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The Social Role of Minoan Symbols

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A thesis submitted to the

Department of Archaeology
Durham University

In accordance with the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2015

Declaration

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Abstract

Starting from the premise that symbols are among the most reliable and efficient representatives of a society and that, Minoan society in particular, appears as overly dependent on symbols and their ritual use for the operation of its socio-political structure, this thesis will examine the social role of six of its most emblematic symbols: the double axe, the horns of consecration, the figure-of-eight shield, the sacred knot, the triton and the shell. Based on a large amount of data and recognizing the enormous value of contextual analysis, the social role of the symbols is illustrated through the comparison of patterns of use from a number of sites in North Central and East Crete. The selection of North Central Crete and East Crete is justified by the diversity of socio-political factors offered by the two areas: North Central Crete was a geographically unified area, where the Palace Knossos, the largest and most complex palace of Minoan Crete was built, while East Crete was a geographically fragmented area with relatively isolated settlements, which developed different degrees of palatial complexity. The variation in the responses to the emergence of the palatial system in these two inherently different geographical units is here used to demonstrate the significance of the study of Minoan symbols for the understanding of past societies. The above patterns are interpreted under the scope of an interactive relation between different social groups, individuals and objects, as well as the spaces which become fields of action for the symbols. In this frame, symbols are viewed as constantly changing formations which reflect dynamic social relations.

To

The sons of Durham

"Some people go to priests.

Others to poetry.

I to my friends."

Virginia Woolfe

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List of Abbreviations

Periods:

FN	Final Neolithic
EM	Early Minoan
MM	Middle Minoan
LM	Late Minoan

Symbols:

D/A	double axe
H/C	horns of consecration
S/K	sacred knot
8-S	figure-of-eight shield
T	triton
S	shell

Abbreviations in Data Tables:

Spaces:

Abbreviations	Meaning	Section
AQ	Artisans' Quarter	Fig. 5.13; Table 5.7
B	Building	Fig. 5.13-4; Table 4.9; Data Tables; Table 5.3; 5.7; 5.14-15; 5.19
BCT	Building of the Cyclopean Tower	Table 5.19
BDD	Building of the Double Doors	Table 5.19; Data Tables
BNHR	Building North of the Harbour Road	Table 5.19
BNPK	Building North of the Palace Kitchen	Table 5.16
BNWS	Building of the North west Section	Table 5.16

BPD	Building of the Pottery Deposits	Table; Data Tables
BSD	Building of the Sacred Deposits	Table 5.16; 5.19; Data Tables
C	Cemetery	Table 4.10; Data Tables; Table 5.18; 5.21
CC	Central Court	Data Tables
CPS	Central Palace Sanctuary	Table 4.3
CT	Chamber Tomb	Table 4.10
CSS	Court of the Stone Spout	Table 4.3
CRB	Cult Room Basement	Data Tables
DB	Diagonal Building	Table 5.17; 5.20; Data Tables
DQ	Domestic Quarter	Table 4.3; Data Tables
E	East	Table 4.7; Data Tables; Table 5.4; 5.12; 5.15; 5.21
EB	East Building ('Old Palace')	Table 5.16-18; 5.21
EW	East Wing	Data Tables; Table 5.17; 5.19-20
HCS	House of the Chancel Screen	Table 4.8
HDA	Hall of the Double Axes	Data Tables
HF	House of the Frescoes	Table 4.8; Data Tables
HH	Hogarth's House	Data Tables
HHP	House of the High Priest	Data Tables; Table 5.4
LP	Little Palace	Data Tables
LWB	Loomweight Basement	Table 4.8; Data Tables; Table 6.2
MPB	Monolithic Pillar Basement	Table 4.3; 4.6; 4.8
N	North	Data Tables; Table 5.11-12; 5.16
NE	North east	Fig. 5.43; Table 4.8; Data Tables; Table 5.7; 5.12; 5.18; 5.20; 5.24-5
NEGA	North Eastern Gate Area	Table 5.21
NEIC	North East Interior Court (close to later palace entrance)	Data Tables
NQ	North Quarter	Table 4.3; 4.7
NSC	North Spur Cemetery	Data Tables
NW	North west	Table 4.3; 4.8; Data Tables; Table 5.11-12; 5.16

OSA	Open shrine area	Data Tables
OPR	Olive Press Room	Table 4.8
P	Palace	Table 4.3; Data Tables; Table 5.16-20; 5.25
PB	Plateia Building	Table 5.3; Data Tables
PC	Pillar Crypt	Data Tables; Table 5.3; 5.7-8
PK	Palaikastro	Data Tables
PPS		Table 4.7
Ps	peak sanctuary	Table 5.18
QM	Queen's Megaron	Data Tables
R	Room	Data Tables; Table 5.7; 5.12; 5.15; 5.21
RCB	Room of the children's Bones	Data Tables
RJF	Room of the Jewel Fresco	
RPS	Royal Pottery Stores	Table 4.4; 4.8; Data Tables
RR	Royal Road	Table 4.8; 6.3
RRN	Royal Road North	Data Tables
RRS	Royal Road South	Table 4.7-8
RSJ	Room of the Stirrup Jars	
RSP	Room of the Stone Pier	Table 4.8
RSS	Room of the Stone Spout	Table 4.8
S	South	Table 4.8; Data Tables; Table 5.3-4; 5.11; 5.19; 5.21
SB	Strong Building	Data Tables
SDA	Shrine of the Double Axes	Data Tables
SME	Stratigraphical Museum Extension	Data Tables; Table 6.2; 6.4
SH	South House	Data Tables
SE	South east	Fig. 5.57; Table 4.8; Data Tables; Table 5.7; 5.12-13; 5.17
SEH	South East House	Data Tables; Table 6.3
SPT	Special Pottery Tradition	Table 5.16; 6.3
SW	South west	Fig. 5.58; Table 4.3; 4.7; 4.8; Data

		Tables; Table 5.7; 5.16; 5.20
SWH	South west House	Table 4.8
TDA	Tomb of the Double Axes	Table 6.5
TB	Tower Building	
TT	Temple Tomb	Table 6.3
TG	Tourkogeitonia	Data Tables
Tn	Town	Data Tables
TR	Temple Repositories	Table 4.3; Data Tables; Table 5.4
UCS	Upper Columnar Shrine	Table 5.8; Data Tables
Uf	upper floor	Data Tables; Table 5.3; 5.8; 5.15
UM	Unexplored Mansion	Data Tables
VRD	Vat Room Deposit	Table 4.6; 4.8
W	West	Table 4.8; Data Tables; Table 5.4; 5.11-12; 5.20
WW	West Wing	Data Tables; Table 5.16; 5.25
WC	West Court	Table 4.2; 4.7; Data Tables; Table 5.11; 5.20; 5.25; 6.2
WCH	West Court House	Table 4.1-2; 4.8; 5.18; 6.1
WQ	West Quarter	Table 4.3
W	Wing	Data Tables

Artefacts:

Abbreviations	Meaning	Section
AB	animal bones	Data Tables; Table 5.15; 5.17-21
Acc	According	Table 4.3
B	Black	Data Tables; Table 5.21
C	Circa	Data Tables
Cc	conical cup	Fig. 4.28; Table 4.10-11; Data Tables; Table 5.4; 5.8; 5.12; 5.15-21
cbsh	cover with button-shaped	Table 5.20; Data Tables

	handle	
CF	Cycladic figurine	Data Tables; Table 5.20
Cm	centimetre(s)	Data Tables; Table 5.14
Con	concentration	Data Tables; Table 5.20; 6.1-4; 6.6
Cp	cooking pot	Table 5.8; 5.17-20; Data Tables
Cr	conical rhyton	Data Tables; Table 5.3; 6.4-5
Dec	Decoration	Data Tables; Table 5.21
Dep	Deposit	Table 4.6-7; Data Tables; Table 5.11; 5.18-9
D	Diameter	Data Tables
d.o.l.	dark on light	Data Tables; Table 5.11; 5.16
Dom	Domestic	Table 4.7; Data Tables; Table 5.3; 5.11; 5.15; 5.19; 5.21
est.	Estimated	Data Tables
F	Figurine	Data Tables; Table 5.4; 5.8; 5.12; 5.15; 5.17-21; 6.3
FS	Floral style	Data Tables; Table 5.3; 5.21; 5.24
Frag	Fragment	Table 4.10; Data Tables; Table 5.4; 5.7-8; 5.12; 5.18; 5.21; 5.24
G	Gray	Data Tables
H	Height	Data Tables
KW	Kamares Ware	Data Tables; Table 5.20; 5.22
L	Large	Table 4.10-11; Data Tables; Table 5.4-5; 5.7; 5.17-20; 6.3-4
L	Length	Data Tables; Table 5.14; 5.21
l.o.d	light on dark	Table 5.11; 5.16
Lw	loomweight	Data Tables; Table 5.16-7; 5.19-21; 6.2-3
M	<i>Murex</i> (shell species)	Table 5.1-2
M	metre(s)	Data Tables
Max	Maximum	Data Tables
Min	Miniature	Table 4.11-12; Data Tables; Table 5.12-13; 5.15; 5.17-21; 6.2-6
MM	mason's mark	Table 4.12; 5.11; 5.15; 6.2-5
Mm	millimetres	Table 4.5

Mn	<i>Monodonta</i> (shell species)	Table 5.1-2; 5.25
MS	Marine Style pottery	Table 4.5; Data Tables; Table 5.3; 5.7; 5.25; 6.4
N	Natural	Table 4.4-5; Data Tables; Table 5.3; 5.25; 6.1-6
Ns	not specified	Data Tables
P	<i>Patella</i> (shell species)	Table 5.1-2
Pi	<i>Pisantium</i> (shell species)	Table 5.1-2
PS	Palatial Style pottery	Data Tables; Table 5.15
Pos	Possibly	Table 4.3; Data Tables
Pyr	pyravnon/pyriatirion (portable fire lamp)	Table 5.21
Rn	ring neck	Data Tables
Sev	Several	Table 4.10; 4.12; Data Tables; Table 5.17-21; 5.25; 6.2-4; 6.6
Sm	Small	Table 4.7; 4.11; Data Tables; Table 5.2; 5.4-7; 5.12; 5.18; 5.21; 6.2-6
SPT	Special Palatial Tradition	Table 5.16; Table 6.4
StNo	Study Number	Data Tables
Th	thickness	Data Tables
Uc	unspecified context	Table 4.3; Data Tables
Veg	Vegetal	Data Tables
V	Vessel	Table 4.7; 4.10-11; Data Tables; Table 5.3-8; 5.12-13; 5.15-21; 6.1-3
Wbt	wild boar tusk	Data Tables; Table 5.17; 5.19
W	Width	Data Tables
W	White	Data Tables; Table 5.14; 5.21

Statement of Copyright

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Preface

I suppose the original source of this PhD has been my early and stubborn inclination to understand things. The reasons and the purpose of things and what made them meaningful has been a constant motivation for exploring and analysing my surroundings since childhood, often to the exasperation of my parents. As a great fan of common sense, cause and effect rationale, I insisted in rejecting everyday symbols, usually manifested around me as social conventions, because their reasons and purposes were not clear or useful, and therefore, not worthy of mind processing. It has been a long road full of surprises of the mind but mostly of the sentiment which led me to reconsider. It has been through this thesis that I finally started to understand the infinite power and the usefulness of symbols for humans. And it has been through this process that I have become more human, in the mind and the emotions.

Acknowledgments

In the five years of this life-changing experience, I was consulted, guided and supported in a number of ways by several people, to whom I owe special thanks.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor Prof. John Chapman for his solid guidance through the labyrinthine and treacherous paths of symbolic theory. From the very start, I appreciated his bold insistence on a free-spirit approach to introducing symbols to a novice, such as myself. It allowed me to explore my genuine personal limits in the subject without being moulded in strict theoretical forms. As a true and faithful mentor, he was not only there to bring me back to the right path, when I was going astray, but he was humanely engaged in my efforts and stood by me as a fatherly figure providing valuable support when I most needed it.

I would also like to thank my external supervisor Dr. Nico Momigliano for all her feedback, academic and personal help which contributed enormously to the improvement of this thesis and of myself as a researcher. Her Doric passion for correctness and systematic work were hard but precious lessons, always softened by her unmistakable personal generosity and tenderness.

I am grateful to my secondary supervisors Dr. Penny Wilson and Philip Graham for their comments on the overall value of my work and the conversations we shared throughout these years in Durham, and to Robin Skeates for the most charming and witty encounters between British and Greek temperament. Review panels ceased to be boring the moment we met. I would also like to thank my former supervisor Lefteris Platon for his clarifications on the material of Zakros and George Vavouranakis for his advice and support in my first academic steps.

I am also much indebted to the Greek State Scholarships Foundation (IKY) for funding most of my studies and making the completion of this thesis possible.

I owe special thanks to all the people who shared long and passionate conversations on symbolism with me and helped me bring together my workshop on Symbolism: Professor Chapman, Robin Skeates, Andreas Pantazatos, Andrew Jones, Prof. Douglas Davis, Prof. Seth Kunin, Seif el-Rashidi, Antonis Iliopoulos, John Goodenough, Emma Flynn, Gretchen Larsen, Anthony Atkinson, Jonathan Miles-Watson and Agni Prijatelj. From the bottom of my heart, I want to thank Mr. Lawson Fenwick, a renowned but unexpectedly warm and modest artist of Durham, who invited me to his beautiful house by the river of Durham to interview him in his own workshop. He shared with me the most metaphysical initiation to

symbolism, one that no academic book or conversation would ever offer me and one that, unfortunately, had no place in my thesis, but is forever marked in my soul.

I would like to thank my dearest friend Andreas Pantazatos, the philosopher, for the lively, therapeutic meetings which always started by exploring unknown paths and pleasure corners of Durham and ended discovering mysterious twists in our minds.

Only poetry can express my infinite love and admiration to George Gazis, because of whom I started this thesis and came to Durham, and because of whom I have become the complete person that I am now. My dark angel, the gothic alter ego of myself, who showed me that I was born to shine, not only for myself, but mostly because the world needs it.

I would also like to thank all the wonderful men who danced me, loved me and hurt me during my Durham years. They were colourful mosaic pieces of the one true love that is yet to come.

Most of all, I want to thank my parents, the pillars of my very existence: my mother for teaching me discipline, perseverance and devotion to the cause and my father for teaching me love and compassion for humans and the rare ability to see the magic in all things in life. They gave me the most precious weapons to fight through the marvellous realms of symbols.

Volume I: Text

Chapter 1: Introduction (Figs. 1.1-1.2; Tables 1.1-1.3)

There is no fundamental difference between man and the higher mammals in their mental faculties, solely in man's almost infinitely larger power of associating together the most diversified sounds and ideas

Darwin, Ch. III, *The Descent of Man*
(Darwin 1877: 91)

All human behaviour consists of, or is dependent upon, the use of symbols. Human behaviour is symbolic behaviour; symbolic behaviour is human behaviour. The symbol is the universe of humanity

Leslie White, 'The symbol:
The Origin and Basis of Human Behaviour'
(White 1940: 451)

The symbol is one of those intriguingly elusive terms, the definition of which has generated long debates and innumerable publications in different fields of human knowledge. The attempt to construct a comprehensive definition of the symbol throughout the time of this thesis has triggered an overwhelmingly wide range of research in a number of diverse disciplines such as history, archaeology, anthropology, psychology, theology, sociology, philosophy, arts and semiotics. It generated a two-day interdisciplinary workshop under the title 'The conceptual boundaries of symbolism', in which I invited archaeologists together with anthropologists, psychologists, linguists, philosophers, musicians, artists, and even

economists to discuss possible approaches to the interpretation of symbols (31/01/2013-01/01/2014, Durham University). This was followed by a seminar titled ‘Neurobiology meets archaeology’, in which Dr. Marion Benz from the University of Freiburg presented further innovative approaches from the field of archaeology (01/04/2014, Durham University). Furthermore, throughout the years of my research I was lucky to have shared valuable and enlightening discussions with a large number of researchers from archaeology and other fields and acquire a rich and broad understanding of different aspects of symbolism.

The result of the above efforts has been a wide and indispensable background of understanding over the scholarly issues concerning the subject but was far from establishing a coherent and solid definition of the symbol. In reality, the gradual acquaintance with the multi-layered and volatile nature of this concept helps one to realise that a truly efficient and methodologically safe definition of the term is possible only when it is described within the specific aims of a thesis and according to the disciplinary problems and purposes of its field.

1.1.1 Statement of research aims and objectives

The aim of this research is to offer a better understanding of the social role of symbols using Minoan Crete as a case study. It is therefore necessary to define the concept of the symbol within the disciplinary field of archaeology and, more specifically, within the field of Minoan archaeology by developing a solid theoretical and methodological framework in which symbols can be analysed and interpreted. Using this framework, the first objective of this research is to examine the diachronic and intra-spatial associations and changes in the use of symbols on the basis of a wide comparative material of selected Minoan symbols in a range of contexts. The second objective is to examine in which ways the emerging patterns may contribute to a discussion of some of the current scholarly problems on Minoan social relations by using the emerging patterns of the above comparative analysis. The third objective is to assess and interpret the results of this discussion, which is the case study of this research, by employing the selected theoretical and methodological tools of this research.

1.1.2 Summary of chapter contents

The above objectives determine the general structure of the thesis. The present first Chapter is an introduction which includes a general research background, the geographical and chronological framework and a general statement on the definition of the symbol. In the same

chapter there follows an overview of the history of the symbol as a concept and the history of investigation in the early and recent archaeology, as well as the main theoretical premises and methodological tools adopted by the author for the identification, analysis and interpretation of the symbols. A last section addresses the role of the symbol in Minoan archaeology including an overview of the Minoan bibliography on the matter. It also includes a historical outline of the socio-political developments of Bronze Age Crete which stress the recent scholarly contributions to the main problems of Minoan social relations and the theoretical and methodological tools employed for their treatment.

The Second and the Third Chapters discuss the patterns which are formed by a rich corpus of symbols/data from selected sites of North Central Crete and East Crete respectively with separate data analysis for each area. The Fourth Chapter proceeds to the comparison of the main patterns from the two areas and discusses the main results of the analysis. The Fifth Chapter addresses the aims and the objectives set at the beginning of the thesis and concludes with a discussion of the main points on the social role of the Minoan symbols.

1.1.3 History of Minoan studies

Minoan scholarship was established by Arthur Evans and his immensely influential work *The Palace of Minos* which shaped Minoan archaeology for several decades. The excavators of the major Minoan sites, such as Doro Levi at Phaistos, Nikolaos Platon at Zakros and Yannis Sakellarakis at Archanes, added significant data to the corpus of Evans and complemented his interpretations on Minoan society. Other scholars contributed mostly to the field of theory and interpretation (Branigan 1970; Renfrew 1972; Cherry 1978; 1983; 1984; 1986; Warren 1975; 1985). It is considered that the *Emergence of Civilisation* (Renfrew 1972) and *Prepalatial Crete* (Branigan 1970) reformulated old questions and classified the existing material in a sufficiently systematic and helpful way opening up new fields of enquiry (Schoep & Tomkins 2012: 3-4).

It is during the last decades that Minoan scholars (Momigliano 1999; MacGillivray 2000; Hamilakis 2002b; Papadopoulos 2005; Hamilakis & Momigliano 2006; Schoep 2010b) are systematically re-evaluating Evans' work and all previous scholarship, theories and models.

1.1.4 The geographical area

The large amount of data in combination with the limitations in research space and word limit has not allowed a consideration of the sample symbols from all the Cretan sites. For this reason, the study area of this research focuses on a certain number of sites and areas within Crete. North Central Crete and East Crete are two areas which have produced rich material representing a variety of symbolic artefacts and a diversity of comparable contexts. Moreover, the Palace at Knossos, its town and its immediate territorial surroundings in North Central Crete constitute an entirely different socio-political environment from the geographically more isolated harbour towns of East Crete: ‘Central Crete is the heartland of the Middle and Late Bronze Age palatial phenomenon, the scale and complexity of which is not matched in East Crete (Vavouranakis 2007: 17). The specific differences and similarities in the socio-political characteristics of the two areas can lead to a productive comparison. At the same time, there is an awareness that the results of a study aiming at a comprehensive contextual investigation of the six symbols in Crete would have to include other palatial towns, such as Phaistos and Malia, and many other important sites across the island.

The number and the selection of these sites have been determined by the necessity to create a representative data sample within the confines of this thesis’ time and word limits. The selection of the specific settlements aims, moreover, to include site types characterised by different socio-political components. This range of site types allows the examination of the correlation between the social role of the sample symbols and the hierarchical position of the East Crete towns, according to the definitions set in the relevant section of the methodology chapter



Fig 1.1 Map of study areas

1.1.5 The chronological span and dating issues

This thesis considers the social role of symbols during the Bronze Age period from the Prepalatial to the Postpalatial period until LMIIIB, that is approximately between 3000 and 1200 BC. I have excluded LMIIIC because it presents significant cultural differences which appear to belong to the beginning of a new era with a different political and social framework.

Because of the large amount of data included in this study and the broad scope of the addressed questions, I will focus on wide patterns across the Eastern and Central areas of Crete over a long period of time and I will mostly rely on already chronologically defined material in current publications. As this approach does not allow or require a meticulous study of problematic issues related to Minoan chronology, I will not address such issues unless exact dating of certain symbolic artefacts is of decisive importance for the analysis and interpretation of certain patterns. For example, recent refinements in comparative stratigraphical studies, such as the identification of LMII in East Crete in comparison to Central Cretan layers, or the two distinct LMIB destruction layers of Palaikastro (Niemeier 1985: 176; MacGillivray & Driessen 1990: 406, fig. 5; MacDonald 1997: 276-9) do not yet provide sufficient material for an effective comparison. However, this study benefits from the general conclusions and remarks of the relevant studies and will take them into account for the understanding of the trends which shaped changes from one period into another. The chronological divisions in Prepalatial (EM-MMIA), Protopalatial (MMII-MMIIIA), early Neopalatial (MMIIIB-LMIA), late Neopalatial (LMIB), Final Palatial (LMII-III A) and Postpalatial (LMIIIB) provide a breakdown of time which can illustrate with sufficiency the changes in the use of symbols:

Prepalatial	Proto palatial	Early Neopalatial	Late Neopalatial	Final Palatial	Post palatial
EM-MMIA	MMIB- MMIIIA	MMIIIB- LMIA	LMIB	LMII-III A2	LMIIIB
3000-1950	1950-1750	1750- 1580	1580- 1490	1490-1320	1320-1200

Table 1.1 Minoan chronological periodisation used in this thesis (based on Momigliano 2007)

1.1.6 Historical overview of the term symbol and its meaning in various disciplines

Understanding the complex theoretical framework in which the symbol is defined requires some knowledge of the wider historical and disciplinary background of the concept. The following sections offer an historical overview of the use of the concept ‘symbol’ and a summary of the early and recent archaeological approaches as developed basically in the last two centuries.

General dictionary definitions of the word ‘symbol’ describe it as something which stands for or represents something else (CCD s.v. symbol). Usually the symbol is something concrete and particular, an image or an object (OALD s.v. symbol) that represents something else, usually abstract and generalised (ER; CCD; NED s.v. symbol). Second and third definitions of the symbol regard marking or signing in science (maths, music, etc), as well as the ‘Christian symbol’ as the ‘formal authoritative statement of Christian doctrine; a creed or a confession of faith (OED, OALD). Interestingly, the religious quality of the symbol is stressed as one of the inherent and distinct aspects of its meaning. Characteristically, the *Encyclopaedia of Religion* states that ‘In particular, a symbol, as opposed to other forms of signification, tends to be understood as a representational mechanism that renders transcendent realities into tangible forms’ (Struck 2004: 8906).

This characteristic of the symbol is closely associated with its early history. The ancient Greek word ‘σύμβολον’ (symbolon) is a compound word of the preposition συν (syn) meaning with and the noun βολή (bole) from the verb βάλλω (ballo) which means ‘to proceed’ or ‘to hit’ and altogether has the meaning of a converging point. In Ancient Greece, the ‘symbolon’ had a number of applications: in everyday economy, it was a token of authentication for agreements and contracts (where the two parts of the agreement converge) (ibid: 8906); it was used as a certificate in Pythagorean and other sects to ensure participation of the initiated but, more importantly, to guarantee communication of the participants with the divine (converging of the human and the divine) (ibid: 8907); it could denote an object used by the dead to ensure their passage to the Underworld as a means of entering a restricted and divine space (ibid.); it could mean a divine signal which seers had to interpret as a manifestation of the divine to the humans; and it could also refer to divine attributes. In the Homeric Hymn to Hermes, the god recognizes the lyre made of turtle shell to be his attribute-symbol, "σύμβολον ἥδη μοι μέγ' ὀνήσιμον", meaning ‘a sign of joy for/to me’¹. The idea of the symbol as manifestation of divine power developed further in the Hellenistic Period with the

¹Hymn Hom in Merc 30 and 527.

appearance of allegoric poetry: attributes of the gods, such as birds or garments or magical amulets granted direct divine protection or other properties offered from the gods (ibid.).

In the Early Christian Period the concept of the symbol was for the first time systematically integrated into a religious philosophy. Iamblichus, after the Pythagorean example maintained that esoteric wisdom can only be reached through a secret language of symbols. At the same time he underlined the ritual importance of symbols as tools which activate ritual and as material items or secret language which can invoke the divine presence. Similarly, the Neoplatonist philosopher Proclus claimed that the symbol does not just resemble the real presence of its referent, but instead reproduces it: 'It operates according to invocation and not according to imitation' (ibid: 8908).

The mystic and transcendent perception of the symbols was transmitted through the Middle Ages to the Romantic movement. In the middle of the 18th c., the representative of Romanticism, J.G. Hamann, stated that 'symbols enable one to view all the phenomena of nature and history as revelations of a divine communication' (ibid.). The romantic poet Coleridge considered the symbol as a powerful representational tool that had the unique capacity to grasp the transcendent in physical, palpable form and was 'consubstantial' with its referent (Reid 2006). The idea that symbols can participate in the power of that which they symbolize found followers in 20th c. theological philosophy. As stated by Tillich in his 'Systematic Theology' (Tillich 1951-1963): 'a symbol is true: it is the expression of a true revelation' (ibid.: Vol. 1: 240).

In the field of psychology, the theological idea that symbols participated in religious revelation is replaced by the anthropological view that they can convey the emotional meaning of otherwise inaccessible areas of the psyche. Intellectual understanding is not sufficient to resolve a repressed complex of the unconscious, 'for the complex consists not only of meaning but also of value, and this depends on the intensity of the accompanying feeling tones' (Jung 1959: par. 52). Developing further Sigmund Freud's theory of symbols, which defined them as individual symptoms of unresolved repressions (ER: 8911), Jung (1978) suggested that the treatment of complexes requires emotional experience or shock.

The interpretation of the symbols as participants of mystic experience, the unconscious and emotions was for the first time seriously challenged by the ideas of the Enlightenment. The secret symbolic traditions started to be rationalised under the influence of scientific realism and objective criteria of evaluation. By the end of the 19th c., anthropology and ethnography had become popular fields of exploration for 'primitive' societies, and rituals came to the centre of interest and comparative studies. These first approaches detected symbolism within

the theoretical framework of cultural evolutionism and the beginnings of social anthropology. Different approaches as that of fundamental animism (Tylor 1871) or the cycle of nature (Frazer 1925) and otherworldly perfection (Eliade 1961; 1968), however, remained primarily explanatory and failed to raise the elementary questions about the definition of symbolism (Boas 1927).

A major turning point in the progress of investigation on symbols and symbolism took place when Lévi-Strauss predicted that structural linguistics, founded by Saussure, would ‘play the same renovating role with respect to the social sciences that nuclear physics has played for the physical sciences’ (Lévi-Strauss 1963: 33). Saussure, the father of modern linguistics and semiotics, proposed that semiology could be applied to all of culture by studying rites, customs, etc, as signs to be explained by laws (Saussure 1966: 17). Saussure’s revolutionary insight conceptualised language as a system of relationships between elements defined only by their differences. In taking this perspective, he singlehandedly placed the study of language on a sound scientific footing. According to Paul Bouissac (2004: 242), Saussure’s semiotic legacy is one of “meeting his epistemological challenge through applying his linguistic approach to other cultural institutions and productions.”

Because of its general semiological value and acceptable employment on social symbolism the Saussurian linguistic model was used as a constant basis and starting point in anthropological and later archaeological studies. Levi-Strauss (1963: 62) related the structures of language to those of society analysing its constituent elements on the principles of opposition and correlation, since ‘different communication systems in the same societies are the product of the same unconscious structures. He contributed importantly to a new attention to art and material culture in anthropology, and a wealth of explicitly structural approaches to the ethnographic arts (Conkey 2001: 278).

These structuralist approaches, however, were soon criticised. They gave excessive priority to the structure of relations and to the form at the cost of content; ‘it is an analytical, not evaluative method’ (Eagleton 1983: 96). Levi-Strauss’s study on cultural symbolism aimed at understanding the mode of thinking as shared by all humans, irrespective of time and place. However, neglecting intentionality and human agency meant overlooking the significance of context (Sturrock 1979: 12-15).

As a reaction to the above strictly cognitive approaches, a new branch appeared in anthropology which became known as ‘symbolic or interpretative anthropology’ and studied symbols as cultural elements, as humanly meaningful elements of rituals away from society’s functional requisites and the ways in which they can be interpreted to better understand a

particular society. Its representatives stressed culture as meaning, expressed through symbolic means which implies an interpretative approach from the "natives' point of view" (Geertz 1983: 55-72). The identification of cultural life for an investigator requires isolating symbols, identifying their meanings, and showing how they resonate within a specific dynamic cultural context.

Turner (1968) contributed significantly to this direction with a theory of symbols which aimed at an understanding of their content. Absolute preconditions for this are, according to his theory, a study in the 'action-field context' of the symbols in combination with the associated behavioural patterns, which are viewed as the ones giving symbols their meaning. A symbol is the smallest unit of ritual, it is a 'storage unit' filled with a vast amount of information (ibid:1-2). But symbols are also transformative for human attitudes and behaviour precisely because of their reference to the supernatural. However, Turner underestimated the role and responses of social structure to rituals, ignored the symbolic dimensions, informalities and the humanly meaningful within the realm of structured relationships (Morris 1987: 122).

Geertz, another major representative of symbolic anthropology was even less concerned with the practical social effects of symbols. He outlined culture as "a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which people communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (Geertz 1973: 89). Geertz' s symbolic anthropology (often termed "semiotic approach") viewed symbols as acts which shaped the way people think, influence personhood and, eventually, but not primarily, social relations.

The above described trends and approaches to symbolism made by anthropologists, ethnographers and sociologists formed the basis from which archaeology drew its early theoretical foundation and its main methods to analyse symbols.

1.2 The symbol in archaeology

The Saussurian linguistic model together with structural anthropological approaches to symbolism formed the early theoretical and methodological background of archaeology, while symbolic anthropology was generally overlooked. In its inception as a discipline in the 19th century (Renfrew & Bahn 2004: 26), archaeology claimed solid scientific foundations and dismissed religion and ideology as epiphenomenal, mere by-products of ecological adaptation or as attempts to 'Palaeopsychology' (Binford 1972: 198). In line with the basic principles of scientific analysis of New Archaeology, processualists considered symbols as one of the categories by which a civilisation can be classified and studied. And yet, due to their complex and elusive nature, which does not facilitate quantification and concrete, measurable results, symbols were rather avoided as unreliable information (Robb 1998).

Post-processualists (Barrett 1994; Hodder et al. 1995; Thomas 1991; Tilley 1993) criticised New Archaeology for the dichotomy between culture and function, the generalisations that tend to overlook cultural variety and the contributions of the individual to culture (Hodder 1982: 6). Artefacts including symbolic objects and their function became central and were placed in a social framework. For post-processualists, an insight into meaning can be possible through the dialectical relationship between subjective experience and expression in the inter-subjective context, thus stressing not only the social dimensions of a symbol but also those of individual experience (Kus 1982: 48).

As a reaction to post-processualist criticism, Renfrew (1982; 1994) introduced cognitive archaeology which attempted to establish a more distinct and independent archaeological concept for the symbol. Drawing its theoretical premises on structural and cognitive anthropology but recognizing the processual archaeological method as more reliable, cognitive archaeology claimed to be a discipline which focuses explicitly upon the special human ability to construct and use symbols (Donald 1991; Renfrew 1994; Renfrew & Bahn 1991). However, its paradigm has been criticised for the lack of coherent theoretical premises which can efficiently explain the social process of symbolism. Despite the significance of symbolism to cognitive archaeology, there has been remarkably little consideration of how symbols actually work (Preucel 2007: 171-2).

It appears, that, although post-processualism has been criticised for an excessive degree of breadth and variety of theoretical approaches (Preucel 1995), it is the only theory which incorporates into its analysis the concepts of symbolism, power, ideology and material culture

as an active force in society. Aligned with post-processual approaches are important theoretical advances which are exceptionally popular in recent archaeological scholarship, such as the theories of material culture, semiotic approaches as well as theories on memory and remembrance, and the importance of emotions and performance in the understanding of the social role of symbols. These approaches shape together the main theoretical framework of this thesis and it is, therefore, important to make special mention to them.

1.2.1 Material culture theory

However controversial and diverging scholars' opinions are and have been over the disciplinary nature of archaeology, they all share the view that the defining characteristic of the disciplinary field of archaeology is material culture (Preucel 2007: 2-3). Post-processualists have provided some of the most sophisticated analyses of material culture meanings. From the outset, they criticised the linguistic model of material culture because 'material culture has form and substance, it has the power to fix meanings in ways that are not possible with language' (ibid: 84).

An immensely significant dimension of the theory of material culture is how objects can take on an independent and exceptionally powerful new character. Objects are sign-artefacts with agency and can act as independent signs which may generate new meanings. The role of material culture as an embodiment of ideologies is an active element in social life which legitimates the existing world and leads it to further transformation in a dialectically dynamic process (Tilley 1982).

1.2.2 Peircian Semiotics

These basic principles of material culture theory are entirely compatible with another substantial theoretical and methodological tool for the analysis and interpretation of symbols: Peircian semiotics. In his recent book '*The Semiotics of Archaeology*', Preucel (2007: 1) proposes an archaeological review of Peirce's theory on semiotics as an alternative to the Saussurian approach. He claims that human sciences constitute different configurations of knowledge and that the Saussurian model, by itself, cannot provide an adequate account of material culture meaning. This is because of its flawed characterisation of the sign and its focus on codes and rules at the expense of social practice. Preucel defines archaeology as a

semiotic enterprise because of its linkage between theory, data and social practices in the pursuit of meaning.

Peircian semiotics became known to archaeologists relatively recently and through an American anthropological movement with diverse approaches on the matter. It is considered that the pragmatic foundations of this movement may offer an efficient response to the limitations of symbolic, structural, cognitive anthropology and poststructuralism (Preucel 2007: 67-8). Its three strong points which solved long standing problems of archaeology are: firstly, the solid and specific tools which the pragmatic background provides to understand culture; secondly, its concern with the social aspects of signification; and, thirdly, the agency of signs and their ability to not only represent social reality but also to generate new signs and shape new realities.

More specifically, contrasting the Saussurian approach to the sign which was determined by linguistic relations, Peirce considered that signs encompass everything existing, humans and nature (Bauer & Preucel 2001; Gardin 1992; Gottdiener 1994). This touches upon the pragmatic and social aspects of Peircian semiotics. While in a Saussurian analysis the actor/speaker is assumed, in a Peircian analysis the actor/speaker is an integral part of the process of signification. This is so, because the theory of signification and linguistic codes cannot deal with the problems of how the different cultural “languages” are related to empirical objects and egos, to individual actors and groups.

For Peirce ‘the *sign* stands for something, its object. It stands for that object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I have sometimes called the ground of the representamen’ (Peirce 1931-58: 2.228). This scheme includes, apart from the sign and the *object*, which roughly corresponds to the Saussurian signifier and the signified (Silverman 1983: 15), the *interpretant*, which represents the sense made of that sign in the mind of a person (Peirce 1931-58: 2.228). Peirce also constructed highly elaborate divisions of sign categories which describe the relationship between the sign and its referents. The ‘most fundamental’ (ibid. 2.275) of these categories are: the index, which indicates a representamen that directly refers to its object without depending on the interpretant; the icon, which indicates a representamen that resembles or imitates its object; and the symbol, which indicates a representamen that refers to its object by virtue of a convention or arbitrary relationship and where the interpretant has to be aware or learn the nature of this relationship. These categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive and a sign can be a combination of different types of signs.

The agency of signs and their ability to generate new ones is reflected in the interactive and continuous relationship between these three components. A sign never exists in isolation; it is always connected to other signs. Signs have the capacity to generate infinite new signs since the Interpretant of one sign relation can become the Object for another sign relation and so on in an endless process. This process, known as ‘semiosis’, brings together reality and representation in living systems (Preucel 2007: 55-6). This concept is explained as part of Peirce’s ‘synechism’, a philosophical concept which suggests that all things of the world are continuous and form meaningful and potential objects of signification (Peirce 1931-58: 1.172, 7.569-7.578).

1.2.3 Emotions, performance and memory

An interesting aspect in Preucel’s semiotic archaeological approach considers the importance of emotions for the understanding of symbols whose content cannot really be accessed only by means of the intellect. This idea reflects a hard-earned and mature recognition by modern archaeology of the insufficiency of a strictly intellectual approach and the importance of emotions which are historically embedded in its concept as discussed earlier. The degree of this advance is indicated by the similarities in Preucel’s position with that of Tillich: ‘The unique nature of a symbol is that it gives access to deeper layers of reality which are otherwise inaccessible’ (Tillich 1964: 54).

The importance of emotions in conjunction with social practices has also been recognized by the functionalists who viewed rituals as mechanisms which use transcendental elements in order to sustain social equilibrium and ensure societal unity and solidarity among a community’s members (Radcliffe-Brown 1952; Gluckman 1954; Gluckman 1958; Douglas 1966; 1975; 1978; Turner 1982: 201; Durkheim 1995). Thus, Durkheim (1995: 223-32) proposed the idea of ‘viewing society as a system of forces conditioned by the symbolizing process: symbols were social because they preserved and expressed social sentiments’. Religion connects its members to each other and to society by animating their lives with the sacred: powerful symbols – including ‘secular’ ones – that make and remake society’s collective existence. Social effervescence can only be understood in relation to a concrete object-sign. The sign is loved, feared and respected and it becomes the object of gratitude and sacrifice. The symbol is seen as objectified feelings.

Post-processualism embraced and further developed these ideas by associating them with the capacity of objects to be socially remembered through time. According to Andrew Jones

(2007: 66), ‘the ability of objects to produce a memorable experience depends upon their role in social performance’. Moreover, ‘The potential of an object to be remembered will partly depend upon its emotive force’, and its capacity ‘to produce an emotive reaction will depend upon its sensual qualities’ (ibid.). Elaborating further on the Peircian index, Andrew Jones used the term ‘citation’ (ibid: 55) to indicate the process of attaching added layers of significance to an action through its reiteration, which, thus, ceases to constitute a simple reference to the past.

Andrew Jones further suggested that the evoking of an object by its index is not so much based on an information retrieval as the result of sensory experience and in this way it can be stated that material culture ‘actively precipitates remembrance (ibid: 23-25). Understanding the operational function of a symbol is perhaps more effective than attempting to understand its meaning. That is because in practice rituals and symbolic ideas do not need to build on logical succession of associations and are perpetuated through repetition and continuation. Most times their participants accept this arbitrariness as factual and do not require knowledge of their symbolic content (Sperber 1975: 15-70).

All the above reveals an increasing concern of modern archaeology with exploring effective ways to approach the meaning of symbols by addressing as many of the aspects of its complex nature as possible. Summarizing the main theoretical tools which result from the above discussion, three points have to be stressed. The first is the importance of integration of symbols into a model of analysis which emphasises their social role as an essential element for their understanding. In this direction, the Peircian approach to semiotics and its archaeological adaptations by Preucel seem to offer an efficient theoretical background. The second point is the agency of symbols as expressed in material culture theory and the Peircian idea of *synechism* and *semiosis* which must form part of any consideration of symbolism. The third point is the importance of the performative impact of symbols which draws, on the one hand, on their sensory properties, and on the other hand, on their involvement in action.

1.3 A definition of the symbol for Minoan archaeology

1.3.1 The symbol in Minoan bibliography

Symbols have played a central role in Minoan civilisation. In Minoan bibliography, the wealth of cultic objects and spaces has long been recognized as reflecting the high reliance of Minoan people on ritual and symbolism (e.g. Evans 1901; Evans 1921-35; Nilsson 1927; Gesell 1985: 1). The central role of the representation of Minoan symbols in the socio-political life of Bronze Age Crete is being increasingly appreciated. As has been characteristically stated: 'Minoan art may have served as propaganda, but not as a proclamation of the supreme status or of the divine sanction of a ruler, but rather of the status and divine sanction of the cult' (Davis 1995: 19).

Most of the Minoan symbols have been discussed in detail in Evans' *'Palace of Minos (1921-1935)'*. As a rule, his analysis of interpretation of symbols was based on iconographical evidence such as frescoes and seals/sealings, which give a relatively eloquent idea about the ceremonial context of the symbols, but not a reliable one when context is not also considered. Moreover, although massively influential, his interpretations have been criticised for the uncritical employment of syncretic and ethnographic analogies between different cultures and periods and the lack of a social analysis of the symbols (Marinatos 1993: 9).

Nilsson (1927) was the first to create a firmly founded and full presentation of evidence on Minoan and Mycenaean cult. His method was systematic in the collection and classification of architectural and iconographical symbolic motifs combining the descriptive and analytical models of archaeology but, overall, he did not escape the theoretical (evolutionist) framework of interpretation set by Evans. Moreover, Nilsson largely overlooked those features that determined and distinguished Minoan society equating it to the Mycenaean culture.

However, the significant advances that he introduced towards a more 'contextual' analysis with emphasis on the cult places inspired a generation of Minoan archaeologists who classified and discussed data on ritual material according to categories of ritual spaces without, however, making much effort to reconstruct ritual action within them. Gesell (1985) and Rutkowski (1986), for example, created comprehensive studies of data relying heavily on the archaeological record with systematic recordings of cultic artefacts and the classification of their cultic contexts. However, the lack of a coherent theoretical framework and definitions of cult and cultic contexts rendered their results vague, with objects and spaces, which did not fit in the specified categories, remaining overlooked. Warren, on the other hand, in his

Minoan Religion as Ritual Action (Warren 1988) reversed this static approach, and classified the data according to categories of ritual action, while balancing iconographical sources and the archaeological record. Thus, he was the first one to seriously address action and performance in Minoan ritual (Faro 2008: 32).

Renfrew (1985) was the first to theorise on Minoan ritual in an attempt to set objective criteria for the identification of cultic artefacts and contexts, but his proposed guidelines proved insufficient when put into practice (Cunningham & Sackett 2009). His checklist approach suggested an intention to understand ritual in terms of categories with very specific correspondences between religious act and archaeological evidence, whilst the definition of religious and sacred remained obscure. Recently, there have been attempts to shift the focus of research from the demarcation of sacred spaces to the identification of cult activities that may have occurred within or outside domestic units, but which were organised at the household level (Marinatos & Betancourt 1995; Betancourt 2001) or focusing on the objects rather than on the spaces (Sikla 2011: 219-231; Jones 1999).

More recently, the important work of Nanno Marinatos on Minoan symbols and religion adopted an early post-processual and structuralist approach combined with a major reliance on iconographical data and inter-cultural analogies (Marinatos 1993: 11; 2010: 7-10). Her structuralist approach identifies symbols through observation of the morphology of visual patterns and the comparison and analysis of their combination (syntax) by underlying the structure of ritual as a symbolic language in Minoan religion. Inspired by functionalism and diffusionism she aims at sociological interpretations of fundamental ritual action often on parallels from neighbouring civilisations, justified by a method based on the historical approach (Marinatos 1993: 8). Despite her great contribution towards a comprehensive history of Minoan religion her interpretations largely ignore the archaeological record and remain detached from the social frame and its dynamics and do not place ritual and religion as a factor in the making of developments of Minoan society through time.

Generally, during recent years, Minoan archaeologists have acquired increased awareness for the importance of contextual analysis and interpretation as a means of 'minimalizing the risks of projecting our own modern views to the past' (L. Platon 1999b: 38). Systematic studies of contextual approaches change the traditional tendency of Minoan archaeologists to identify symbols primarily in the rich Minoan iconography. Moreover, the traditional method of simple classification of the physical characteristics (Buchholz 1959) is replaced by the application of analytical methods where a range of factors is assessed in connection to the studied artefacts (Soles 2012; Sackett 1996). Recent post-processual approaches have offered

some new perspectives of analysis of symbolism with respect to symbolic use of space and architecture (Hitchcock 2000; 2007) or landscape (Vavouranakis 2007). Thus, although Minoan archaeology has still a lot to learn from the theoretical advances of archaeology mentioned in the previous sections, it has made significant steps towards adopting theories which can cope more comprehensively with the complex issues of Minoan symbolism.

However, there is still a lot to learn from the theoretical advances of archaeology mentioned in the previous sections. The development of new methodological tools for the analysis and interpretation of data may offer new insights in major issues regarding the Minoan social relations. In the present study, I have attempted to move precisely in this direction and to conduct a research which would cover recurrent gaps of Minoan archaeology in the field of symbolism and which, taking into account the latest achievements of Minoan scholarship, would apply important theoretical and methodological advances of the discipline of archaeology on the analysis and interpretation of the data. A main contribution to Minoan symbolism, in this respect, is the creation of a comprehensive and systematic collection of data which includes archaeological and iconographical representatives of the selected symbols classified in association with their contexts and relevant assemblages. Another important contribution is the systematic application of contextual analysis to the emerging patterns with an emphasis on the multiple levels of association that allows the use of Peircian semiotic theory. A third contribution is the construction of a coherent theoretical and methodological framework which allows the interpretation of the social role of sample symbols through the investigation of the inherent trends of Minoan social relations and by placing humans in the centre of action and social practice.

1.3.2 The ‘sample symbols’

According to the theoretical framework which will be discussed in detail below, a symbol in archaeology is an object or an image which is inextricably linked to social practices: that is the symbol functions as an organic factor of the ideological principles and actions of a community. The connection between the symbol and the community is perceived as led by the human factor, which means that people and the way they interact with symbols is a focal point in the investigation of symbols in archaeology. Considering that ‘all this universe is perfused with signs, if it is not composed exclusively of signs’ (Peirce 1906: 448), and that potentially any archaeological artefact or image could be taken as having lasting or temporary symbolic value, it is important to establish those properties which may determine an

archaeological artefact or image as symbolic compared to a non-symbolic or less symbolic one. The definition of these properties is based on semiotic studies and archaeological theories of symbolism which will be discussed in detail in the following section. Here I would like to establish that a symbol is an artefact or an image which can act as index, icon or symbol in Peircian semiotic terms and must have specific and powerful performative qualities which can stimulate emotional experience and enhance historical continuity and memory.

In this study six Minoan motifs have been selected: the double axe, the horns of consecration, the sacred knot, the figure-of-eight shield, the triton and the common shell (fig. 1.2). By 'common shell' here I mean the bivalve shell and those species which morphologically fall under the category of the *Cerastoderma* including the *Glycymeris* and the *Spondylus*². It will be here shown that these six motifs are symbols on the basis of the above presented criteria: the strong connection to social practices and the human factor, their potential for semiotic analysis as indexes, icons and 'symbols' (in the Peircian term) and their performative qualities.

The selected motifs possess an enormous potential for the consideration of their relation to social practices and the role of people primarily as a result of the large amount of available media of representation (artefacts and images) in which they appear. Most importantly, the wide diversity of contexts in which they are found makes it possible to reconstruct action in space and the involvement of the human factor in social practice. Their potential for semiotic analysis in Peircian terms is significant for the same reason of wealth of available data but also for another reason. Unlike other popular Minoan motifs, such as the spiral or vegetal motifs, which mostly appear as abstract or emblematic images and offer limited ways of interaction and function, the ones selected here are objects which could be used as real objects in social life. This means that they could assume different roles and could establish a diversity of indexical, iconic or 'symbolic' associations with spaces, practices, people and other artefacts. Similarly, unlike other popular Minoan motifs, such as the bird, the bull or the snake, the six selected motifs were much more determined in their symbolic content and function by the human factor than living creatures whose behaviour and habitat largely

² These species are often, and especially in older publications of Minoan archaeology, recorded with terms such as 'ahivada' or 'cockle'. The term 'streidia' sometimes refers to shells in a generic way and others to bivalves or even to cowries. Similarly, tritons are occasionally recorded as 'conch shells', a term which in reality refers to a murex (MacGillivray et al. 1984: 141). In this study, when the terms 'streidia' and 'conch shells' are not further described or clarified as to their nature, they are taken to mean bivalves and tritons respectively. The reader will find in the Data Tables the terms as used in the publications and in the text the terms according to their categorisation in sample symbols.

determined their symbolic associations. Finally, the performative qualities of these symbols are exceptionally rich and widely evidenced in Minoan iconography and the archaeological record: double axes were carried by priestesses or set on stands, horns of consecration were placed on altars as foci of ritual action, sacred knots were ceremonially worn in feastings, tritons were used as sound instruments, common shells were massively deposited in the Temple Repositories of Knossos.

The number of symbols was regarded as the optimal for an effective comparative analysis which would provide sufficient coverage of chronological span, diversity of contexts and symbolic behaviours. These six symbols will be referred to in the text as ‘sample symbols’ to distinguish them from other symbolic artefacts.

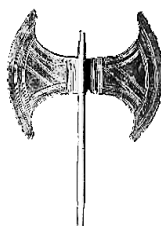




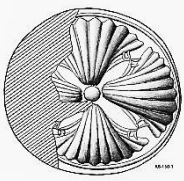
Sample Symbols					
Double Axe	Horns of Consecration	Figure-of-eight shield	Sacred knot	Triton	Shell
					

Fig. 1.2 The six sample symbols

1.3.3 The social role of Minoan symbols

So far I have discussed the issues of definition of the symbol according to the available theoretical currents and methodological tools and I have established the specific features of identification and interpretation of symbols for this research. It is important, however, given that this study focuses on the social role of symbols within Minoan society, to explain how

symbols are viewed in Minoan bibliography and to outline the inherent scholarly and methodological problems of Minoan archaeology. For this purpose, a brief literature review on Minoan symbolism and its theory is here presented and followed by a discussion of the current positions of Minoan scholarship on the understanding of the history of Minoan society and how this affects the methodology of interpretation in the present study. Although the major questions in the latter field remain open and debated, there are recent innovative approaches of interpretation which open new possibilities for discussion, to which hopefully the results of this study could contribute.

1.3.4 A socio-political context for the study of Minoan symbols: Key social issues in Minoan archaeology and the main contributions of Minoan scholarship

In this section I will discuss some of the temporal and regional variations which determined the structure of Minoan social relations and the way these are reconstructed by recent archaeological research, in order to establish a socio-political context in which to analyse and interpret the six sample symbols and integrate this discussion in the current academic context.

Prepalatial period:

During the Prepalatial period there was a significant growth in the number and size of sites implying significant social changes (Whitelaw 2004: 243, fig. 13.8; Haggis 1999; Watrous 2001: 167). The way these social changes are interpreted has been profoundly revised by recent scholars. One of the most significant contributions in this context is the idea that social complexity resulted from the process of emergence of social differentiation, long-distance trade, specialised craft production, urbanism and settlement hierarchy (Tomkins & Schoep 2010: 66-76) and not from a sudden appearance of social hierarchies materialised in the form of palaces (Cherry 1983; 1984; Watrous 1987; 2001: 174-9). As a result, social complexity is now identified in Crete before the actual emergence of the palaces (Wilson & Day 1994; Day et al. 1997; Knappett 1999; Schoep & Knappett 2004; Schoep 2006).

Moreover, new approaches to socio-political changes suggest that social complexity was not invented by single elite authorities (Cherry 1986: 27; Watrous 2001: 174-5) but involved situations of weak hierarchy, where multiple groups competed for power. The above developments are viewed within the frame of continuity in the local culture of the island (Watrous 2001: 163, 168) and of promotion of commercial and industrial relations of Prepalatial Crete with its Aegean neighbours. Thus, emulation for social status between

households has been detected in the EM high-quality pottery, marked regionality, elaborate chaînes opératoires and increased productive intensity (Wilson & Day 1994; 2000; Day et al. 1997; Whitelaw et al. 1997; Tomkins 2004; Isaakidou 2008), while access to distant products provided opportunities for the marking of social differentiation through consumption (Whitelaw et al. 1997: 269; Wilson & Day 1994: 85; Tomkins 2004). Similarly, large amounts of imported raw materials such as obsidian, stone and metals were processed in coastal sites, such as Mochlos and Poros (Warren 1965: 28-36; Branigan 1991; Dimopoulou et al. 2007), which extended their trading contacts towards East Crete and Eastern Mediterranean (Wilson 1994: 41-4; Dimopoulou et al. 2007: 87-93; Sherratt & Sherratt 1991; Schoep 2006).

The increase in social differentiation is further attested in sealing documentation and funerary customs. Recent scholarship tends to dissociate the role of EM sealings from a hierarchically organised bureaucratic administration (Weingarten 2000; Schoep 2004a) and to link them to the emergence and the development of elite identities and elite culture (Tomkins & Schoep 2010: 71). The wide distribution of seals and their deposition in funerary contexts has prompted scholars (Schoep 2006) to consider them as markers of social differentiation not necessarily attached to economic factors (Postgate et al. 1995). Similarly, emergent burial architecture with marked visibility in the local topography is interpreted as an expression of social competition (Tomkins & Schoep 2010: 71).

Perhaps the most important contribution of recent Minoan scholarship is the increasing awareness of the central role of public ritual as a form of elite strategy which can mark social differentiation, both in funerary contexts (Hamilakis 1998: 124-6) and in town space. It is now believed that the courts of the Minoan palaces may be traced back to the Neolithic period with the example of an open space at Knossos (Tomkins 2007: 41-2) and a first proper court building dated to EMII (Wilson 1994).

These open spaces were used for ritualised gatherings of large groups of people and involved ceremonial drinking and eating (Hamilakis 1996; 1999; Tomkins 2004: 43-5). Increasing evidence on the importance of commensality at Knossos has led archaeologists to consider the palace of Knossos as one of the major Cretan centres for communal gatherings, a sanctuary or festival hall, and not the seat of worldly authority, as it was viewed throughout much of the 20th century, and which it may have become after LMIB (Driessen 2002; MacGillivray 2007: 106).

Protopalatial period:

Similarly important contributions and advances have been noted in the study of the Protopalatial period, a period which is identified with the emergence of the 'First' or 'Old' palaces in Crete. As already stated, the emergence of the Minoan Palaces, which is traditionally dated to MMIB and viewed as the result of dramatic social changes (Cherry 1984; 1986) is now recognized as a long process of social and political negotiations which goes back to the EM period. Moreover, there has been a lot of consideration about the designation 'Palace', which was introduced by Evans, and has since been established in Minoan bibliography. Using Egyptian, near Eastern and Homeric socio-political models, many Minoan scholars, who themselves often derived from monarchical ideological backgrounds, attempted to identify evidence for the existence of a king (Hood 1978: 224; Betts 1967: 15-40; Wiener 1990: 128-161; Cadogan 1984; Hallager 1995: 547-56; Dickinson 1996: 63-71) without reaching satisfactory results. As a consequence, the term palace has been revised and new terms, such as 'court building' or 'court-centred buildings' and 'court compounds', have been suggested (Schoep 2002; Driessen 2002) to restore a neutral view of the function of these buildings. As this suggestion has not been widely adopted, the designations 'palace' and 'villa' will be retained in this study.

Criticism has also focused on the view that palaces were economic centres of a redistribution system which was based on the local production and manufacture (Renfrew 1972; Cherry 1986; Halstead 1988; Branigan 1988; Watrous 1987; Dickinson 1994; Hood 1995), and formed centres of small independent units, as in the *Peer-polity interaction model* (Renfrew 1972; Renfrew & Cherry 1986; Cherry 1986: 19-45; Weingarten 1990: 105-20; 1991: 325-45; Bennet 1990: 193-211; Driessen & MacDonald 1997: 77-8). It is now suggested that the palaces were not the exclusive producers or consumers of high culture (Schoep 2010: 114-9). In effect, the Palace at Knossos has produced very little evidence for local production of the high-value objects known from the Palace and it has been demonstrated that the major high-quality pottery ware of the Protopalatial period, the Kamares ware, may not have been produced within the confines of the Palace but outside the area of Knossos (Day & Wilson 1998: 352, 358). Generally, the economic activities of the Palace are now viewed as a means of display of control in terms of potential for acquisition and consumption rather than production. Moreover, the economy is starting to be understood as a number of activities which may have been assumed and managed by diverse sources of authority and not exclusively controlled by the palace (Schoep 2010: 114-5).

Identifying the emergence of elite groups in this process becomes central. Traditionally the components of elite symbolism in Minoan scholarship are architecture, record-keeping, exotic/imported and specialisation-demanding objects (Nixon 1987; L. Platon 2004). The most reliable measure for the identification of elite symbolism is architecture (McEnroe 1982; Bennet 1990: 193-211; Driessen 2001a: 51-71; Warren 2002: 201-5). The presence of ashlar masonry is still considered an unambiguous feature of conspicuous consumption especially when detected in those buildings which appear to repeat specific features of plan, design, construction and decoration in different sites (Driessen 1999: 122; 2001a: 55). However, in the last two decades there is increasing awareness about the role of commensality and public performance. It was shown that this factor determined social differentiation in Crete already in the Prepalatial period. In the Protopalatial period the composition of feasting assemblages assumes a strong correspondence with the hierarchical elements of the participant groups (Hamilakis 1996; 1999; MacDonald & Knappett 2007: 535).

Given the ongoing debate on which criteria would be most reliable to measure site hierarchy (Driessen 1999; Branigan 1972; 2001; Whitelaw 2001), I will adopt the same set of criteria for the classification of ranking of the Minoan settlements in a site hierarchy in order to facilitate relative comparisons in the role of sample symbols between the selected sites. Given the spatial and temporal diversity in the increase of social complexity and the adoption of palatial features by each community (Driessen 2001: 56; Schoep 2004; 2010: 115), the degree of adoption of these criteria by each site may determine their relative elite position at a regional level.

Neopalatial period:

During the Neopalatial period, the palaces and towns of Minoan Crete reached their highest peak of prosperity. This is evidenced in the monumentality and complexity of architecture, the elaboration of manufactured artefacts, the exotic imports deriving from an extended international trade network and the use of a complex administrative system. Knossos possessed the largest palace and is considered to have played a leading role in the palatial system of Minoan Crete. The unprecedented uniformity of elite symbolism across the island (Nixon 1987; Cherry 1978: 411-37) suggests that perhaps Knossos was a supreme Minoan centre which set the standards of elite symbolism in Crete during this period. The scenario of a Knossian hegemony in the Neopalatial period (*The Knossocentric Ideal*, e.g., Wiener 1987; Hamilakis 2002a: 182; *et al.* 2007) supports the idea that Knossos was in a position to impose

a political and cultural homogeneity over the other Minoan sites which were subordinate to it. Other scholars attribute this uniformity to a diffusion of palatial features caused by the continuous and intense interaction of the Minoan sites (Renfrew 1986: 6-8), while the ‘Versailles effect’ model, proposed by Wiener (1990: 140-2; see also ‘Archaic States’ and the ‘single integrated system’ of Marcus & Feinmann 1998: 4-5), interprets it as the result of emulation of Knossian material culture by provincial or smaller sites (Driessen 1989; 1999: 122).

The ‘Versailles effect’ model is more in line with the methodology of viewing Minoan society bottom-up, as recently adopted by Minoan scholars (Tomkins & Schoep 2010: 68). This model allows a better understanding of social changes and it challenges the top-down palace-centred view of Minoan society. In the traditional palatial model, palaces form ‘the physical embodiment of a complex state structure or a state and the residence of a political, religious and economic authority (Cherry 1984; 1986). However, the discovery during the last decades of palatial buildings of various sizes and non-canonical arrangements at several locations of Crete has profoundly challenged the traditional definition of the palace as a generalised and uniform concept (Day & Relaki 2002; Driessen 2002: 11). Many scholars now suggest that palaces should no longer serve as the starting point of consideration of Minoan societies (Schoep 2010). They may be seen as of state-level only in some respects. An in-between status with plural polities of alternating centralizing and more fragmentary character might be closer to an effective description (Manning 1999: 476-7). Political power was not necessarily monopolised by the palace but engaged a number of different groups of people. There is increasing evidence for sealing documentation and prestigious artefacts found outside the palaces in other high-profile buildings of affluent families which further supports the validity of such an approach (ibid.: 120-2).

Thus, the latest trend in Minoan investigation is to identify multiple sources of control of administration and economy, outside the palaces in order to gain a more objective picture of Minoan society (Day & Relaki 2002). The consideration of households or elites as factions of the community which become agents of socioeconomic developments is gaining ground in Minoan scholarship (Tomkins & Schoep 2010: 76; Blanton 1998; Vansteenhuyse 2001). According to the model of hierarchical structures, the control of certain sources of power allows a small elite to set themselves apart from the rest of the population and maintain a privileged position within the wider society (Schoep 2006; 2010). Evidence for such behaviour derives from the use of spatial arrangements such as courts and cemeteries, and from the distribution of prestigious artefacts in Minoan sites. ‘Assymetrical relationships in

people' (MacDonald & Knappett 2007) have also been noted through the study of commensality engaging large and complex corporate groups, perhaps composed of a privileged (elite) social group and their affiliates and dependents (Tomkins & Schoep 2010:74).

Characteristically, it is increasingly suggested that perhaps the end of the Protopalatial period (MMIIB) may have seen a change in the ruling elite of Knossos. This is suggested by a number of significant changes that took place about this time, such as the abandonment of hieroglyphic script and the impressive increase of foreign trade at a time when other sites of Crete appear to be recovering from MMIIB disasters (MacDonald et al. 2010: 536).

Final Palatial period:

At the end of LMIB, most Cretan sites were destroyed by fire marking the end of the flourishing Neopalatial civilisation. The causes of this catastrophe have been attributed to a) internal unrest against the dominant power of Knossos, b) a Mycenaean invasion supported by those who favour an early dating of the Linear B tablets in LMIB, and c) natural catastrophes (Hallager 2010). Combinations of the three factors are also popular in Minoan scholarship. The fact that the Palace at Knossos survived the LMIB catastrophe but large parts of its settlement were destroyed, while certain other Minoan settlements were not affected (Chania, Kommos), indicate that the human factor was decisive in this destruction (ibid: 153-59).

In connection with, or sometime after, the LMIB destructions, Mycenaean mainlanders settled in Crete and brought dramatic changes to the Cretan society. The dating of the Linear B tablets, which is taken to indicate the Mycenaean presence, is under serious dispute (Palmer & Boardman 1963; Popham 1993; Hallager 2010: 154). Some scholars argue that the Mainlanders arrived and dominated the island in LMII and others after the LMIIIA2 destruction of the palace of Knossos (Hallager 1988; Niemeier 1982: 219-87).

Given that the most obvious change between LMI and LMII-III was that from 'Minoan' Linear A to the 'Mycenaean' Linear B script (MacDonald 2010: 540), it appears more likely that invaders would have taken over the administration on the island after LMIB. In fact, the changes in the sealing documentation were related to the function and structure of the administrative system. For example, unlike the Minoan sealing system which was concentrated in archives and concerned a large range of people, the Mycenaean administrative documentation was scattered in storage spaces and workshops and concerned only people who were involved in economic affairs. Moreover, the dramatic increase in

funerary contexts and some evidence for changes in architecture, such as the extensive refurbishment of the palace of Knossos according to Mycenaean standards, reflect deep cultural changes related to the presence of mainlanders on the island.

Postpalatial period:

Material culture became much more uniform across the island during LMIIIB (Hallager 2010: 153-7). It is considered that the Mycenaean mainlanders represented an economic and political elite in Crete as their script was used for the administration of wealth but that it did not affect all the layers of Minoan society.

In LMIIIB2, almost all coastal towns and settlements were abandoned and people either moved to the mountains or emigrated to the so-called refuge settlements (Nowicki 1987). This change can be at least partially explained as a consequence of the large migration movements of population in the Eastern Mediterranean (Hallager 2010: 157-8).

Key social issues in Minoan archaeology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • growth of social complexity • emergence and role of Minoan 'palaces' • change of MMIII ruling power at Knossos • role of Knossos in Neopalatial Crete • effect of LMIB catastrophe in Minoan Crete • dating and impact of Mycenaean invasion
Latest contributions in interpretation of Minoan societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social complexity is the result of gradual process • the process of growth is dialectical • power derives from dispersed agents and sources • wholistic criteria of social differentiation: production, imports, seals, architecture, feasting • critical role of public performance in Minoan society

Table 1.2 Key social issues and latest contributions in the interpretation of Minoan societies

The above section has outlined the main historical changes which took place throughout the Bronze Age and has illustrated the most recent scholarly positions regarding the key social issues in Minoan archaeology. Recent scholars have revised traditional approaches of

interpretation and have suggested new theories and methods for the examination of these problems. The following section illustrates the methodology of applying the theoretical and methodological tools which have been developed in the theory of symbolism, discussed in the first section of the introduction. Together with the tools offered by the latest contributions on Minoan social issues it will form the full methodological equipment of this study.

1.4 Method of analysis and interpretation of the symbols

The basic methodological tool of this research is the contextual analysis of the symbolic artefacts, as it is the only way to understand the environment in which symbols became meaningful in a given time and space. For Peirce (1931-58: 6.481), ‘to acquire full mastery of meaning it is requisite, in the first place, to learn to recognize the object under every disguise’. In Peircian terms identifying the context of a symbol suggests an analysis of its indexical associations. In archaeology it has also been recognized that the repeated use of objects in different contexts can recreate the framework of meaning within which people act (Hodder 1982: 10).

A very useful methodological tool for the identification of symbolic contexts is structured deposition (Hatzaki 2009). Structured deposition considers deposits as a patterned aspect of human behaviour producing artefact assemblages in contexts of preservation, but it is a significant social practice in itself (Chapman 2000). Recognizing the drawbacks of a purely structuralist approach for the present methodology, which wants to focus on human social practice and the action of people, it is with such awareness that I use selectively structuralist tools. Thus, oppositional analysis of artefacts and contexts (funerary-urban space, natural-manufactured artefacts, presences-absences of objects) and the patterned use of space and artefacts will be considered for the enhancement of associative analysis.

Contextual analysis and the identification of structured deposition will be further used with the specific aim to reconstruct symbolic action and reveal how people were involved in it, in order to examine the relationship between symbolic artefacts and people. This aim is further complemented by detecting the ‘performative capacities’ of materials (Jones 2007: 49) which are both the sensory properties of the artefacts and their use in social practice referring to their visibility, accessibility and the natural properties of objects which ‘operate in concert to facilitate acts of remembrance or forgetting’ (ibid.).

Remembrance can be methodologically approached by identifying in the archaeological record components of ‘citation’ (ibid: 55), that is a process of adding layers of significance by

each reiteration of an action. Objects may contain traces of the past ('retention') and elements of the future ('protentions') when viewed as parts of 'networks of referentiality' (ibid: 81). Placing the symbols in a constant process of meaning production and reproduction is the methodological employment of Peirce's synechism. This also implies a flexible perspective on matters of classification of past events that allows the detection of 'synchronic' and 'diachronic' perspectives in time and space and enables the reconstruction of the past as narrative (Adams 2007).

Symbol: qualities of identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • link to social practices • link to human factor • potential for associations • performative qualities
Symbol: criteria to be assessed in case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social role • link to human factor • agency, synechism • performative impact
Methodological tools for the interpretation of patterns:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contextual analysis • structured deposition • reconstruction of symbolic action and role of people • detecting performative capacities of symbols • detecting examples of 'citation'

Table 1.3 Qualities of identification of the sample symbols, criteria to be assessed in case study and methodological tools for the interpretation of the patterns

1.4 Some further methodological issues: problems of identification and data selection of the sample symbols

1.4.1 The sources

The sources of data for this study derive exclusively from publications. They include architectural remains and artefacts from archaeological excavations, as well as iconographical representations found on frescoes, seals/sealings, stone vases and sarcophagi. Written sources are not considered in this thesis as the evidence related to the examination of the sample symbols is very limited. Therefore, they do not form a sufficiently systematic corpus of material in order to justify the elaboration of the specialized methodologies required for the analysis and interpretation of this category of evidence.

Because the collected data is very extensive, it has been necessary to select certain patterns and priority has been given to those best suitable to form meaningful and clear patterns related to the social role of symbols. However, the reader will find in the detailed tables of the Appendix a complete catalogue of all the sample symbols per site accompanied by relevant information about their artefact category, material, size, context, associated assemblages or any other significant information. Data whose context is not known or secure are not included in the catalogues unless knowledge of their mere presence at a site can provide significant information. For example, seals/sealings and Knossian frescoes, which were, as a rule, recorded outside their original context (Krzyszkowska 2005: 10, n. 23) provide important information about the development of symbolism in a site, even if the precise context is not known. Seals that many experts have considered to be forgeries are not included in the study (Betts 1965).

It has to be noted here that sample symbols which can form concentrations in specific contexts, such as shells in a grave or double axe mason's marks on a wall, are recorded as units in the tables for reasons of convenience. Whether such concentrations were the result of accumulated material of repeated symbolic action, such as repeated shell feasting or the result of intended act of emphasizing meaning through multiplication of the symbol, as may be the case of the multiple use of double axe mason's marks in cultic contexts, will be examined separately for each case.

The Appendix includes a number of tables which contain further information on the discussed patterns and a number of figures which facilitates the visualisation of the distribution patterns of the symbols and the relationship between artefacts and context in the

sites. Finally, in order to avoid overwhelming referencing to the data tables, given the amount of artefacts discussed, referencing will be limited to information regarding artefacts which are not sample symbols and are not included in the tables. Generally, any information regarding the sample symbols from the sites of the study area of this research can be sought by the reader in the relevant site tables.

1.4.2 Limitations of analysis and interpretation

Limitations of analysis and interpretation derive mostly from problems of preservation of the data and their excavation and publication. As most Neopalatial settlements were built on top of earlier ones, the material from the EM and the MM layers is usually scarce. Significant gaps of clear knowledge concern also periods such as LMII and LMIII mostly because of a strong bias towards the Neopalatial period in Minoan archaeology. Natural causes such as erosion, destructions by fire, earthquakes and rural activities have further affected the quality of data deriving from the Cretan sites (Walsh 2014).

Significant difficulties result also from practices of the early excavations, such as inaccurate techniques of excavation, biased recording of fine artefacts, unstratified, uncontextualised and unsystematic descriptions based on personal criteria (see discussion in Betancourt 2011b). The later or more recent excavations, some of which are still in progress, are increasingly characterised by more accurate and efficient methods. This uneven study created a gap in the quality of data between the different excavated parts with some being more systematically and scientifically recorded than others.

Similarly problematic are some publications, mostly earlier ones. Characteristic is the case of Knossos, whose main publication, the *Palace of Minos* ‘is not - and was not intended to be - a site publication’ (Popham 1970a: I, cited from Momigliano 1991: 151). Given that the *Palace of Minos* contains the main corpus of data concerning the site and especially the Palace, this study is significantly affected by the ambiguous and problematic character of the information (Gill 1965: 68). However, as a great amount of this material makes reference to symbols, all the information of Evans’ records has been taken into account in this study and used with awareness of these drawbacks.

In order to avoid the additional problems of interpretation deriving from the reliability of iconographic evidence in Minoan archaeology (see discussions in Laffineur & Crowley 1992 and Müller 2000), I have used iconography mainly as complementary evidence which can strengthens patterns of the archaeological record. When otherwise, such as is the example of

the imagery of the horns of consecration at the Palace of Knossos (see 2.2.1), there is special reference to the specific problems involved in the presentation of the iconography and its relationship to the relevant archaeological material.

Despite all these drawbacks, there are also certain advantages in the study of symbols. Generally, symbolic artefacts and symbolic motifs appear to enjoy priority in the recordings of Minoan excavations and in publications, as distinct and characteristic examples of groups of objects deriving from a specific context. They are usually recorded even in the most limited or strictly selective publications. Thus, double axes, horns of consecration, figure-of-eight shields and sacred knots are generally likely to be at least mentioned, when found in a context. And although this is widely true also for the triton shells, it is not so for the common shells. Unfortunately, the Minoan archaeological record, especially of the early excavations, has widely overlooked the importance of molluscs. Recording of shells is either limited to the very apparent examples of culturally treated shells like man-made models, jewellery, etc. or mentioned in passing without specifying the species or the context. The study of the shells will take into account the possibility that significant differences in the quality of such data may affect the objectivity of the relevant results.

Having now explained my theoretical and methodological approach, in the following two chapters, I will discuss the recorded data regarding the six symbols from selected sites of North Central Crete and East Crete respectively. These data will be discussed separately for each site and according to the sequence of the Minoan periods.

Chapter 2: North-Central Crete (Fig. 2.1-21; Tables 2.1-2.26)

As mentioned in the introduction, because of the large amount of data which are discussed in this and the next chapter, and to avoid burdening the text and the reader with excessive referencing, references will be limited to information regarding artefacts which are not sample symbols and are not included in the tables. Any information regarding the sample symbols can be sought by the reader in the Data Tables at the end of the Appendix.

2.1 Introduction: the study area (Fig. 2.1)

The area of North Central Crete (fig. 2.1) can be identified with the Knossos valley and adjacent areas, for the largest part of its Bronze Age history, with the main territorial domain of Knossos (Cherry 1986; Knappett 1999; Warren 2004; Adams 2006). Most Minoan researchers agree that its boundaries extend to the west until the imposing Ida massif and to the north until the shoreline where the harbours of Poros and Amnisos are situated (Warren 2004). The eastern (towards the Malia Lasithi region) and southern (towards the Phaistos region) borders are geographically less defined. Here, the geographical limits are conventionally demarcated up to Vathypetro in the south, and between Vathypetro and Nirou Chani in the East (fig. 2.1). Defining the cultural and symbolic boundaries of Knossos within North Central Crete and beyond, especially during the Neopalatial period, is a significantly more complex issue (Renfrew & Bahn 1991: 324-6; Cadogan 1994; Warren 2004), which stands beyond the primary scope of the present research. Therefore, and for the purposes of this chapter, the study area of North Central Crete will be defined according to the natural boundaries of the wide Knossos valley as roughly established above and will include those sites which are better published and appear to have played a significant role in the socio-political developments of the area on the basis of their size, location and wealth of material culture.

For structural purposes, this chapter on North Central Crete will be divided in four sections: a) Knossos and its area (Palace, Villas, town and cemeteries); b) Archanes and its area ('Palace', town, cemetery and hinterland); c) the rest of the area south of Knossos (including Vathypetro, Arkalochori, Jouktas and Anemospilia); d) the area north of Knossos (including Tylissos, Poros-Katsambas, Amnisos and Nirou Chani).

2.2 The area of Knossos (Figs. 2.2-2.10; Tables 2.1-2.16)

Knossos is geographically marked by its natural borders (fig. 2.2), the hill of Prophitis Ailias to the East, the Gypsades hills to the South and the Acropolis hill to the West (Hood & Smyth 1981; Bredaki et al. 2010; Whitelaw et al. 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009), while its Northern boundaries were clearly demarcated only after LMI through the construction of a significant number of cemeteries (Preston 2007). The area is 5 kilometres long from north to south (Ayios Ioannis to Spilia) and a maximum of 3 kilometres in width from east to west (Ailias to Fortetsa) including the Palace and the town of Knossos and most of the outlying cemeteries of all periods (Hood & Smyth 1981: 1). Archaeologically it is one of the most thoroughly investigated sites in Greece with approximately 600 site locations and is supplemented by a number of recent, as yet unpublished rescue excavations and surface surveys (Whitelaw 2004: 150; Whitelaw et al. 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009, fig. 1).³

The history of the Palace at Knossos is extremely complex and is still not entirely understood (Preziosi & Hitchcock 1999: 92). Most of the EM buildings were severely destroyed by levelling activities for the construction of the First Palace. However, the existing evidence has revealed parts of a large and prosperous settlement spreading from the North Quarter of the City to the area of the Royal Road and also beneath the West Court and beneath the South Front of the later Palace (Hood 1966; 1971; Momigliano 1991; 2007). The so-called West Court House, a substantial EMIIA building found under the West Court of the later Neopalatial Palace (fig. 4.3), may have been the house of a local ruler during this period (Hood & Smyth 1981: 6-7).

The subsequent construction of the First Palace is now thought to have been the result of a long process of successive building activities covering the period between EMII and MMIB (MacGillivray 1994; Knappett et al. 2013). Its plan is not very clear as it is mostly covered by the Second Palace (Cadogan 1992: 128). The Protopalatial town and the burial grounds are very little known through some evidence for urban activity on the west slope above the palace and the cemeteries of Ailias and Mavrospilio to the east and Gypsades to the south. The First Palace was destroyed in MMIIIA (MacGillivray 2007) and its rebuilding seems to have started immediately.

The succeeding MMIII-LMIA period was when the palace and the town expanded the most (Cadogan 1992: 129) and the population of Knossos reached a maximum of possibly 12,000

³ For a detailed history of investigation, see Cadogan 1992: 136.

people (Whitelaw 2004). A number of wealthy houses, usually referred to as ‘Villas’, were built in the immediate surroundings of the palace. By contrast to the urban development, very few tombs are known from this period. The function of the Temple Tomb, which is generally regarded an exceptional funerary monument associated with the palace of Knossos (Soles 1973: 242), is not entirely clear and it is possible that at least for part of its history it may have not had a funerary or an exclusively funerary role (Popham 1970a: 74-6; Preston 2007: n.27). The Ailias and Gypsades cemeteries were last used in this period.

This growth was limited by a series of destructions which left an important sequence of deposits at Knossos: the MM IIIB destruction caused by an earthquake, another seismic destruction caused by the eruption of Thera volcano in LM IA, and the widespread fire-related destructions evidenced across the island in LMIB (Hatzaki 2007: 151-2). The LMIB catastrophe that ended life in most other Minoan sites did not occur in the same extent or at all at Knossos (Cadogan 1992: 129, 138; Weingarten 1994: 183; Schoep 1999: 216). It is now believed that only part of the town was affected, as is evidenced by the burnt remains in the Royal Road (Hood 1961-2: 25-7) and the Stratigraphical Museum Extension excavations (Warren 1980-1; 1982-3; 1991). It is possible that during that phase the palace was still being repaired from partial damages caused in the LMIA period (Driessen & MacDonald 1997: 27-9; MacDonald 1997: 28; 2002: 53).

During LMII-III, occupation around Knossos shrunk dramatically (Hood & Smyth 1981: 12). Parts of these areas were covered by burial grounds which extended over a much wide area. The frequent presence of weapon assemblages in some graves made them known as the ‘Warrior Graves’ and identified the deceased as military officials of possibly Mainland origin (Cadogan 1992: 129). Despite the radical changes, however, it appears that the main centre of occupation in the Knossos area continued to be the palace site. The date of the end of the Palace at Knossos is debated (LMII, LMIIIA or LMIIIB: e.g. Palmer & Boardman 1963; Popham 1970a; Driessen 1990), but Popham’s view that it happened in LMIIIA2 seems to be favoured (MacDonald & Knappett 2010: 540). In LMIIIB, the urban population appears to have been significantly decreased and most of the Palace was abandoned (Hood & Smyth 1981: 12; Cadogan 1992: 133).

2.2.1 The palace of Knossos

Although the area of the West Court was part of the town in Prepalatial and Protopalatial times, it is discussed in this section, because of its topographical overlap with the area of the

palace of the Neopalatial period, which is the most representative period in the history of the site.

Prepalatial period (Figs. 2.3; Tables 2.1-2)

Although the use of other symbols is attested, the only sample symbol used in this period in the area of the later Palace is the common shell. Large numbers of shells (Table 2.1) were systematically studied by Reese (1987: 207-211) and were associated with activities in the EMII West Court House (Table 2.2; fig. 2.3). There is a marked preference for species which match the generic shape of the common shell such as *Cerastoderma* and *Glycymeris* (Table 2.1). Although both these species were edible, 64% of them were collected dead and their use as a food source can be excluded. An ornamental use is suggested by some perforated shells. At the end of this period (Late Prepalatial) the mould of a real shell was used for the construction of a clay model which was probably used as an ornament attached on a vessel. It derived from House B beneath the Kouloures in the West Court and was dated by Evans (1935: 108-9) and Pendlebury (1928-30) in MMIA but it could well be later (Momigliano 1991).

Protopalatial period (Figs. 2.3-5; Table 2.3-4)

The use of sample symbols at the site essentially starts with the foundation of the First Palace. The double axe, the horns of consecration, the figure-of eight shield and the triton made their appearance, while the common shell assumed a more sophisticated symbolism.

The double axe is the symbol with the comparatively largest range of media of representation including seals, mason's marks and pottery. The category of the seals is represented by two examples without specified context (Table 2.3). The category of the double axe mason's marks is represented by the earliest (MMIB) of such examples known from the Palace. They were found incised in the area which possibly served as the original west entrance (West Porch) to the First Palace, next to the south end of the West Magazines (fig. 2.3-4) (MacDonald & Knappett 2007: 7-8). The category of the pottery is represented by a Protopalatial storage amphora bearing on its shoulder the depiction of a double axe hanging upside down as a sole motif inside a frieze demarcated by bands (fig. 2.5). This vessel derived from the corner of a small yard belonging to a house next to the West Court, and was part of a fine Kamares ware assemblage containing rare types of what appears to have been a set of elaborate ritual pouring vessels (fig. 2.5).

The horns of consecration and the triton derive from a single and rare assemblage of miniature models of sacral structures. It appears that the horns of consecration crowned shrines and altars and the tritons were represented as in cultic use within this context.

The figure-of-eight shield is represented in the earliest known sealing document depicting this motif in Minoan Crete. Although its exact context is unknown, it is recorded as deriving from the area of the Palace (Table 2.3).

The pattern of common shells being moulded in clay and attached on vessels, which emerged in the previous period, continued throughout the Protopalatial period and was enriched with stamped examples (Table 2.4). Their use presents certain nucleation in the area of the West Court. Natural shells were probably used as food source in this area.

Early Neopalatial period (Figs. 2.6-7; Tables 2.3, 2.5-6)

During this period there is an impressive increase in the numbers and diversity of artefacts categories with sample symbols (Table 2.5).

Two of the most iconic Minoan symbols, the double axes and the horns of consecration, were the most popular (Table 2.5). However, in what usually appear to be the most representative artefact categories of these two symbols in Minoan iconography, that is the bronze double axes with their stone stands, and the large stone horns of consecration which crown buildings, they were found in unexpectedly low numbers within the confines of the Palace (Table 2.6). A very large bronze double axe, recorded by Evans as found at the south east entrance of the Palace (Evans 1921: 160), is never mentioned again by himself or any other scholar. The complete lack of any further description or visual representation of this object supports the suspicion that the object might have been ‘invented’ by Evans to match the massive pair of horns of consecration found nearby.

One explanation for the lack of bronze double axes may be the general lack of bronzes in the Palace. Even tools and weapons, relatively common at other sites, are generally absent in the building (Hakulin 2004). On the other hand, the symbol of the double axe is also very rare in other artefact categories which were more likely to have been preserved. Characteristically, only three double axe stands made of stone derive from the Palace and no stands of clay or any other material have been found in its confines (Table 2.6). They derive from the Long Corridor of the West Wing, the ‘Queen’s Megaron’ of the East Wing and the south east angle of the Palace. It is hard to think that stone stands would have been plundered for any practical reason, especially considering the abundant availability of stone construction material from the Palace. Similarly, major closed deposits of the Palace with rich symbolic contents, such

as the Temple Repositories, did not contain double axes in any media. Surprisingly rare are also the double axes on the numerous frescoes of the Palace. They only appear on two Knossian frescoes and they are represented as small objects either attached to the capitals of columns or as part of the decoration of architectural facades⁴. Their symbolic function on frescoes appears to have been secondary and complementary to the primary role of architecture. No double axes are included in the ritual scenes (bull leaping, ritual dancing and processions) represented on the exquisite stone vessels of this period. Relatively few are also the representations on seals/sealings,⁵ where the double axe appears in abstract compositions and associated with a bucranium, a flower and a sacred knot or ankh motif (Table 2.3).

It appears that the prevailing impression that double axes were used on stands in Minoan Crete, introduced by Evans on the basis of the Aghia Triada sarcophagus scene (Evans 1921: 423-447) and largely still sustained on the same argument, is not attested in the extant iconography of the Palace. Thus, one major first conclusion, deriving from the patterns of representation and contextual distribution of the double axe in the Palace, is that during the early Neopalatial period the symbol was not an omnipresent and conspicuous emblem in the Palace of Knossos.

It is therefore, important to examine the precise role of those double axes for which there is evidence in the early Neopalatial Palace. Their contextual pattern shows a concentration in two specific areas: in the West Wing area of the Pillar Crypts and the West Magazines, and in the East Wing Hall of the Double Axes and the Queen's Megaron (fig. 2.6).⁶ The double axe stand from the Long Corridor in the West Magazines possibly fell from an upper floor which communicated with the two Pillar crypts next to the magazines. Next to the Long Corridor, in a filling of the 13th Magazine, was also found the fresco depicting a structure with columns, the capitals of which were decorated with small double axes. It may have decorated originally the upper floor wall of a nearby space. In the same area of the West Magazines and the two Pillar Crypts one finds the largest concentrations of double axe mason's marks (Gesell 1985: 26).

A similar situation is repeated in the Hall of the Double Axes and the Queen's Megaron of the East Wing. A stone stand, apparently reused, was found between the column bases of the

⁴ The miniature entablature fresco (No 12 in Hood 2005, fig. 2.1) and the Ivory Deposit miniature frescoes (No 20 in Hood 2005, fig. 2.1) have been dated by Evans in MMIIIB. However, their dating was revised by Hood (2005: 53) who placed them in LMIA or in MMIIIB-LMIA. In any case, the frescoes are dated within the limits of the Neopalatial period of the present study.

⁵ Unfortunately their exact find spot is unknown and no contextual use of their study can be made.

⁶ The third stone stand derives from an unclear context significantly altered by erosion with severely mixed stratigraphy and does not offer material for comparisons.

hall in the Queen's Megaron, an area which does not possess a pillar crypt but is isolated and inaccessible from the Central Court. In the so-called Treasury of the same space was found the second fresco depicting double axes as part of an architectural frieze together with two small bronze (gilded) miniature double axes. The fresco was found in the securely dated MMIIIB 'Ivory Deposit' (Hood 2000: 201) in the same space and may have originally decorated what is believed to have been a small shrine (Koehl 1986). The Queen's Megaron possesses a large number of double axe mason's marks precisely on the north wall where a corridor connects the space with the Hall of the Double Axes, which was named after the impressively large number of double axe mason's marks decorating its walls.⁷ The fresco was used in the same period with the mason's marks and the double axe stand and must have formed part of the same ceremonial setting.

It has to be stressed that apart from the two areas discussed here, no other area of the Palace has produced stone stands, bronze double axes, frescoes depicting double axes or similar concentration of double axe mason's marks. This means that the concentration of a range of artefact categories functioning together to accentuate the symbolic value of the double axe was not coincidental. The repetition of this structured function in two juxtaposing areas of the Palace, in the East and the West Wing and across the Central Court, supports the intentional character of their positioning (Table 2.6). The same is indicated by the parallel use of artefact categories as both contexts contain respectively a double axe stand, a fresco with small double axes subordinate to impressive palatial architecture and large concentrations of mason's marks (Table 2.6). Both contexts were only indirectly accessible from the Central Court or one of the Palace's entrances through a system of staircases and corridors and following complicated circulation patterns. In both the East Wing and the West Wing the double axe contexts were related to libation practices. In the Pillar Crypts there were libation tables next to the pillars and in the Hall of the Double Axes a prestigious stone rhyton.

This analysis shows that the double axe was not a conspicuous and omnipresent emblem of the palace of Knossos, but confined to inaccessible spaces and possibly used for exclusive types of ceremonies reserved to the palatial elite. The poor representation of double axes on the frescoes and the stone vessels of Knossos may be partially explained by the fact that these iconographical media as a rule depict exterior facades of structures or activities which take place outdoors. In conclusion, the inaccurate impression of a wide use of double axes may be rather attributed to a biased reading of iconography in past Minoan bibliography. In reality,

⁷ As a rule mason's marks appear in groups in certain areas of the palace of Knossos, with the double axe being the most popular mason's mark sign (Hood 1987).

both the iconography and the archaeological record indicate a limited presence of the symbol and its structured ritual function within secluded areas of the Palace.

The symbol of the horns of consecration also involves a certain degree of discrepancy between the relatively abundant iconographical sources (e.g. images on frescoes, stone vessels, seals, etc.) and the scarce finds of actual horns of consecration as architectural elements. Overall, there appears to exist a significant distinction in the treatment of the symbol between iconography and its use as an artefact both in terms of numbers and in terms of distribution patterns. Thus, the scattered and isolated use of a few large horns of consecration (one in the Central Court possibly associated with the Throne Room, the other by the south east entrance to the Palace and another one recorded by Evans as an interior cult object in the East Hall) contrasts with the repeated rows of pairs of horns decorating the roofs and the windows of palatial structures on frescoes, fine stone vessels⁸, seals and sealings.

A common theme in the iconography of the horns of consecration is the emphasis on palatial architecture. Unlike the double axes which appear as subordinate to palatial architecture, the three large pairs of horns of consecration from the Palace seem to project and proclaim the significance of palatial architecture and to function as its markers by accentuating its inherent characteristics. They are made of stone like the Palace, their size is large making reference to the structural monumentality of the Palace, and they are set on its most conspicuous parts, for example its roofs and facades. In this sense, the horns of consecration played a reverse role from that of the double axe: the double axe was confined to small remote spaces accessible to few people and on special occasions, while the horns of consecration were constantly visible and stood out as the main distinctive features of palatial architecture for all to see.

Moreover, the distribution of the horns of consecration in the palace was structured: the rich deposits with frescoes depicting horns of consecration were found in the West Wing together with the two pairs which possibly crowned significant entrances to this section of the palace, such as the Throne Room and the south east entrance (fig. 2.7). Given that the pair from the East hall was most probably used in the interior of the building and was not visible like the others, the East Wing produced visible horns of consecration.

The figure-of-eight shield became during this period one of the most important symbols of the Palace with a rich representation in a large number of artefact categories. It was perhaps the one sample symbol that was represented in the most prestigious materials, ritually valuable artefacts and significant deposits. Represented in a series of artefacts made of

⁸ Found at the site of Knossos without context (for catalogue of Knossos stone relief vessels see Logue 2004).

faience, a material which was exclusively found in the Palace of Knossos in Crete, it displayed the access of the Palace to foreign techniques of production of luxury artefacts (Panagiotaki 2008). A faience bowl with figure-of-eight shield bosses and five inlays in the same shape were found in the East Temple Repository, while four similar faience figurines wearing figure-of-eight shield necklaces were found in a deposit at the early entrance of the Palace ('Early Propylaeum'). The well-known board game of Knossos was decorated with ornaments of expensive and imported materials including ivory figure-of-eight shields. All of these examples reveal the elite character of the symbol and its association with imported, exotic materials and highly specialised manufacturing skills.

References to the actual use of the figure-of-eight shield are mainly conveyed by a series of Knossian seals/sealings on which men holding such shields walk in procession (Table 2.3). These scenes possibly represent a class of warriors or a ceremony of military character. The fact that the association between the figure-of-eight shield and military activity is recorded specifically on administrative documents, rather than any other media, may imply that a specific group of military officials were entitled to use this type of shields in real life. In this sense, it is of some value that the 'contextualised' representation of the symbol, where actual people appear using it, was viewed as more appropriate for administrative documents than the abstract one, which was confined to decorating prestigious artefacts. This means that the seals/sealings, the actual objects of administrative power, bore representations of the actual people who possessed this power, whose emblem was the figure-of-eight shield, while the prestigious artefacts made reference to the same elite through the highly valued materials and the emblematic figure-of-eight shield ornaments.

Tritons and common shells were very highly valued during this period as is indicated by their active role in the Temple Repositories. The two symbols appeared on sealings, which displayed similar arrangement (Table 2.3), open vessels decorated with moulded tritons and shells, and models of tritons and shells. A number of faience shell models were possibly used as features of an impressive marine-scape composition from the Temple Repositories. In the same context was found an impressive concentration of natural common shells, some of which were painted with bands of red, orange, brown, green and black. The fact that not only faience manufactured shells but also natural shells were deposited in the Temple Repositories indicates the highly symbolic role of the common shell at the Palace of Knossos. However, it has to be noted that this concentration of natural shells has no recorded parallels from the Palace and may have been linked to a specific event which happened once.

Tritons, either natural or imitated in manufactured materials, were rather used as single objects in the Palace. A natural triton from the so-called South East Insula Shrine was possibly related to an altar (ledge) and an alabaster one from the Sanctuary Hall formed part of an assemblage of ritual vessels in what is assumed to have been a shrine treasury. Regarding their function, it appears that they were used as libation vessels rather than as sacral musical instruments (Evans 1928: 822). They were made of faience and alabaster or marble, like the fine libation vessels of the Palace, and they were found in assemblages, which mainly comprised rhyta and jugs (Data Table).

The sacred knot appears only once in an unclear context not allowing any discussion about its use and significance at this stage (ibid: 391 ff).

In summary, the contextualised and comprehensive study of MMIII-LMIA sample symbols from the Palace has revealed a more accurate picture about their use and significance than so far attested. Important observations were made about the double axe and the horns of consecration, two main palatial symbols of the Minoans, in the peak of their use during the Neopalatial period and in their major building, the Palace at Knossos. It was shown that the actual symbols were not as widespread as illustrated in iconographical means or as established in Minoan bibliography. Their use was found to have been much more structured and specific than so far described both in terms of contextual distribution and spatial function and in terms of ritual practice and associated artefacts, while the role of iconography was supplementary to the particular use of each symbol.

Generally, each of the sample symbols at the Palace of Knossos seems to have played a specific role which is reflected in its context, use, material and artefact associations. The figure-of-eight shield was an emblem of the Knossian elite, which used prestigious artefacts made of imported materials and administrative documents as a means to display its power. Tritons, on the other hand, were generically seen as ritual libation vessels.

Late Neopalatial Period (Tables 2.5-6)

The Palace at Knossos notoriously lacks secure and contextualised LMIB destruction deposits. The RRN and SEX excavations and possibly some material deriving from site clearance of the Palace indicate massive levelling off and rebuilding operations after the LMIB destruction (Hatzaki 2007: 184). In this period the diverse use of media and artefact categories for the representation of symbols noted in the Neopalatial period dropped dramatically (Table 2.5). Pottery, a medium which was scarcely used for the representation of symbols in the previous period, dominated in LMIB. This is largely due to the increased

significance of decorated pottery during the period and the rise of the so-called ‘Special Palatial Tradition Pottery’ (Betancourt 1985). This ware includes the Marine Style pottery, examples of which were often decorated with tritons and in fewer cases with common shells, as well as a series of vessels decorated with symbolic motifs such as the figure-of-eight shield and the double axe, occasionally combined with the sacred knot.

A seal depicting a female figure with a ceremonial double axe and what could be a sacred garment was found in the Court of the Stone Spout in the Palace (Table 2.6). Other seals represent the double axe crowning a bucranium, sacred knots, horns of consecration and a figure-of-eight shield (Table 2.6), while a small stone pair of horns of consecration was found in a ritual context with several highly valuable ritual vessels in a building on the Royal Road (Hood 1961-2: 27; Koehl 2006: 306). This small surviving sample of symbols shows that, despite the lack of evidence, symbols probably continued to be used in the Palace during this period.

Final Palatial period (Table 2.5)

During this period the main Neopalatial sample symbols of the Palace fell in decline (Table 2.5). There was a disproportionate expansion of the figure-of-eight shield symbolism which appears in a diversity of prestigious media such as large frescoes, precious material and elaborate artefacts, and a large number of sealing documents and in exclusive performative events of structured deposition in the most prestigious spaces of the LMII-III A Palace, such as the Throne Room⁹: a multiple set of fine gypsum alabaster and lids were decorated with relief figure-of-eight shield handles which, however, were too small to be used as real handles and their role was symbolic (Hägg 1988: 103). They are thought to have been found at a location of ceremonial action which may have involved a ritual anointment (Rehak 1992: 116). The sealing documents were decorated with standardised imagery of wild animals together with ‘floating’ figure-of-eight shields as abstract motifs. Their large numbers reflect a significant reliance of their owners on the specific type of representation for their administrative authority and their standardisation contrasts with the diversity in the repertory of the Neopalatial sealing documents. The sacred knot appears for the first time in ritual action on a large fresco scene depicting a ceremonial banquet presided over by two female

⁹ The date of the Throne room is still debated between LMIIIA2 and LMIIIB (Hägg 1988; Popham 1970a: 297-99 Minoan Palaces, the use of the palace). Here, the first dating is favoured because of the accordance of the discussed symbols with the other assemblages of the Palace which are not attested in LMIIIB.

figures which bear the symbol on their back, perhaps their priestly insignia (Evans 1935: 381-9; Lenuzza 2012 with further bibliography).

Overall, there appears to be a certain attempt to imitate monumentality and accessibility to exotic and specialised artefacts as well as the sophisticated performance of the Neopalatial period. On the other hand, there is an unprecedented trend of standardisation and static use of past symbolism with an emphasis on its administrative and exclusive or hierarchical character.

Postpalatial period (Table 2.5)

During LMIIIB, the Palace was only partially functional and its exact role is not yet fully understood (Popham 1965; Gesell 1985: 42). The few finds from this period reveal new dramatic changes with double axes and horns of consecration occupying again the first place of preference and most other sample symbols going out of use (Table 2.5). The sudden disappearance of the figure-of-eight shield is, in this context, impressive. Characteristically, in what is believed to be the main sacral space of the site during this period, a small bench shrine known as the Shrine of the Double Axes, was found a miniature double axe, two small pairs of horns of consecration with sockets and figurines. In the North West Treasury House, a circular stand of clay combined the double axe and the horns of consecration with sprays, fish and Argonauts.

2.2.2 Knossos ‘Villas’

The so-called Villas are differentiated from the ordinary town houses by the use of palatial architectural features, building material and techniques (Hatzaki 2011: 251), their substantial size, complexity of design and proximity to the palace. Moreover, interior arrangements and the contents of the few Villas, which still preserved some of their equipment, reflect their elite status. They were founded in the early Neopalatial period and some were still partially used until the Postpalatial period.

Early Neopalatial period (Figs. 2.8; Tables 2.7-8)

During what appears to be the peak of their use and importance, the Villas at Knossos produced very few symbols (Table 2.7). Interestingly, these symbols were almost exclusively

double axes¹⁰(Table 2.8) and their use and distribution was structured (fig. 2.8). In the South House, South East House and the Little Palace, double axe stands were associated with Pillar Crypts. Their contexts and assemblages were highly ceremonial with strong references to contexts of the Palace (Table 2.9). The South East House Pillar crypt contained a double axe stone stand next to a stone platform with a holed plaster stand and stone bases for vessels. Its pillar bore a double axe mason's mark like the Pillar Crypt of the West Wing of the Palace. The neighbouring pillar crypt of the South House contained a double axe stand, a hollowed base and a bench, while another double axe stand, another bench and a unique hoard of silver vessels had fallen from the upper floor ('columnar shrine'). In the Little Palace, a double axe stand was found together with the famous black steatite bull's head rhyton in a deposit between the south west pillar crypt of the building and a staircase. The deposit appears to have been the result of a destruction event as it contained debris and it has been securely dated to the MMIII-LMIA period (Hatzaki 2005: 119-122). The stand is unusual by Minoan standards in that it is made of steatite, while, as a rule, double axe stands were made of common stones such as limestone. It is apparent that there was an intention to associate the stand to the exquisite steatite rhyton found with it and that the two objects were perhaps manufactured as inseparable parts of the same ritual context and practice. The pattern of use of double axe stands and libation receptacles and vessels in pillar crypts of the Villas described above combined with the deposition of the steatite stand and the bull's head steatite rhyton of the Little Palace next to a pillar crypt and the staircase, which apparently led to the upper floor columnar shrine, indicates that they were originally placed in the pillar crypt. This reconstruction is further supported by the stone base that was found next to the pillar of the pillar crypt and was possibly used for libations (Evans 1914: 66). In conclusion, according to the pattern as described so far from the three Villas with the best preserved contents, double axe stands were placed next to pillars of pillar crypts together with libation receptacles and rhyta. This pattern, securely dated to this period by the deposit of the Little Palace, displays uniformly structured contexts and consistent references to palatial use of symbolic practices. To the south of the Palace, the House of the High Priest contained a double axe gypsum stand next to an incurved limestone altar¹¹. However, the symbol was not in a pillar crypt but positioned against a wall facing the entrance to the building. Thus, access to the double axe was here much more direct than in a pillar crypt, where it was only achieved through complex circulatory routes involving staircases and corridors. That this should happen in the

¹⁰ It is suggested that the ivory sacred knot from SE House was dump from palace clearance.

¹¹Evans suggested the altar was actually symmetrically flanked by two stands.

Villa with the remotest location from the Palace may not be coincidental. It appears that the Villas close to the palace imitated the restricted and indirect access to the double axe stone stands as found within its confines (West Wing Pillar Crypts and Queen's Megaron). Perhaps these restrictions were no longer necessary as one was moving away from the palace.

Buildings such as the Royal Villa (Fotou & Michailidou 2006) and the House of the Chancel Screen combined the architectural elements of the pillar crypts of the three Villas and the frontal arrangement of the High Priest's House, but unfortunately they were found empty of portable objects and it is not possible to assess how the double axe pattern would, if it did, apply here.

The House of the Frescoes was small and simple in design but unusually rich in frescoes and important symbolic artefacts, such as a ladle and a libation table with Linear A inscription. Its special ceremonial role has been confirmed by the latest studies (Chapin & Shaw 2006: 88). In its most inaccessible room, which was next to the room with the frescoes, and, in a rich assemblage of fine pottery, were found a spouted jug and a sherd from a cup with painted double axes. The two vessels complemented each other functionally and were perhaps associated with the libation table. Although no stand or pillar crypt was found here, the use of these vessels in the remotest space of the house, in association with pouring vessels and a palatial environment (frescoes, polythyron) is in agreement with the so far established pattern of the double axe symbol (remote spaces, libations).

Thus, the controlled and rigidly prescribed way of use of the sample symbols in the Villas reflect a certain degree of their subordination to the Palace.

Late Neopalatial period (Tables 2.7-8, 2.10)

During this period there was a notable increase in the numbers and diversity of artefact categories of sample symbols in the Villas (Table 2.7-8). The main change was that sample symbols appeared now only on pottery, while those preferred in the previous period were no longer in use (Table 2.10). Following the mainstream repertory of the Special Palatial Tradition, a larger number of sample symbols including double axes, sacred knots, figure-of-eight shields and tritons was represented on vessels. Not much more can be said about their function and distribution because they are mostly known through sherds whose context is either not known or not recorded in the publications. What is of special significance, however, is that the Neopalatial pattern of use of the double axes was no longer used in the villas. This reflects important structural changes in ritual action and its associated symbolic equipment.

Final Palatial period (Tables 2.7-8)

During this period the Villas produced extremely few symbols (Table 2.7-8). Three pots from the Unexplored Mansion, the Little Palace and the High Priest's House indicate changes in the iconography of the symbols. The jug from the Unexplored Mansion was decorated with a figure-of-eight shield on one side and a pair of horns of consecration placed on an altar on the other. The arrangement of the symbols is quite unusual and the horns of consecration on pottery is a novelty. The jug from the Little Palace was decorated with an abstract version of a double axe - sacred knot motif. Its use with earlier LMIA cultic material probably indicates an attempt to reproduce Neopalatial symbolism. One of the LMII ceramic artefacts associated with the jug was a bull's head rhyton, which clearly attempted to imitate the famous Neopalatial steatite bull's head rhyton from the same building. Similarly, the stirrup jar with a figure-of-eight shield on its neck from the House of the High Priest was a fine ritual vessel used in the cultic context of the earlier Neopalatial shrine of the building. The position of the symbol on the vessel and its representation in relief makes reference to Neopalatial prototypes. There is, therefore, an overall break with past traditions in the use of symbolism in the Villas which, however, was at the same time largely integrated in a general tendency to imitate earlier Neopalatial contexts and symbols.

Postpalatial period (Table 2.8)

During this period, the use of symbols changed significantly. The figure-of-eight shield went out of use and the horns of consecration became the most popular symbol in cultic contexts both as motif on pottery and as a portable focal object for ritual practices (Table 2.8). The symbols were associated with small domestic shrines which occupied spaces within the former Villas, e.g. in the South East House, the Little Palace and the Unexplored Mansion. The shrine in the South East House contained a small pair of horns of consecration set on a pebble floor on a higher level than the rest of the small inner room. In the Unexplored Mansion, the Neopalatial lustral basin was converted into a small shrine where horns of consecration were placed on the ledge of its balustrade in the opening between the columns. A similar shrine is conjectured in the Little Palace (Fetish Shrine) but its context is unclear (Hatzaki 2005: 11-13).

2.2.3 Knossos Town

The evidence from the very poorly known town of Knossos (Cadogan 1992: 125) derives from partially excavated or badly published buildings as well as structures that still remain not fully published (Hatzaki 2011: 248). The unclear picture about the Knossos town is also the result of Evans' excavation strategies, which apparently favoured the most promising buildings over the humble ones, in terms of monumentality and palatial features (Fotou 2004). Although numerous systematic and rescue excavations have taken place since, it is mainly the areas of the Stratigraphical Museum Extension (SME) and the Acropolis that have provided evidence for the urban network, demonstrating that elite buildings are not the only type in the Knossos town (Catling et al. 1979; Warren 1980-1, 1982-31; Whitelaw 2001: 22). Indeed, the results of Evans's and Hogarth's test pits throughout the valley suggest that elite buildings were, as a whole, rather rare.

Since the Prepalatial and Protopalatial houses of the West Court have already been discussed in the section of the Palace, here I will refer to those houses beyond the immediate area of the Palace.

Prepalatial period

The Prepalatial evidence from the town is very scarce and has not produced any sample symbols.

Protopalatial period (Table 2.4)

In the houses beyond the Palace the sample symbols used were markedly fewer than those used in the Protopalatial houses of the West Court. However, a house in the urban area of the SME contained a 'shell vessel' similar to one from the West Court (No 3 on the Knossos town Data Table; Table 2.4).

Natural shells might also have had a symbolic use in this area. A unique foetus burial deposited within a house to the west of the Palace (area Trial KV) was accompanied by objects which seem to point to an elaborate funerary ritual. A massive pottery assemblage, several lamps, plaster hearths together with animal bones and a concentration of shells may have been used in a feast where shells were either consumed together with other animals or deposited as offerings to the burial.

Early Neopalatial period

During the Neopalatial period, both humble and moderately wealthy houses, some of which contained rich feasting assemblages (Hatzaki 2009), did not produce any sample symbols. A triton from a building at Gypsades to the south of the Palace was the only sample symbol recorded in the town. The triton was found in a pillar crypt-like space with pebble floor, furnished with an altar and a libation table and associated with 200 upturned conical cups on a pebble floor and placed on either side of the pillar (Evans 1914: 66). Because of this structured deposition Hood (1957: 22) suggested the building may have been a house-shrine.

Late Neopalatial period (Table 2.7-8)

During this period, an explosion of use of symbols is attested in the town (Table 2.7) mainly because of the wide use of Special Palatial Tradition Pottery (Table 2.8). However, it appears that this pottery had specifically cultic character, as the vessels belong to ceremonial types. The symbols on pottery were mainly double axes and tritons and more rarely figure-of eight shields. The well-preserved and systematically recorded evidence from the LMIB North House provides a rare possibility to reconstruct the context of this pottery. The example appears to be quite exceptional, as it is considered that human sacrifices of children and possibly cannibalism took place in the basement of the building (Warren 1981b). One natural triton and a few shells were also related to this context. They had fallen from the upper floor of the building together with snails and some of the children's bones and probably belonged to the same feasting assemblage.

Final Palatial period

Few sample symbols were recorded during this period and mainly derived from the same areas as in LMIB. An important trend for the revival of some of the main Neopalatial symbols in earlier cultic spaces is reflected in the use of the LMIA building at Gypsades. In the SME, the largest out of three rare circular structures bears the latest mason's mark of the Knossos site. The selection of the double axe sign for this mason's mark is indicative of the effort to reproduce highly ceremonial contexts of the Neopalatial Palace in sections of the LMII-III A2 town.

The horns of consecration symbol appeared for the first time on pottery and in no other media. Its representation on a conical rhyton and the possible association with the shrine at Gypsades indicates the high appreciation of the symbol. Shells were also appreciated in the area during LMII when the South House replaced the North House. They were found in a rich

deposit together with precious materials such as glass paste, cornelian and blue frit beads. The beads and the shells were probably kept in a wooden box whose ivory inlays and a bronze stud were found with its contents.

Postpalatial period (Table 2.7, 2.11)

A recently discovered shrine at the SME, possibly belonging to LMIIIB or earlier, produced an interesting pair of horns of consecration on a pebble floor with incense pots in front of it. It had a socket for the insertion of a double axe or some other object (branch?). Not far away was found a bowl decorated with double axes. Thus, the use of symbols appears reduced during this period (Table 2.7) and limited to one specific area of the town. The active use of the double axe and the horns of consecration in this context contrasts with the absence of all other sample symbols (Table 2.11).

2.2.4 Knossos Cemeteries (Table 2.12)

Prepalatial period

Only one grave is known from Knossos during this period, from a location called Monastiriako Kephali on the Acropolis hill, to the west of the Palace (Preston 2013). However, despite the significant evidence for EMIII-MMIA use of feasting assemblages, no sample symbols were recorded.

Protopalatial period

No securely dated symbols are found in the MM Knossos cemeteries, despite the significant wealth of some of the burials (Forsdyke 1926-7).

Early Neopalatial period

During MMIII-LMIA securely dated symbols derive only from the so-called Temple Tomb, whose funerary use during this period is debated, as already discussed in the introduction. The structure stands out among the Knossos graves because of its unique architecture which imitates palatial prototypes. Because of the repeated use of the building after the Neopalatial period the only two symbols that can be securely associated with the Neopalatial phase of the building are a stone pair of horns of consecration and a double axe mason's mark on the pillar of its pillar crypt. The choice of the specific symbols and the way they were used makes

direct and undoubted reference to the use of symbols at the Palace. In combination with its architecture, it becomes apparent that the explicit intention of this building was to be closely associated with the Palace itself. It has been suggested that when it was built in MMIII-LMIA the Temple Tomb was actually a shrine (Popham 1970a: 74-6).

Late Neopalatial period

With the exception of few pottery sherds, no sample symbols are securely dated in this period.

Final Palatial period (Tables 2.3, 2.5, 2.7, 2.12-3)

During this period, there is an impressive increase in the deposition of sample symbols at the cemeteries (Table 2.7) and especially a dramatic rise of the figure-of-eight shield, which predominates over all others, both in numbers and in diversity of artefact categories (Table 2.13). The symbol appears in an impressive diversity of artefact categories and materials, mostly very precious, such as an alabaster pyxis, an ivory lid, a stone vessel, a faience pendant, an elaborate ritual goblet (Table 2.12). There is a large number of seals depicting figure-of-eight shields as abstract motifs in wild animal scenes (Table 2.3).

A characteristic pattern of this period is the intense trend to ‘cite’ Neopalatial symbolism. Many graves across the cemeteries of Knossos (Isopata, Mavrospilio, Zapher Papoura, Sellopoulo and Gypsades) contained bronze vessels with attached relief shells and tritons or imitations of metal vessels with figure-of-eight shields like the Minoan ones from the Neopalatial period found in the Shaft Graves of Mycenae and those found in the Temple Repositories of the Second Palace, alabaster or clay vessels with figure-of-eight shield handles and models of figure-of-eight-shields, tritons and shells in faience, such as those from the Temple Repositories or in glass paste imitating them (Table 2.5, 2.12).

There are two especially interesting examples of this pattern. In what appears to be a plundered shaft grave opposite the Temple Tomb, some slabs bear mason’s marks and seem to have been transferred from the Palace to be re-used here. In the context of the shaft grave was found a double axe stone stand. The proximity of this grave to the Temple Tomb makes it possible that the stand was transferred from there. This assumption is supported by the presence of a Pillar Crypt in the Temple Tomb, where, given the architectural relation of the Temple Tomb to the Palace, a palatial double axe context may have been reproduced (pillar crypt, double axe mason’s marks, double axe stand).

A similar example of reproduction of palatial double axe context derives from the Tomb of the Double Axes. Architectural arrangements make reference to pillars (Evans 1914: 36; Alberti 2009¹²), and bore mason's marks. Furthermore, the grave contained a burial shaft in the shape of a double axe, as well as two ritual bronze double axes. The absence of weapons from the grave, whose original presence is attested by the gilded sword studs found in it, is attributed to selective removal of grave goods during ceremonial practices (ibid. 2009). The practice of re-opening the grave and removing artefacts is further supported by the presence of a double axe tool in the filling of the entrance (Evans 1914: 34). Just as in the case of the Temple Tomb, it has been suggested that the Tomb of the Double Axes was actually meant to be a shrine also used for burials (ibid.: 35; Alberti 2009). The so-called Royal Tomb at Isopata and the Kephala tomb also possessed double axe mason's marks (Evans 1914: 9, 30), but not much more can be said about them, as they were found disturbed by later occupants (Preston 2007: 296). What is certain is that LMII-III A2 graves drew significantly on the Neopalatial symbolism of the Palace.

Postpalatial period

Despite the continuous use of several of the graves founded in the previous periods, no sample symbols are recorded from the Knossian cemeteries during this period.

2.2.5 General discussion on the site of Knossos

Prepalatial period

During this period the only sample symbols attested at Knossos were common shells. Their use presents a nucleation in the area of the West Court, where perforated natural shells were used by the inhabitants of the West Court House and a moulded clay shell by the people of House B beneath the Kouloures, also in the West Court, if this find is indeed Prepalatial and not Protopalatial (as it is more likely). It appears that the symbolic use of the common shell was linked to this area, as it was not found in other Prepalatial contexts of Knossos, such as the grave at Monastiriako Kephali or the South Front Houses, where it appears to have been used essentially as a food source (Momigliano & Wilson 1996).

¹² The association of the contents of box 1672 with Tomb 2 (of the Double Axes) has been questioned and for this reason the artefacts are not included in this study.

Protopalatial period (figs. 2.9-10; Tables 2.14-5)

During the Protopalatial period, all of the sample symbols, with the exception of the sacred knot, made their appearance, albeit in reduced numbers and media. ‘Shell vessels’ were mainly used in the area of the West Court, while the earliest representation of a double axe on pottery from Knossos appeared in the same area and the earliest appearance of double axe mason’s marks in the adjacent West Porch of the First Palace. The town and the cemeteries of Knossos shared very little of this symbolism.

The nucleation of sample symbols in the area of the West Court presents a pattern of continuity from the previous period (fig. 2.9). Although the EMIII-MMIA gap in the evidence of this area does not allow a systematic study of the pattern, it cannot be excluded that the social groups attached to the EMII West Court House were somehow connected to the Protopalatial inhabitants of this area, who appear to have been involved in the construction of at least part of the newly built Palace of Knossos.

Important evidence indicating the socio-political role of the West court area shows certain continuity from the Prepalatial to the Protopalatial period: the presence of two EMIIA sealings, which belong to the earliest non-funerary documents found in Crete (Tomkins & Schoep 2010: 71); and the evidence from the patterns of the Knossian feasting assemblages suggesting different competing social factions which were actively involved in the construction and the political control of the First Palace. More specifically, a large number of feasting assemblages containing different quality and amounts of pottery was found distributed in various parts of the area of the Palace of Knossos and its immediate surroundings in the Prepalatial and mostly in the Protopalatial period. Feasting assemblages were also deposited in what have been characterised as rather low-class burials in the Late Prepalatial tomb at Monastiriako Kephali (Preston 2013: 101) and were common in the Protopalatial Knossos cemeteries. The study of their quantitative and qualitative parameters shows that possibly the area of the West Court attracted the largest and most prestigious feasting events (fig.10; tables 2.14-5). Although this may partly be the result of accident of excavation and later building patterns, this nucleation adds some credence to the suggestion that an early elite with a continuous leading socio-political role may have been active here.

The detected concentration of sample symbols in this area can be seen as part of a wider set of associations related with the social prestige attached to those who were in a position to hold feasting activities and display plentiful, rare and elaborate ritual vessels: the ‘Shell vessels’ were exquisite representatives of prestigious feasting assemblages and the amphora with the representation of the double axe was associated with an impressive assemblage of

rare ritual vessels. It appears that the West Court elite had succeeded in prevailing over the other social factions of Knossos and was actively engaged in the long process of formation of political power at Knossos. This power was materialised in the concentration of feasting symbolism according to what was established as the main idiom of elite propaganda at Knossos.

Regarding the role of this elite in the emergence of the First Palace, there appears to exist a connection between its activities and the construction of the West Porch and the West Wing, two of the earliest sections of the First Palace (MacDonald & Knappett 2007). This connection may be supported by the exclusive use in these two areas of the Palace of the earliest known double axe symbolism. The earliest appearance of the double axe on pottery appeared in the Protopalatial houses of the West Court (possibly House B). It was a large amphora associated with ceremonial equipment suggesting the storage of goods destined to be used in feasting or other ritual practices. The same symbol appeared for the first time at Knossos (and in Crete) in the West Porch of the First Palace in the form of incised mason's marks (MMIB) - the first ever that appeared at Knossos (ibid.: 7-8).

Accentuating the importance of the entrance as an architectural element of communication between the West Court and the West Wing, it probably intended to signal the prolonged control of the Protopalatial elite over the West Wing. The connection between the double axe symbolism of the West Court houses and the West Wing is further established by the extensive use of double axe mason's marks later in the same period in the Magazines II-IV of the West Wing, which were those adjacent to the West Porch.

The use of previous symbolism in the same area is a good example of citation of artefacts and spaces. The Protopalatial elite appropriated symbols used by the Prepalatial West Court elite in order to claim power over the newly constructed Palace. The perforated natural shells of the Prepalatial West Court were reproduced in clay models at the end of the Prepalatial period and became adornments of prestigious feasting cups in the Protopalatial period. Similarly, the consolidation of the West Court elite as the leading Knossian elite took place in the West Court, a space which was constantly 'cited' throughout the Prepalatial and Protopalatial periods and during the construction of the West Wing of the Palace. Thus, the original topographical focus of the early Prepalatial elite of Knossos was symbolically perpetuated through shared symbolic artefacts but also repeated ceremonial action which took place in the same area. In addition to the exclusive use in this area of the emerging symbolism of the double axe and the erection of an entrance to the newly built Palace which connected it to the area of the West Court, it appears that the West Court became a space of

ceremonial celebration of the association between the new Palace and the 'old' West Court area. The raised walkways of the West Court, which were recently restudied, are described as ceremonial routes connecting ritual spaces between the Palace and the town operating from the Protopalatial period (Palyvou 2004; Driessen 2009: 47, 51; Shaw 2015: 14-5). Although there is no consensus on the exact function of the contemporary structures known as kouloures in the same area (granaries, cisterns, ceremonial receptacles, tree pits), it is possible that they involved depositing offering and pouring libations (Strasser 1997: 90). The presence in one of the kouloures of a stone trough without interior waterproof material indicates a use for liquid disposal (ibid: 75). Perhaps the Kouloures of the West Court were shafts opened in the ground to allow visual contact with the Prepalatial houses of the Knossian elite as monuments of its ancestral origins and were connected ceremonially to the West Porch of the First Palace. That the Knossian elite may have appropriated the West Court space for such a use of commemoration and citation linking it to the West Porch and the West Wing is indicated by another factor: that the West Court was paved over and placed the kouloures in disuse in MMIIIB in order to integrate the area in the newly built Second Palace, the construction of which coincided with a possible change in the Knossian elite system which may have taken place (MacDonald & Knappett 2007: 536).

Moreover, and according to the defining features of citation set by Jones (2007: 55) explained in the introduction, shells were added new layers of meaning through their association with the increasingly meaningful social practice of feasting in the Protopalatial period. While shells were symbolic in their use as natural ornamental objects in the Prepalatial period and as models, icons of themselves in their clay representations (if Evans's MM IA dating of the example from House B beneath the Kouloures is accurate), in the Protopalatial period they became ornamental motifs on ritual vessels used in feasting.

Moreover, the common shell and the double axe played a significant role in ritual performance during the Protopalatial period. This is indicated by the strong association of the 'Shell vessels' and the double axe amphora with ceremonial equipment and by the incision of double axe mason's marks at the West Porch of the First Palace which communicated through the raised walkways of the West Court with the Kouloures.

The symbolism used by the Knossian elite of the Protopalatial period was enriched by comparison to the Prepalatial Knossian elite in one more sense, and that was by establishing indexical references to the newly built Palace. The incised double axes on the monumental entrance of the newly built palace make direct references to the rising importance of

‘architecturality’¹³ at Knossos during this period. The double axe was also indexically associated with the rising significance of storage as marker of economic and symbolic potential of the Palace. Characteristically, the amphora with the painted double axe from the West Court houses was a large storage vessel linked to ritual equipment while the West Magazines, the largest storage space of the Palace, were incised with a large number of double axe mason’s marks.¹⁴ Thus, the double axe represented the fundamental concepts which shaped the palatial system: ‘architecturality’, storage capacity and administrative documentation.

In conclusion, the contextual analysis of the Prepalatial and Protopalatial sample symbols in the area of the Palace has shown that the double axe and the shell symbolism played a crucial role in the signification of socio-political claims by the Knossian elite of the West Court.

The emerging Knossian elite, which was linked to the erection of the First Palace, did not only draw symbolism from the Prepalatial West Court elite to reaffirm and proclaim a long-lasting and solid presence in the area, through the shell symbolism, but it also introduced new symbols for the construction of a unique new identity which was closely associated with their greatest achievement, the erection of the First Knossian Palace.

Early Neopalatial period (Table 2.7)

During this period the centre of activity of the Knossian elite appears to have been the Palace. This is reflected in the topographical distribution and the structured use or reproduction of palatial ritual contexts within and around the Palace. The first feature is the impressively uneven nucleation of large amounts of sample symbols exclusively in the area of the Palace, leaving its surroundings almost empty of sample symbols (Table 2.7). The relatively poor knowledge of the town contexts, the bad preservation of the contents of the Villas and the low representation of funerary contexts may be partially responsible for the nucleated distribution pattern. It is also true that, unlike its surroundings, the Palace preserved a number of MMIII-LMIA destruction deposits, which produced most of the symbols recorded here. However, important recent evidence from the town has shown that the townsfolk used important feasting assemblages (Hatzaki 2009; Rethemiotakis & Warren 2014). These assemblages occasionally contained few fine ritual vessels but none produced any sample

¹³By the term architecturality, I refer to the emphasis placed on the aesthetics of architecture.

¹⁴ Double axes were also found incised on sealing documents during this period, but, given their unknown context, it can only be assumed that they were used by the prevailing elite of the West Court in the same area.

symbols. Quantity, diversity of artefact categories, prestigious and exotic materials and manufacturing skill together with the high performative effect are the exclusive features which determine the use of sample symbols of the Palace. The second feature is the intense structuration, hierarchical use and specific function in the use of the sample symbols within the Palace. It was shown that double axes were used in repeated private contexts of limited access in juxtaposed areas of the Palace. Their confinement to interior and inaccessible spaces of the Palace is in accordance with their depiction as small objects subordinate to columns or architectural facades in iconography. Horns of consecration were nucleated in the West Wing of the Palace and accentuated the palatial element of ‘architecturality’ both in their use as crowning structural elements of the building and as iconographical features. Tritons were used as single ritual vessels in ritual contexts of libation within the Palace.

Outside the strict confines of the Palace the allowance for reproduction of palatial contexts was restricted to very few occasions, which may have functioned as annexes or ceremonial outposts of the Knossian elite perhaps in an attempt to establish spaces of control in its immediate surroundings according to the established strategy of the Knossian elite already from the Prepalatial period. The strictly controlled character of this strategy is reflected in the patterned use of double axe stand contexts (pillar crypts, double axe mason’s marks, libation receptacles) in highly palatial structures, such as the villas close to the Palace and shrines (or tomb-shrines) such as the Temple Tomb and the Tomb of the Double axes. On the other hand, less palatial structures, such as the building (shrine?) at Gypsades reproduced less complex performative contexts of the Palace, such as tritons used in libations with other pouring equipment (spouted vessels, rhyta or upturned conical cups).

The strictly structured and prescribed manner of use of the sample symbols in the Palace of Knossos, suggests that the early Neopalatial Knossian elite enjoyed a large degree of political control which was identified spatially with the Second Palace.

Late Neopalatial period (Table 2.10)

During this period there is a dramatic drop in the rich diversity of materials and means of representation of the sample symbols (Table 2.10). This was largely due to the widespread use of the Special Palatial Tradition (SPT) pottery which became the main means of representation of the sample symbols. Unfortunately, it is not known how this pottery was used as there are very few contextualised deposits from this period. However, it is clear that the structured indexical associations of the early Neopalatial period came to an end. The relationship between the sample symbols and their representation is not indexically inferred

like before. Rhyta and other libation vessels are decorated with motifs suggesting the flow of liquids, such as tritons and shells, but they are also decorated with figure-of-eight shields and double axes. Possibly sample symbols were depicted on ceremonial vessels which were viewed as palatial symbols in their own right. Thus double axes, figure-of-eight shields and tritons/shells had probably been established as indexes of the Palace in a generic sense and were therefore seen as high status objects. The fact that the vessels bearing sample symbols belonged to the SPT Pottery, a product of the palatial workshops of Knossos (Betancourt 2004: 295), further reinforces this suggestion.

A second dramatic change of this period is that the new forms of symbolism were not confined to the Palace, like the symbols of the previous period, but were found spread in the Villas, the town and the cemeteries. This trend was apparently enhanced by the fact the vessels were portable objects made of less valuable materials. The spread of SPT pottery in the town is impressive. Despite a certain degree of hierarchical distribution (higher concentrations in the Palace, lower in the Villas and few in the town), its presence across the site indicates an unprecedented similarity of contexts between the Palace and the town. And, although the lack of contextualised deposits does not allow a comparison at the level of context associations between the Palace and the town, the examples of the North House and Gypsades¹⁵ show that highly cultic activities involving elaborate ritual equipment were produced outside palatial contexts.

Despite these similarities, the Palace's social symbolism was superior to that of the surrounding Villas and the town. This is indicated by the distribution pattern of sealing documents which shows intense nucleation within the confines of the Palace. The ways in which seals and sealings were decorated show continuity from the previous period and suggest continuity of the same elite system at least at an administrative level. This emphasis on the careful distribution of sealing documents, as opposed to the much more flexible spread of symbolic pottery, may mean that the Palace relied now much more on tangible and practical means of asserting its authority, rather than on the sophisticated and hierarchically structured use of ritual and performative symbols of the previous period.

In conclusion, it appears that in the Final Palatial period the elite of the Palace of Knossos was the main source of production of new palatial symbols and of selected old symbols. However, the loosened restrictions in the use of symbolic pottery and the dramatic reduction in the diversity and hierarchical use of sample symbols may reflect significant political and

¹⁵ Although the exact function of the buildings at Gypsades and the SME is not clear and a ritual character cannot be excluded. Hood (1958b) supports that the SME was a private residence.

social changes in its composition. Unfortunately, the lack of contextualised evidence does not allow further inferences in that matter. For the same reason it is not possible to make any comments on the performative uses of the sample symbols represented on the pottery of this period.

Final Palatial period (Fig. 2.3; Tables 2.3, 2.16)

During this period there was a marked nucleation of sample symbols within the confines of the Palace and sharp decline in the use of sample symbols in the town and the villas. In parallel, there was a drop in the use of SPT pottery and a visible desire for revival of early Neopalatial symbolism in all contexts (Palace, Villas, town and cemeteries). The citation of Neopalatial symbolism occasionally took the form of actual re-use of early Neopalatial contexts, and the removal of artefacts from their early Neopalatial contexts to be used within Final Palatial assemblages. It was also added new layers of meaning in terms of function and context of the symbols: double axe mason's marks were inscribed on new types of structures, such as the circular platforms at the SME and double axe contexts (pillar crypts, stone stands and mason's marks) were used in funerary spaces. The use of mason's marks as a means of reproducing MMIII-LMIA palatial contexts may have expressed the efforts put by the new Knossos elite to revive the Neopalatial glory of the Palace (Hatzaki 2004: 124).

The figure-of-eight shield rose as a dominant motif in this period with the largest numbers, highest quality materials, most specialised crafted artefacts and most sophisticated ceremonial contexts (Table 2.16). It also formed a large part of the sealing documentation of this period appearing in a new and standardised iconographical category (Table 2.3). In parallel, a strong divide between the Palace and its immediate surroundings is illustrated by the complete absence of figure-of-eight shields and sealing documents in both the Villas and the town. This standardisation, the strict and exclusive palatial use and the impressive preponderance of the figure-of-eight shield in material culture and in sealing iconography suggest an association with the ruling elite of this period. It appears that during this period the Knossian elite was based at the Palace, used the most prestigious graves and identified itself with the figure-of-eight shield as its main symbol. On a sealing from Knossos dated to this period a male figure stands in a ceremonial gesture in front of a palatial structure (the Palace?), while behind him is represented a figure-of-eight shield. The man, the Palace and the figure-of-eight shield summarise the components of the space of authority and the emblem of high rank acknowledged to an official.

Apart from the changes which departed from the pattern of imitation of Neopalatial symbolism, there were further changes in the use of certain symbols reflected in the iconography: the double axe was closely associated with the 'Minoan goddess' crowning her 'snake frame' (fig. 4.3) and the horns of consecration no longer appear as monumental crowning elements of the Palace but as ground-level cultic objects. Perhaps as a result of this shift in the representation of the symbol, the horns of consecration motif appears for the first time on pottery.

The amount and the nature of the aforementioned innovations reflect deep socio-political and cultural changes and the distinct identity of a new elite residing at the Palace. The rise in the importance of funerary contexts and the elite character of a certain number of prominent graves, the citation of Neopalatial symbolism by the elite of this period as a means of legitimisation of power and revival of the glorious past of the palace, the preponderance of a military symbol, the figure-of-eight shield, and the changes in elementary uses of the basic Neopalatial symbols seem to reflect the presence of new cultural groups of people. The evidence from the distribution and use of the sample symbols would therefore favour the scenario of a Mycenaean presence during this period (see debate in introduction).

Characteristically, the emphasis on sealing documentation indicates a much greater desire for control through administrative means than ever before. The impressive numbers of these seals/sealings reflect a significant reliance of their owners on the specific type of representation for their administrative authority and their standardisation contrasts with the diversity in the repertory of the Neopalatial sealing documents. Ritual symbolism and ceremonial action were no longer the main means to signal authority outside the palace. Symbolism became much more realistic, specific and bound to the people of authority who were distinguished through the use of seals and access to the symbol representing their rank, the figure-of-eight shield, in the Palace and their graves. These features certainly agree with the extant knowledge about the preferences of the contemporaneous Mainland culture for strict administrative structures and their emphasis on display of funerary architecture and grave contents starting with the Shaft Graves and continuing in the time when the occupation of Knossos took place.

Postpalatial period (Table 2.16)

The Postpalatial period brought with it a new break with past uses of symbolism. The huge changes of this period are widely evidenced at the site of Knossos. Ritual activity was

confined in small domestic shrines in spaces within the Palace and the former Villas and no sample symbols were found in the cemeteries.

The sudden disappearance of the figure-of-eight shield from all contexts (Table 2.16) reflects a massive decline in the power of the previous palatial elite or a definite abandonment of its previous means of signification of power. Most sample symbols went out of use, while the horns of consecration became the most frequent and diversified symbol. Its use on elevated platforms and the fact that other objects such as incense burners (SME) were placed in front of it, indicate that it was the focus of ritual practice. As a socketed object it could receive and 'consecrate' other objects such as double axes or perhaps branches which are represented on pottery of this period. The double axe is the second most popular symbol during this period, mostly represented on pottery and usually in subordinate position to the horns of consecration.

Generally, sample symbols were used in modest ritual contexts of uniform character and any intention for display of luxury or diversity was entirely abandoned by their users. However, the strong preference for the horns of consecration and the double axe is indicative of a certain continuation at the site. Assuming that the palatial elite of the previous period were either gone or entirely defeated and no longer entitled to use their previous symbols of power, these symbols now became available to the remaining indigenous population of the site as objects of veneration.

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2.3 Archanes (Fig. 2.11-2.17; Table 2.17)

The site of Archanes is just 5 kms to the south of Knossos (fig. 2.11) and comprises an important Neopalatial palatial building and an important cemetery which was used throughout the Bronze Age. Apart from the palatial building, the town and the cemetery of Archanes, there is a number of smaller hinterland sites (Table 2.17) including the country Villa at Vathypetro and a network of sacral sites on the Jouktas mountain to the west of the main site (fig. 2.11), which are of great interest. The hinterland sites appear to have developed under the influence of the main settlement's expansion (Sakellarakis & Sakellarakis 1992: 12, 28) and many of them lasted until LMIII, surviving the LMIA and LMIB destructions (Table 2.17).

The larger part of the site was excavated from 1965 by Yannis and Efi Sakellarakis. Although the site has not been fully published, there are extensive preliminary reports in the Proceedings of the Archaeological Society (Sakellarakis 1966a; 1967a; 1971; 1972; 1973; Sakellarakis – Sakellarakis 1980; 1981a; 1982; 1983; 1984; 1989), as well as a two-volume set of documents (Sakellarakis & Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1997). However, the stratigraphy and the dating of the site are often unclear.

2.3.1 Archanes Town (Fig. 2.12)

The town complex of Archanes is known only fragmentarily through a number of excavations in scattered plots of the modern town (fig. 2.12; Sakellarakis & Sakellarakis 1997: 63-69). The main site, also regarded as the centre of the Minoan town, is Tourkogeitonia. There, a high-status building has been designated as 'Palace' by its excavators,¹⁶ because of a number of important architectural features including the large size of the structures, ashlar masonry, high quality materials, three-storied sections, mason's marks, elaborate floors and frescoes. The 'Palace' was originally built in MMIII-LMIA, but was replaced in LMIB by a larger and more complex structure. Nearby locations (fig. 2.12), such as Ayios Nikolaos to the NE (Theatral area), a circular spring chamber to the north, the Kalpadakis plot to the south and other architectural remains show alignment with the main site at Tourkogeitonia and possibly belong to the same building (ibid: 74-151; Myers et al. 1992: 61). It is suggested by the excavators that the 'Palace' must have covered an area equivalent to that of the

¹⁶This designation must be used with caution in view of our lack of satisfactory evidence concerning its overall size and plan (Branigan 2000: 385).

modern town centre and the settlement more or less the same extent as the modern one (Sakellarakis & Sakellarakis 1992: 29). Occupation in these locations is dated between MM and LMIIIB (Table 2.17; Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1990: 90, 97) but sporadic evidence for the EM town under these layers shows similar expansion (Sakellarakis & Sakellarakis 1992: 9-10).

Prepalatial/Protopalatial periods

Evidence from these periods is very scarce and no sample symbols are recorded from the town.

Early Neopalatial period (Fig. 2.13)

The evidence from this period is either poorly known, because of the wide reconstructions of the late Neopalatial period, or unclear from the description of the layers in the preliminary publication of the site. It is evident, though, from those sample symbols which are safely dated to MMIII-LMIA, that the early 'Palace' attempted to reproduce Knossian palatial symbolism through the use of double axe mason's marks, horns of consecration and elegant frescoes with popular palatial themes (marine-scapes and shells). It also appears that the sample symbols are nucleated in the area of the early 'Palace' as opposed to the surrounding town. Thus, the area of Troullos (fig. 2.13), the second most important site at Archanes after the 'Palace', produced two pairs of horns of consecration, which were, however, small in size and one of them was made in clay. The size and the quality of material, as well as the overall paucity of other symbols in the area, indicate a limited use of symbols compared to the 'Palace'.

Late Neopalatial period (Fig. 2.14)

During this period sample symbols were sharply nucleated in the area of the Palace and there are no examples in the surrounding area showing an increase in the symbolic role of the 'Palace' compared to the previous period.

Three main spaces have yielded most of the symbols in the 'Palace':

Space 17

In Space 17 (fig. 2.14), on the ground-floor of the building, two stone double axe stands were aligned in a N-S axis, with the Northern stand surrounded by a stone altar with animal bones in its central cavity, a stone pyxis and a clay tray with an animal skull, and the southern stand

surrounded by two animal skulls and a bull figurine. To the same context belonged sherds decorated with double axe-sacred knot and figure-of-eight shield motifs, which are unique at Archanes. With them were found shells, but their species is not recorded. It is assumed that there were two ‘shrines’: one on the ground-floor level of Space 17, the other on the upper floor with the horns of consecration. The structured deposition of Space 17 was perhaps related to animal sacrifice. The southern double axe stand was the focus of the skulls¹⁷ and the figurine of the bull, as a way of representing the real act of sacrifice, while the Northern double axe stand was next to the altar where the actual sacrifice probably took place.

At different, unspecified locations of Space 17 the excavators found: a stand associated with four fruit-stands, conical cups, fine pottery and the upper part of a human figurine. Two double axe-sacred knot sherds were also found in this space with two conical cups, a grinder, part of a steatite table and a rhyton. All of this mixed material still suggests a context where libations and offerings were made. This context may be juxtaposed to the sacrificial assemblages found in the same space. It is possible that Space 17 hosted animal sacrifices and offerings in separately organised areas. These different ritual practices, however, employed similar symbolic equipment. The double axe stands were the markers of its structured use which involved other sample symbols such as the sacred knot, the figure-of-eight shield and the shells. The common use of symbols in different ritual acts indicates that these symbols may have been attached to more general meanings, at least in certain contexts. They could be, for example, associated both with sacrifices and with simple offering depositions or libations. A pair of horns of consecration had fallen into Space 16 from the upper floor of Space 17 and may represent a different ritual act. It is inferred that the symbol was not crowning the building, as there are no external walls in the adjacent areas of its find-place. The possibility of an upper floor shrine, with the horns of consecration used as an interior cultic object, is supported by the heavily decorated walls and the contents deriving from the same context. The ritual equipment involved a stone altar with cavity, four ivory figurines, parts of stone vessels and one small shell. This context presents similarities to the ground floor shrine (altar, figurines, shell). On the other hand, there is a special emphasis on natural or manufactured objects of hard materials (stone, obsidian, shell, steatite, stalactite). The stone horns of consecration may have been viewed as part of this generic assemblage.

Court 11

¹⁷ Unfortunately it is not mentioned which animal species the skulls belonged to.

A double axe stand was found on a stone platform ('exedra') with two stepped altars in Court 11 (fig. 2.14). Associated with the exedra were a small clay figurine, parts of stone vessels, parts of a black stone lamp and of a stone libation table, animal bones, pieces of a bronze vessel, 40 conical cups and 2 obsidian blades. With them was found a shell in two pieces, a triton and four more fragments of one or more tritons. It has been suggested that the rituals taking place on the 'exedra' projected the interior arrangement of the adjacent building which divided the interior and exterior spaces in two, through Tower 8 (Sakellarakis & Sakellaraki 1997: 102). This context is similar to that of Space 17, where a combination of libations and blood sacrifices are focused around an altar and a double axe stand. The difference is that the rituals in Court 11 took place outdoors and could involve large groups of people. This is further indicated by the 40 conical cups found in the area of the exedra.

Space 10-12

The upper floor of Spaces 10-12 produced evidence for another shrine (fig. 2.14). Two plaster horns of consecration were found in Space 10 and another one of stone in Space 12: the former were found with a large sacrificial stone altar, about 30 tripod plaster offering tables and a lentoid seal with the image of a bull; the second was found with ten animal figurines and a seated human one. It is not clear whether these contexts really form two different cultic assemblages or should be taken as complementary to each other. The first assemblage comprises mostly receptacles of ritual offering, while the second comprises mostly the offerings themselves, but no receptacles. More objects belong to the Space 10-12: a bull and other animal figurines, a double axe stand incised with mason's marks, a steatite lamp and a triton found inside a veined marble jug-like vase are representatives of offerings, receptacles and other ritual equipment.

From all the above it can be concluded that ritual in the LMIB Archanes 'Palace' was conducted through the use of similar ritual equipment and symbols in different ritual contexts and ritual operations. Spaces 17, 10-12 and the Courtyard 11 (fig. 2.14), which comprise interior and exterior, upper-floor and ground-floor spaces with smaller or larger capacity for the gathering of few people or large groups of participants, shared a common idiom of ritual material culture. In these three different spaces shells, figurines and libations were offered and animal sacrifices were conducted in front of double axe stands or horns of consecration, which served as the foci of these cultic performances. However, horns of consecration were only found in the upper floor, even though they appear to have been used internally and not

as crowning elements of the building. Double axe stands were mostly found on the ground floor, although one stand was fallen from the upper floor shrine. Also, the upper floor shrine did not contain any shells which are found in the other two ground floor cultic contexts and even the triton was probably kept on the ground floor. It is not clear what these differences might suggest, but they certainly reflect the elaborately structured perception of symbolism within a general frame of common use. Also the functional role of the sample symbols was very specific. Double axes and horns of consecration were used as foci of the ritual practice, but they were not used as offerings. Sacred knots were only combined with double axes, and together with the figure-of-eight shields they appear only as painted motifs on pottery. They were both especially associated with the sacrificial ceremonies. Tritons most probably served as libation vessels and not as instruments, as is deduced by their context (libation vessels, channelled floor).

Final Palatial period

After the LMIB destruction, the area of Archanes prospered. The town was moderately recovering (Lembessi 1970: 256-70), while the cemetery became a space of ostentatious interments.

Although LMIII pottery sherds and scattered architectural elements have been found in the town and the hinterland (Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1990; Sakellarakis & Sakellaraki 1997: 149), this evidence is still under study (Andrikou 1997). The study of ceramic typology and decorative style reveals functional uniformity over the wider area of the town (Agora, Tourkogeitonia, Tzami, Troullos and Acropolis) (Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1990: 90, 97) and continuity from the previous period (Andrikou 1997: 9-22). Minor influence from Mainland motifs is attested but generally Mainland shapes and motifs are adjusted to the local ones (ibid: 13-20). The case of the symbolic motif of the triton is characteristic: a simplified version of the Neopalatial triton (ibid: fig. 6: 4, 5) represents the descendant of the traditional Minoan motif. This motif coexisted at Archanes with the so-called whorl-shell, a schematic type of the triton which was represented on local imitations of a type of cups (kylikes) and was imported from the Mainland (ibid. fig. 10: 53, 54).

Postpalatial period

Significant architectural and ceramic remains indicate a period of revival in the town (Sakellarakis & Sakellaraki 1997: 454-5). The pottery is more abundant and shows increased Mycenaean influence, with more vessels depicting Mycenaean whorl-shells, which prevail

now over the Minoan triton motif. This trend may indicate an increased influence from the Mainland. The strong Mycenaean influence correlates with the rising presence of Mycenaean figurines (Ψ and Φ types), many of which were found in the town indicating strong Mycenaean presence with a probable local figurine workshop (Sakellarakis & Sakellarakis 1997: 521-5). It is also attested through the construction of a *megaron*, a Mycenaean type of building associated with administrative power.

2.3.2 The cemetery of Phourni (Fig. 2.15; Table 2.17)

The cemetery at Phourni (fig. 2.15) is unique because of its continuous use throughout the Minoan Bronze Age (Table 2.17), because of its remarkable variety in funerary architecture and mortuary practices and because it is one of the best preserved burial grounds in Crete (Myers et al. 1992: 54; Soles 1992: 129, fig. 81).

Prepalatial period (Figs. 2.16-7)

The use of Phourni started in EMII with the foundation of two tholos tombs of the southern Cretan type (Mesara tholoi). Tholos Epsilon contained two layers, dated to EMII and EMIII-MMIA. Tholos Gamma started in EMII and was sealed in EMIII-MMIA. Both tombs contained a large number of burials and grave goods. It is worth examining the use of sample symbols deriving from these early funerary contexts.

Tholos Epsilon

Despite the relative wealth of Tholos Epsilon, no sample symbols were contained in its EMII layer with the exception of a pierced natural *Glycymeris*. The depositions of the EMII layer (Panagiotopoulos 2002: 104) suggest that the shell was a necklace pendant.

Tholos Gamma

Tholos Gamma was richer than Tholos Epsilon but still contained very few symbols. The tomb contained a number of burials in larnakes and one in a pithos, one of the earliest example of this type of burial which mainly appeared in EMIII Crete (Sakellarakis & Sakellarakis 1997: 468). All the larnakes were found empty of grave goods, containing only the bodies, while the pithos burial contained a single shell together with animal and fish bones. The lack of offerings in the older type of burial (larnakes) and the presence of some grave goods in the one innovative burial type (pithos) may indicate a range of different treatments for different types of burial containers. The shell was associated with the latter.

Three more shell depositions derived from the same tomb. In one case 80 shells were found inside an upturned goblet which was integrated in the foundation of the north wall of the tomb's dromos. In the opposite south wall a female skull, a child's tooth and an upturned goblet containing animal teeth were also integrated in the structure. This sophisticated and structured secondary deposition took place when the dromos of the tomb was built in EMIII-MMIA. Another concentration of shells was found together with human bones under a larnax which was placed at the entrance of the dromos and blocked it. This act marked the end of the tomb's use in MMIA (ibid. 54). Finally, a shell was deposited together with a cup over the tomb's roof possibly after it collapsed (Sakellarakis 1972: 328; Papadatos 2005: 50).

In conclusion, the deposition of shells in Tholos Gamma seems to have been associated with a succession of significant events which marked the history of the building, such as its construction, the introduction of a new burial type, the foundation of a dromos attached to the main tholos, the end of the tomb's use and finally its collapse.

Area of the Rocks

The so-called Area of the Rocks, located to the south west of Tholos Gamma produced a large number of EMII-MMIA secondary burials, many of which were furnished with shells and in two cases with tritons (fig. 2.16). Some of the burials produced one single shell and others large concentrations of shells. Because the material from the Area of the Rocks is similar to that found in Tholos Gamma (ibid.: 52-3), it is possible that the Area of the Rocks was used for material cleared from Tholos Gamma. This suggests that Tholos Gamma and the Area of the Rocks should be examined as one burial unit.

However, the two contexts present a different use of shells: while in Tholos Gamma shells were exclusively linked to the special burials which marked changes in the use of the grave, shells in the Area of the Rocks were widely deposited as grave goods of secondary depositions. That these shells did not belong to the initial burials is suggested by the complete absence of shells in the larnakes and the floor burials of the chamber of Tholos Gamma. However, the transfer of the burials may have been regarded as a final stage of burial episodes connected to Tholos Gamma, which also had to be marked with depositions, of shells.

During EMIII-MMIA (Late Prepalatial period) a proliferation of new burial structures emerged at Phourni in what can be characterised as the peak of use of the cemetery. The deposition of shells became now a widely used custom in all the buildings of the cemetery

(fig. 2.17), although in most cases burials were mixed with grave goods and it is not possible to discuss association of individual burials with specific symbols.

The first double axe and the first horns of consecration made their appearance (fig. 2.17): the upper layer (EMIII-MMIA) of Tholos E yielded a steatite seal with a double axe sign, the only one at the cemetery depicting the symbol; the Area of the Rocks yielded a spouted vessel with a row of moulded bucrania on its rim, which resembled horns of consecration; and, close to the newly built Tholos B a kernos was found with cuts in the walls of its base in the shape of horns of consecration, double axes and incurved altars. Unfortunately, the original context of the kernos is not clear (Sakellarakis & Sakellarakis 1992: 99-103; 1997: 169).

Protopalatial period

The use of shells shows a strong connection with the traditions of the previous (EMIII-MMIA) period. Deposition of mainly large, but also smaller concentrations of shells were found in most of the newly constructed burial structures reflecting a widespread acceptance of the shell as a funerary symbol. No other sample symbols are recorded.

Early Neopalatial period

During this period the cemetery at Phourni underwent significant changes in function and use. Generally, burials dramatically decreased in number and only few new structures were erected (Buildings 3, 4 and 17). These were mostly used for feasting and libations (ibid: 86, 88-9). The use of the new architecture and the changes in ritual practice indicate that the function of the site had shifted from burying the dead and furnishing their graves to mainly honouring them through feasts.

In this new use of the site, sample symbols were not important. The only evidence for their use was a foundation deposit in Building 4, which contained two shells, found together with more than 200 conical cups, broken fine LMIA pottery, two bell-shaped vessels, fragments of a stone vessel, 55 small pieces of animal bones and animal teeth (one in a conical cup). From the two shells one was a fossil excluding consumption. Thus, even though the assemblage probably derived from the remains of a feast, the shells were viewed as symbols in their own right and not as ritual food.

From the burial structures, only Building 3 was actively used for burials. It was constructed as annex to the south of Tholos B and it appears to have mainly received secondary depositions from this grave. This is suggested by the shared masonry and fresco decoration

between Building 3 and Tholos B, as well as by the amount and the luxury of finds. Shells were found mixed with fragments of larnakes, bones and teeth in accordance with the Protopalatial pattern.

One or two gold sheet cut-outs in the shape of figure-of-eight shield found in Building 3 may belong to the same period. Although Danielidou (1998: M11) suggested a LMII-III dating, the close metallic parallels from the Shaft Graves of Mycenae can support a MMIII-LMIA dating. Unfortunately, the finds from Building 3 belong to a mixed material which has not been fully studied and published and further suggestions on this example remain hypothetical.

Late Neopalatial period

During this period evidence for the use of the cemetery at Phourni is low and no sample symbols were recorded.

Final Palatial period

During this period two very important new funerary structures revived the burial activities at the cemetery. The main new graves, Tholos A and Tholos D have been designated as ‘princely’ because of their rich contents. Tholos B, on the other hand, continued in use but its exact function is not clear. A use of the tomb as a shrine is suggested by its full remodelling with an interior bench, the red colour covering its floor and walls and the rich evidence for animal sacrifices. Related with this activity was a clay pair of horns of consecration found in the main chamber.

By far the richest grave at the cemetery and one of the richest Minoan burials of all periods was Tholos A. Its main burial was a woman found inside a larnax. Next to the entrance were four gold rings with decoration of figure-of-eight shields and a cornelian seal with two wild goats and a figure-of-eight shield. They were found with an extraordinarily rich assemblage of jewellery which, combined with the absence of weapons, has led to the assumption that the burial was of a high priestess. An ivory footstool with elaborate ivory decoration including friezes of figure-of-eight shields seems to confirm the hypothesis. Footstools are sometimes depicted in front of divine or priestly figures on seals and sealings. In a pit in front of the entrance to the side chamber there was an empty and broken larnax decorated with horns of consecration. A bronze vessel decorated with a row of shells at its shoulder was part of a hoard of bronze vessels found next to and underneath the larnax.

Tholos D is dated slightly after Tholos A and contained an undisturbed female burial. Less elaborate but impressively rich in contents, the burial was also furnished with jewellery of precious materials. Close to the woman's head was found a pyxis containing a knife and a rock crystal figure-of-eight shield, which was part of a gold bead necklace.

The two burials belonged to the highest social rank and the similarity in the use of sample symbols reveals their elite function. Thus, the figure-of-eight shield appears to have been the distinctive symbol representing this class as suggested by the luxury of the materials and the artefact categories in which it was represented.

During the same period, an important new burial enclosure with mixed Minoan and Mycenaean characteristics was founded at Phourni (Sakellarakis 1972). It probably represented a local Mycenaean military elite. Unfortunately, its shaft graves had been very disturbed and the scarce grave goods left in the area did not include any sample symbols.

Postpalatial period

No sample symbols and no evidence are recorded from the cemetery during this period.

2.3.3 General discussion on the site of Archanes

A general discussion on the site of Archanes must take into account the uneven preservation of evidence in the town and the cemetery. During the Prepalatial, Protopalatial and Final Palatial periods when the cemetery at Phourni was very active, the town was either not as active or did not preserve any significant evidence. Conversely, when the town was very active in the Neopalatial period, the cemetery was used for feasting events and did not produce any sample symbols. This section will, therefore, have the character more of a summary of the evidence rather than that of an essential comparison between the two areas.

Prepalatial period

The contextual analysis of the distribution and use of shells in the Prepalatial cemetery at Phourni revealed the central role of structured deposition as an intentional strategy of cultural differentiation. Structured depositions of shells in Tholos Gamma were associated with distinct stages of burial procedures and funerary use of the grave and the Area of the Rocks. Thus, the shell symbolism in Tholos Gamma was closely associated with the history and the identity of the people buried in this communal grave. Most importantly, this use was different from that of the simple ornamental shells of the nearby Tholos Epsilon indicating that the two

graves possibly belonged to two social groups of people with different social and cultural backgrounds.

During the Late Prepalatial period structured deposition and the distinction of strategies of different cultural groups in symbolism was replaced by a uniform and extensive use in all the graves of shells as standard grave goods. At a level of social dynamics this change may indicate that there was no longer the necessity to define different cultural entities in the funerary site of Phourni and that the tensions which were marked by symbols as means of cultural demarcation were no longer required.

Protopalatial period

No particular patterns emerge in this period apart from the continuous use of widespread and uniform shell symbolism as in the Late Prepalatial period.

Early Neopalatial period

The break with previous uses of space and symbolism is the main characteristic of this period at the cemetery of Phourni. The decline of the site as a burial space and its use as a feasting place for the veneration of the dead meant a parallel break with the previous extensive use of shells as funerary offerings. This may reveal a conceptual symbolic aspect of the shells, which were viewed as offerings to the dead, but only as depositions in the graves and not as offerings in a funerary banquet.

In the town, the distribution pattern shows a hierarchical use of sample symbols between the ‘Palace’ and the surrounding town with symbolism being nucleated in the former as opposed to the latter. This result reveals the presence of an elite which was able to monopolise the use of symbolism to a significant extent.

Late Neopalatial period

During the late Neopalatial period there is a significant increase in the nucleation of sample symbols in the ‘Palace’, as opposed to the surrounding areas of the town. This may mean that the ‘Palace’ elite acquired centralised power in LMIB with increased administrative and ceremonial activity.

The nucleation of symbolism in the ‘Palace’ was accompanied by an intense use of structured depositions which functioned in different areas of the building, where the use of the same symbols was slightly diversified within a frame of parallel contexts and uses. Double axes and horns of consecration were used as foci for these ritual practices with certain functional

differences in the different contexts, which conditioned the accessibility and the numbers of the participants involved. This structuration, increased by the effects of similarity and juxtaposition, created relations of direct and reverse indexicality: a) different sample symbols (double axes, horns of consecration) in varying assemblages but in similar contexts and b) structured depositions containing similar sample symbols associated with different ritual equipment according to their space of performance (interior-exterior spaces, ground floor-upper floor spaces). These structured combinations of similarities and oppositions seem to have been intentional and intensified significantly the performative effect of the symbols which were involved.

Final Palatial period

During this period sample symbols were nucleated in the area of the cemetery, in two exceptionally rich burials of high-status females, Tholos A and Tholos D. It was shown above that there was a special connection between these elite females and the symbol of the figure-of-eight shield. The prestigious objects and the sealing artefacts on which the symbol appeared functioned as indexes of high-status and administrative authority. Performativity does not appear to have played a significant role in the process of creating symbolic impact in these contexts. The objects were static and effective through their precious materials and the exclusivity of access to this type of artefacts by a limited number of people.

Performativity became, however, central in elite contexts of the cemetery during this period, but not in association with the figure-of-eight shield. Tholos B, the most prestigious burial space of the Neopalatial period, was modified and operated as a shrine, where sacrifices took place in association with a small clay pair of horns of consecration. It appears that sacrifices were elevated to one of the main components of funerary practice, as is indicated by the famous horse and bull sacrifice in Tholos A. The well-known and contemporary sarcophagus of Aghia Triada confirms this pattern of elite burials associated with sacrifices through the representation of a funerary scene where a bull sacrifice takes place. Thus, in elite contexts, figure-of-eight shields functioned as iconic symbols referring to their own value of material and technical skill and their role was not performative but static as prestigious possession of its owner. On the other hand, the horns of consecration symbol was associated with performance in elite contexts and at least on one occasion formed the focus of sacrificial activities.

During the same period, the town of Archanes produced pottery decorated with tritons of a Minoan and a Mycenaean type. The coexistence of the two types shows awareness of the

distinct meaning and possibly the distinct role they played. This is further suggested by the fact that the Mycenaean triton or whorl-shell was represented on Mycenaean kylikes, a type of vessels that originated in the Mainland (Andrikou 1997: 21) or imitations of this type of vessels. In this case, indexicality in the use of the triton functions as geographical or ethnic reference.

Postpalatial period

The identification of ethnic groups through the use of specific artefacts of ‘Minoan’ or ‘Mycenaean’ identity was intensified during this period, when the Mycenaean presence seems to have affected culturally wider parts of the local population than in the previous period. Thus, it is possible that at Archanes tritons now became iconic of Minoan material culture or Minoan users and whorl-shells iconic of Mycenaean ones. However, the present state of publication of the pottery does not allow a systematic and contextual study of this material.

Overall, structured deposition and performance seem to have played a significant role in the use of symbols at Archanes. Summarizing, during the Prepalatial period strategies of structured deposition marked distinct social or cultural groups and the end of their use probably reflects the end of the necessity to safeguard such a distinction; in the Neopalatial period structuration in the use of symbols increasingly became a sign of social distinction between the elite, which was associated with the newly built ‘Palace’, and the surrounding populations which had limited access to palatial facilities. Performativity was associated with feasting, deposition of offerings, libations and sacrificial events in either public or exclusive contexts; in the Final Palatial period the major sample symbol, the figure-of-eight shield, was a static emblem of prestige associated with high-status materials and objects, which accompanied the most prominent individuals of the elite in their burials. Performativity of the elite now focused on animal sacrifice in burial contexts. The lack of contextualised pottery for this and the following Postpalatial period makes a study of the structuration of symbolism in the town impossible for the moment. However, it is possible to detect some associations between distinct ethnic groups (Minoans and Mycenaeans) and distinct versions of the same symbol (triton), in which case differences in the iconography of a specific motif became indexes of different cultural and geographic schemes.

2.4 The area South of Knossos (Fig. 2.18-2.19)

For structural purposes, the sites south of Knossos, except for Archanes, which was examined separately, are grouped together in this section. The best recorded sites of this area are examined: the country house at Vathypetro, the cave at Arkalochori, the peak sanctuary on Mount Jouktas and the shrine at Anemospilia (fig. 2.18).

2.4.1 The country house at Vathypetro

The country house at Vathypetro is situated 4 kms to the south of Archanes in the middle of a very fertile land. The building combined palatial features and facilities for the storage and processing of agricultural products. It was built in LMIA and destroyed in LMIB without being re-inhabited in later periods. The site was excavated by Marinatos in 1949-53 and 1955-6, but the results were never fully published.

Early Neopalatial period

Two sample symbols are recorded from the site. The first was an incised double axe on a ceramic wheel. Ceramic wheels were a usual artefact type at Vathypetro and most incised examples bear leaf-shaped motifs. The double axe and the leaf-shaped motifs were probably related to the certification of ceramic artefacts which were locally produced from the good quality clay of the area (Marinatos 1950). The second symbol was a pair of horns of consecration associated either with a much debated tripartite shrine (Shaw 1990) in the Central Court of the building or with the nearby Central Hall (Marinatos 1952: 609).

2.4.2 Arkalochori

The small cave at Arkalochori contained a unique Minoan collection of metal artefacts excavated by Hatzidakis (1912-3). The cave was found partly looted (Marinatos 1935) and its contents have not yet been properly investigated and fully published. Although the cave has produced Neolithic and EM pottery (Hatzidakis 1912-3: 44), symbols were only identified in the Neopalatial metal hoard.

Early Neopalatial period

The metal artefacts included swords, knives and double axes. One double axe was made in silver and the rest were in bronze, sometimes gilded, belonging to different types in terms of manufacture. Compared to contemporaneous examples from other sites, their tin percentage is low, supporting the view that they were intentionally manufactured to be deposited as votive offerings (Hatzidakis 1912-3: 45- 47). No other symbols were found in the cave and no other artefact categories were represented with the exception of some utilitarian pottery.

2.4.3 The sacred mountain of Jouktas

The peak sanctuary of Jouktas is located on the highest point of Mount Jouktas (Psili Korfi). The built shrine was founded at the beginning of Neopalatial period, but cultic practices were conducted already in the Protopalatial period in the same area and lasted until LMIII (Karetsou 1976: 415-8; 1978: 232). The site was first explored archaeologically by Evans (Evans 1921: 154-9) and later in successive excavation seasons by the Greek Archaeological Society under Karetsou (1974; 1976; 1977; 1978; 1980; 1981a). There is no full publication of the site: only preliminary reports and articles on specific topics.

Prepalatial period

During the Late Prepalatial period the sanctuary produced important symbols, such as a hoard of bronze double axes, which was found in a later Neopalatial context. It belonged originally to a MMIA layer, which contained remains of feasting, libations and offerings in pyres (Karetsou: 1978: 236, 243, 258; 1980; 343). This layer was spread around a natural chasm in the rock, which was the cult focus of an outdoor shrine arranged on terraces (ibid. 1978: 251). The double axes of the hoard comprised thirty-two small and two large double axes with shaft holes (ibid. 1981b: 146). The small size of most axes indicates that they served as offerings. Perhaps they were originally deposited as individual and separate offerings, later collected and put together in one uniform Neopalatial assemblage. A single double axe, found in the extension of the MMIA pyre layer and under the Neopalatial built shrine (ibid. 1980: 341), was apparently one of those individual offerings and was either overlooked or not included in the hoard for some other reason.

The pyre layer also produced 500 shells, an unspecified percentage of which derived from the Neopalatial phase. According to Reese, a large number of this Prepalatial-Neopalatial group belonged to *Columbella rustica*, some to *Pisania Maculosa*, *Murex trunculus* and *Murex*

porphyra and few to *Thais haemostoma*. They were collected dead and their cultic use can be considered secure (ibid. 1978: 258). Although this selection of species does not contain any category matching the common shell shape, it is noted here, because all these species morphologically appear as small versions of the triton. Tritons, as such, were, however, not included in this assemblage.

Protopalatial period

No examples of sample symbols were recorded during this period at Jouktas.

Early Neopalatial period

In the Neopalatial period a built shrine and another structure (Building B) destined to serve accommodation, storage and consumption for the pilgrims (Simandiraki 2002) were added to the site. The chasm continued to play a focal role in the ritual performance of the shrine and a built altar was added to it. Next to the altar were placed a stone libation vessel, a kernos and the hoard of double axes (Karetsou 1974: 232-3, pin. 173a; 1978: 247; 1981b: 145). As already mentioned, it is possible that these double axes were collected from individual offerings of the previous period and deposited in one assemblage as the symbolic foundation of the new altar. It is not clear whether a small clay model of horns of consecration belongs to this or the previous period, because of the uncertain stratigraphy of many offerings. However, a large pair of horns can be safely associated with the early Neopalatial shrine, although its exact location in relation to the building is not certain.

Late Neopalatial/Final Palatial/Postpalatial

No sample symbols are recorded from these periods.

2.4.4 Anemospilia (Fig. 2.19)

The nearby shrine at Anemospilia was built on the natural route that leads from Archanes and Knossos on the northern foothills of Mount Jouktas. It was excavated in 1979 by Sakellarakis & Sakellaraki and dated between MMIIB and MMIIIA (Myers et al. 1992; Sakellarakis & Sakellaraki 1994). Set in an enclosure with a well-preserved destruction layer, the shrine comprised three equal rooms to the south and a long corridor to the north connecting them perpendicularly. It possessed well-defined functional areas with the north corridor serving as

an antechamber and the three southern rooms used for sacrifices, libations and deposition of offerings (fig. 2.19).

Protopalatial period

In the antechamber there was evidence indicating the possible presence of a large pair of horns of consecration perhaps crowning the building, and another one which was probably placed on the floor of the antechamber together with a libation table and vessels. The east room was used for libations and other offerings, as suggested by the large number of storage and other vessels in the building. This room contained a shell which was deposited as part of a very structured arrangement of colourful pebbles. Five of them were found under the threshold, a few in a small pit, one under a pithos and two, a red and a black one were placed next to the shell. Pebbles were symbolic to the Minoans and pebbled floors were associated with Minoan ritual contexts from the Neopalatial period and mostly the Postpalatial period (Gesell 1985: 20, 41). Their deposition at Anemospilia, however, does not represent an intention to create a floor of pebbles. The selection of different colours, the specific arrangement on the floor and the inclusion of one single shell in it reflect an elaborate ritual. As both pebbles and shells are associated with the element of water, it is possible that a special marine symbolism is suggested here.

The central space was destined for what is believed to have been the statue of a deity, evidenced by a pair of clay feet, which were found in a central position on a platform. Next to them, the natural rock was left bare. There, the excavators found a rhyton, a bucket with the representation of a bull and a stone stand possibly belonging to a double axe. There was also a channel which began from this location and ended in a small pit. This context clearly represents different stages of an animal sacrifice, such as the collection of the animal's blood in a bucket, the filling of the rhyton with it and the ritual libation of the blood into the channel, where it would eventually reach the pit. The west space contained the relics of what appears to have been a human sacrifice before some imminent destruction. This space did not produce any sample symbols.

2.4.5 General discussion on the area to the South of Knossos

Prepalatial period

During the Late Prepalatial period (MMIA) the Jouktas peak sanctuary was the only site which produced any sample symbols (double axes and shells). Therefore, no comparisons can be made with the other sites.

Protopalatial period

During this period, only the shrine at Anemospilia produced sample symbols. As there are no data for comparison from other sites, the results from Anemospilia will be discussed in the general discussion on North Central Crete.

Early Neopalatial period

In terms of sample symbols, this is the best represented period in the area south of Knossos throughout its Bronze Age history.

The hoards from the Jouktas peak sanctuary and the Arkalochori cave create a possible pattern and an interesting point of discussion. At Jouktas, a characteristic example of citation took place: what were possibly individual offerings in the Protopalatial pyre of the peak sanctuary were collected into one impressive hoard of bronze double axes, which was deposited in the foundation of the newly built Neopalatial altar of the shrine. The foundation deposit, the altar and a libation table all derived from the previous period and were placed together next to the natural chasm. Thus, Late Prepalatial ritual equipment and votive offerings were placed next to new religious constructions, confirming the continuity of the sacred space and, at the same time signalling the remodelling of the sanctuary with new architectural arrangements. At Arkalochori, the double axes found in the cave appear to have been intentionally manufactured to be deposited as votive offerings and they were never re-used. It is not clear whether they were the result of multiple individual depositions or a massive single event. The uniformity in the artefact categories and the presence of a large number of ingots, emphasise the symbolic value of metal through the accumulation of both raw materials and manufactured artefacts made in bronze, gold, silver and lead. Moreover, the predominance of metal weapons reveals an intense military aspect of these depositions.

In both cases the sites were remote sacred spaces and produced intentionally accumulated quantities of metal double axes. Unfortunately, none of the two assemblages has been systematically published and a detailed comparison between the hoards is not possible. It is

obvious that some of the double axes from Arkalochori were made of finer metals, such as gold and silver, whereas the Jouktas ones were exclusively bronze. The extent to which the Jouktas double axes were as elaborate in their ornamentation as the ones from Arkalochori is not clear from the general descriptions and the available pictures. Judging from the difference in the material, it is possible that more effort was placed in the embellishment of the Arkalochori double axes. If this is true, the depositions at Arkalochori may have been realised by a military elite. By contrast, the Jouktas double axes formed only one out of an impressively diversified range of artefact categories, which could cover different aspects of everyday activities or ideological beliefs. The site could, thus, attract more than just one specific group of people, such as warriors, and appeal to different gender, age and class groups. For this reason, it is not certain that the large concentrations of double axes at the peak sanctuary of Jouktas represented the same people who deposited the double axes, swords and knives at the Arkalochori cave. Perhaps the military character of the Arkalochori deposition is related to the geographical area of the Arkalochori cave, a strategic border area between the wider Knossos valley and the regions to the east. In this case, the depositions would symbolically mark a territory of authority connected with the people who used the swords, perhaps a Knossian elite. If this supposition is correct then one cannot but recognize that swords and double axes shared in this context similar values: if not of military nature, at least of elite distinction. Thus, the symbolic context of the Jouktas sanctuary was one of cohesion and integration within the Knossos-Archanes valley and the double axe depositions expressed one of the many social groups attending it from the surrounding area.

In the country Villa of Vathypetro, where rural activities and local production of pottery were the most important economic factor, marks on a potter's wheel are the predominant category representing the symbol. By contrast, at Anemospilia, an independent shrine with evidence for highly specialised ceremonial activity, double axe symbolism was found on ceremonial pottery, while a stand possibly served as the base of a ceremonial bronze double axe. Thus, it appears that the double axe symbol could be an index of different roles and purposes according to its social context and the local economic and functional orientation of each site.

By contrast to the double axe, the horns of consecration present a very uniform way of use across the sites of the area. Large stone horns of consecration were found at Vathypetro, Jouktas and Anemospilia. The evidence for their exact use is not clear, as their contexts were not well-preserved. However, on all occasions they were related to buildings of palatial type (ashlar masonry) and they probably crowned them. At Anemospilia, it is possible that one pair crowned the building and another was used as the focus of libation inside the building.

At Vathypetro and Jouktas they possibly also crowned their respective sacral buildings. Thus, unlike the double axe, the horns of consecration was not a versatile symbol but had specific architectural connotations which linked it to palatial structures. Its performative effect was perpetuated through its size and position as a visible marker.

Overall sample symbols present patterns which are determined to a great extent by their specific socio-economic contexts and by the ritual practices associated with them.

Late Neopalatial period

No sample symbols are recorded from the area south of Knossos during this period. This is largely due to the end of use of most of these sites after successive destructions. Vathypetro was abandoned at the end of LMIA after a destruction apparently related to an earthquake. Anemospilia had already been abandoned because of a similar destruction before that. The Arkalochori depositions of the previous period were limited to that period and not repeated later. Only the Jouktas peak sanctuary was still in use in LMIB, but apparently not as intensely visited as in the previous period. Generally, an abandonment of the area is noted during this period both in terms of actual use of the space and in terms of use of the symbols. This abandonment appears to have been a reality of this period, since there appears to have been no intention to replace the destroyed sites with new ones.

Final Palatial period

The conditions of the previous period extend to this one and no sample symbols are recorded.

Postpalatial period

Very few sample symbols are recorded from this period. On Jouktas, which showed new signs of prosperity, two sherds depicting horns of consecration with plants in the middle were found in the Stravomytis cave. No sample symbols, however, were recorded from the peak sanctuary itself.

2.5 Area North of Knossos (Figs. 2.20-2.21; Tables 2.18-2.19)

The best recorded sites of the area north of Knossos comprise: the site of Tyliossos, the harbour town of Poros-Katsambas, the harbour town of Amnissos, the ‘Villas’ at Nirou Chani and a number of LMIIIB sites (towns and cemeteries) from the hinterland of this area.

2.5.1 Tyliossos

Tyliossos is situated at a strategic location dominating the route that connects the north coast of Knossos to the west of the island. The site was excavated in 1910-12 by Hatzidakis and produced a sequence of EM, MM, LMI, LMIII layers (Hatzidakis 1912: 198-9; 1912-13; 1921; 1934). Unfortunately, the publication of the material is poor in its stratigraphic and contextual description of the artefacts and many of the finds are only mentioned generically in lists of finds.¹⁸

Prepalatial/Protopalatial periods

Evidence for this period is scarce and no sample symbols are recorded.

Early Neopalatial period (Fig. 2.20)

This is the main period of building activity at the site when three substantial buildings were founded. Houses A, B and C with a dense concentration of palatial architectural features, a rich production of bronze artefacts and rare valuable objects rank Tyliossos as a first-class Minoan site (Vasilakis 1997: 31).

Most of the sample symbols, whose context is recorded, were associated with the two pillar crypts of House A and House C respectively (fig. 2.20). House B presents a very different architectural plan and has been regarded as an independent storage space, possibly serving the two houses. It contained no elaborate palatial architecture and no sample symbols. House A was the largest and the richest in symbols of the two houses. A number of double axe symbols were found concentrated in its pillar crypt, Hall 3. A double axe stone stand and a jug with the representation of double axes were found next to the pillar. In the same room

¹⁸There is, for example, a good number and variety of shells brought from the sea, which is 2 kms away. The species include a triton, two murexes and several other shells, mostly in the shape of the common shell. They are regarded as food source by Hatzidakis (1912: 232). The revision of this material and the possible symbolic use of all or part of these shells cannot be assessed, because they are all mentioned in a list of objects without context.

were another two or three bronze double axes of different sizes, which were characterised as votive, but it could be that one or more were used as ceremonial objects and fitted the stone stand. A large steatite basin could have been used as receptacle for libations carried out with the double axe jug, while animal bones including part of a bull's femur could indicate that animal sacrifices took place in this space.

House A produced few more sample symbols without precise context, such as a double axe from the upper floor of Hall 15, a pair of horns of consecration and an ivory figure-of-eight shield from a board game. The board game clearly imitated the famous one from Knossos which bore similar ornaments.

The pillar crypt of House C contained a pair of horns of consecration. Unfortunately, the object is mentioned in a list of finds from the house and no other details are known about its context or any associated finds.

Late Neopalatial

No sample symbols are recorded from this period. Generally the site has not produced much LMIB evidence.

Final Palatial/Postpalatial periods

Fragments of painted clay horns of consecration of at least two pairs cannot be dated precisely within LMIII, and their context is unknown. However, if they are contemporaneous with the human and animal figurines found in what could have been a sacral cistern (Hatzidakis 1934: 35), they would date to Postpalatial-LMIIIB (Kanta 1980: 12). According to Kanta (ibid: 13), the LMIII occupation of Tyliossos started in LMIIIA1 and lasted through LMIIIB. There is evidence of significant rebuilding activity, with a *megaron* built on top of earlier House C, a cistern and a shrine (Heyden 1981; Hatzidakis 1934: 18), which reflect the shaping of a new spatial distribution of symbolic foci related to power and ritual. However, it is not clear whether they all belong to the same period. The cistern, a ritual focus of cult practices at the site, has been recently dated with certainty towards the end of LMIIIB (Kanta 1980). It appears from the increasing number of pottery used that the site thrived in LMIIIB-C.

2.5.2 Poros- Katsambas

Poros, 6 kms to the east of modern Herakleion, had already been designated by Evans as the main harbour of Knossos and is considered the gate for trade and the foreign interconnections of the Knossian authority (Dimopoulou 1999: 27) since EM (Wilson et al. 2004). Curved boat sheds on the natural rocks indicate port activities, while important buildings with ashlar masonry, rich graves and deposits reveal its unquestionable prosperity. The architectural remains and the portable finds are dated to MMIII, LMI-II and LMIII. The available evidence derives from stray finds, unsystematic digging caused by building activity and from old or recent rescue excavations (N. Platon 1951; Dimopoulou 1999: 27; Dimopoulou 2004: 366). The latter are conducted by the Herakleion Ephorate of Antiquities in the southern part of the settlement, which survived the submersion of the frontal zone into the sea caused by the construction of the modern port avenue. This area is producing rich material and significant evidence of a great range of activities (Dimopoulou 1999: 27). The burial ground of the Neopalatial town was at Poros and at the edge of the urban site. However, after the destruction of the town in LMIB the cemetery was abandoned and a new burial ground was founded in LMII at Katsambas 2 kms to the south east.

2.5.3 Poros/Katsambas town

Prepalatial period

The town of Poros was already a thriving industrial centre and active harbour (Dimopoulou 2004; Wilson & Day 2000; Dimopoulou et al. 2007). However, no sample symbols were recorded in the published material from this period.

Protopalatial period

Despite the presence of a MM ‘megaron’ (Alexiou 1954), impressive architecture containing painted plaster, sealing documents, Knossian pottery indicating strong links with Knossos, two rich MMI ritual deposits and a number of destruction deposits dated to MMIIB-III A (Dimopoulou 2004: 375-6), no sample symbols were recorded from Poros during the Protopalatial period.

Early Neopalatial period

Despite the fact that Poros was an impressively prosperous and economically active town with a rich array of valuable finds and a close connection to Knossos in the early Neopalatial period (ibid: 377), no sample symbols were recorded.

Late Neopalatial period

The town produced only a cup with figure-of-eight shields belonging to the Special Palatial Tradition. However, its context is not recorded.

Final Palatial period

The period is very poorly represented in the town (ibid: 378) and no sample symbols are recorded. In LMIII, the evidence from urban and funerary contexts is very scarce and the very few symbols do not form any significant pattern.

Postpalatial period

After a LMIIIA1-2 destruction, the settlement revived (ibid.) and important ritual activity was attested, showing continuity from previous periods (N. Platon 1941; Kanta 1980). However, no sample symbols were recorded.

2.5.4 Poros/Katsambas cemeteries

The Neopalatial cemetery was located on a low hill bordering the settlement on the south west. Seven rock cut chamber tombs have been excavated until now, which present common morphological features and standardised architectural design (Dimopoulou 1999: 28). Their content was disturbed because of their re-use, but rich finds have been preserved and can be classified into known types of jewellery, seals and fine pottery of this period. The cemetery was suddenly abandoned after the LMIB destructions and a new cemetery was founded at Katsambas in LMII.

Early Neopalatial period

Surprisingly, none of the seven tombs contained any sample symbols, apart from the so-called Chamber Tomb. The Chamber Tomb was the earliest grave of the cemetery and was founded already in MMIIB. An early connection to Knossos is indicated by the rich Kamares pottery excavated in its foundation layer, the Neopalatial feasting assemblage (more than one

hundred conical cups and some jugs) and the reproduction of Knossian ritual contexts within the grave (pillars with upturned cups Lembessi 1967: 199-200).

The tomb contained a unique prismatic three-sided seal of carnelian and suspension holes in gold granulation depicting a sacred knot and double axe on one side, an amphora with S-shaped handles and a moon on the other two respectively. The high value of the material and the combination of symbolic motifs alluding to ritual practices are indicative of the high status of the seal's owner.

Late Neopalatial period

Despite the rich contents and the abundant ritual equipment found in most graves of the cemetery, the Chamber Tomb was still the grave which produced most sample symbols. Four figure-of-eight shield pendants in bronze and silver were possibly attachments of swords or other weapons. In the same grave were found a fine jug with rows of moulded shells and other marine motifs and a few shells manufactured in rock crystal and glass paste.

Tomb H produced a small ivory attachment in the shape of a figure-of-eight shield, which probably adorned the lid of an ivory pyxis found in the same grave. The exterior surface of the pyxis was decorated with a relief scene of bull hunting and bull leaping.

It appears that, during the Neopalatial period (both early and late) accentuating the association of the sample symbols with prestigious materials and elaborate manufacturing techniques was a basic principle in the social use of symbolism at Poros. This was certainly the result of a desire of the upper class of the town to signal its achievements of acquiring access to exotic and rare materials and to praise its workshops and specialised production.

Final Palatial period

The tombs at the new cemetery of Katsambas were different in type, smaller in size and displaying different burial practices than the Neopalatial ones at Poros. A similar decline is attested in the use of sample symbols. Only Tomb B produced an elaborate clay jug with a relief representation of a figure-of-eight shield on its neck, which may imitate metal prototypes. In the same period the town produced a stone pair of horns of consecration and a stone mould for the production of jewels including the shape of a shell. Their context, however, is not known and not much more can be said about them.

Postpalatial period

No sample symbols are recorded from this period although the settlement and the graves of Katsambas modestly continued in use.

2.5.5 Amnissos

Amnissos possibly served as the second harbour of Knossos (Schäfer 1992; Driessen & MacDonald 1997: 27) and was few kilometres to the east of Poros. The town was situated on and around the Palaeochora hill in the middle of a fertile plain. It was excavated by Marinatos (1929-1938) and Alexiou in 1963 and 1967 (Alexiou 1964a; 1964b; 1968b), while Schäfer conducted further investigations in 1983-5 (Schäfer 1992). However, the site was never fully excavated. The area today is significantly altered by modern developments and construction and has also been affected by erosion.

Prepalatial/Protopalatial periods

There are no sample symbols in the available publications.

Early Neopalatial period

The two most prestigious buildings excavated so far at the site, the so-called ‘Villa of the Lilies’, named after its frescoes, and the so-called Megaron with palatial features, contained mostly utilitarian pottery and very few symbols. In total, the site produced three symbols, which were all double axes: an incised mason’s mark in the Megaron; a depiction on a large amphora, fallen from the upper floor of a coastal building (Areal E); and a bronze double axe recorded by Marinatos without context.

Late Neopalatial/Final Palatial periods

No evidence of habitation derives from this period.

Postpalatial period

The site was re-inhabited in LMIIIA2-B. It produced a small natural triton inside an upturned cooking pot found close to the clay model of a shrine. It was found in the small room of what appears to have been a house shrine (Schäfer 1997: 188), whose plan is not yet clear. Interestingly, this area presented the poorest masonry. By contrast, a fine *megaron*-like construction with a court in space A was found almost empty of finds and did not produce any sample symbols. In the same period the only two known graves from Amnissos, one at

Mafeze and the other a burial cave close to Eileithyia' s cave, did not produce any sample symbols within the period of study.

2.5.6 Nirou Chani

The so-called Villa at Nirou Chani was probably the central building of a coastal settlement, whose port installations have been located a few meters away on the shore. The site is dated to the Neopalatial period and was excavated in 1918-9 by Xanthoudides (1922).

Early Neopalatial period (Fig. 2.21)

The 'Villa' at Nirou Chani produced a significant variety of important sample symbols (fig. 2.21). A large stone pair of horns of consecration was associated with a tripartite shrine at the edge of a paved large court to the east of the building (Xanthoudides 1922: 2). Additionally, the largest bronze double axes known in Minoan Crete were found here and stored together on the ground-floor of room 7. This space was accessible from corridor 11 which connected the courtyard of the 'Villa' to room 17-8, where a large number of tripod offering tables and conical cups were stored. A unique representation of a sacred knot showing the textile material of the object probably decorated the upper floor of the area of Corridor 11.

Next to room 7, the small room 7a, which is divided from it by a simple mud-brick wall, contained a hearth, in which coal, ashes and blackened vessels were found. Because of the small size of the room and the absence of any other symbols, Xanthoudides (ibid: 12-13) suggested the axes were actually manufactured in the room and not displayed ceremonially there. However, there is no direct evidence to support any metallurgical activity in this context. The hearth may have served ritual purposes, a suggestion which is strengthened by the presence of a steatite vessel of ritual type (ibid. 13). The colossal size of the double axes and their display in the room suggests a cultic focus for ritual practice which apparently involved the use of the hearth and the stone vessel.

It is possible to reconstruct ritual action at Nirou Chani. Given the large amount of massively and uniformly manufactured offering tables and conical cups stored in the 'Villa', and given the significant storage capacity for food, it can be suggested that the 'Villa' would accommodate large numbers of people for occasional ritual feasting and ceremonial food and drink consumption. It is reasonable to place such feasting ceremonies in the eastern court of the 'Villa', as it is the only place which is large enough for such gatherings. The tripartite

shrine with the large horns of consecration in the eastern court would certainly form the focus of these gatherings and possibly a space of periodical display of the colossal double axes.

Despite the relatively large quantity of high quality pottery vessels (ibid: 16-18), there was only one vase with sample symbols. It was a marine style vessel decorated with tritons found in the small corridor 8 next to rooms 7-7a, where the large double axes were stored.

2.5.7 LMIIIB settlements in North-North Central Crete (Table 2.18-9)

A significant number of new settlements appeared on the island of Crete during the LMIII period with a marked increase in LMIIIB (Table 2.18; Kanta 1980: 7). In North Central Crete specifically, the rich material deriving from a number of new settlements and cemeteries adds significant evidence to the selected sites in this study and can help to assess the role of symbols during this period. These sites are: Moni, Gazi¹⁹, Giofyrakia and Kavrochori from the Malevizion district; Foinikia, Dafnes from the Temenos district; and Ano Vatheia and Episkopi from the district of Pedhiada. Evidence from the above sites derives mostly from the closed contexts of graves, while most of the urban sites present problems of stratigraphy, preservation and precise dating (Table 2.18).

The result of the examination of this additional data was that, despite the impressive amount of evidence, the LMIII sites were found to be surprisingly poor in sample symbols and new symbols became more fashionable. Overall, only five examples of sample symbols were detected. Among them were either double axes with shells or double axes combined with horns of consecration, all of which derived from cemeteries and decorated larnakes (Table 2.18).

An attempt to compare the social contexts of these symbols shows disassociation with rich assemblages and graves (Table 2.19). Both the LMIIIA and the LMIIIB graves at Giophyrakia, whose larnakes were decorated with double axes and horns of consecration, were poor. At Skafidas (Gazi), a chamber tomb contained a larnax, decorated with double axes without any further finds, while a LMIIIA larnax at Kavrochori only contained a few vessels. The second LMIIIB chamber tomb at Skafidas contained four larnakes, one of which was decorated with double axes. In the same context, another one of these larnakes

¹⁹ Gazi has produced layers from previous periods, but their materials are too scarce to contribute any significant evidence for the examination of sample symbols before LMIII. Moreover, the shrine of Gazi (Marinatos 1937; Alexiou 1958) is one of the best known and well-illustrated ritual assemblages of this period. However, its famous ‘goddesses’, of which the smallest has a pair of horns and doves on the forehead, are dated to LMIIIC (Alexiou 1954), and, therefore, outside the chronological scope of this study.

was decorated with a ship and octopi and was probably imported from the Mainland, unlike the rest of the larnakes, which are considered of local manufacture (ibid: 20). Overall, the chamber tomb produced six vases, three of which were identified as Mycenaean imports belonging to an earlier LMIIIA date (ibid: 20). These may be associated with the one imported larnax, leaving the three local larnakes (including the one decorated with double axes) to be associated with the three local vessels.

From the above, it can be concluded that the newly founded LMIII sites of North Central Crete made a very limited use of sample symbols. The evidence shows that in this area the sample symbols had lost their former position of popularity to other symbols, such as the bird, papyrus, palm tree, ship and octopus (Tables 2.18-9), which were perhaps imported Mycenaean elite symbols. The double axe and the horns of consecration appear to have survived mostly in the preference of the poor members of local communities.

2.5.8. General discussion on the area North of Knossos

Prepalatial/Protopalatial periods

The site of Poros and to a lesser extent those of Tylissos and Amnisos produced some evidence from these periods, which, however, did not include any sample symbols.

Early Neopalatial period

During this period the evidence for sample symbols appears nucleated in the largest sites while little evidence derives from the hinterland. One important pattern detected in the distribution of symbols across the selected sites is the poor representation of sample symbols in the harbour towns of Poros and Amnisos, as opposed to the rich representation of symbols in town Villas, such as Tylissos and Nirou Chani. Unfortunately, the uneven degree of preservation, excavation and publication of the data from these sites does not allow inferring that this is a reliable distribution pattern which requires an interpretation.

There is an emphasis of ‘architecturality’ during this period attested in the presence of newly built ashlar structures and complex architectural designs. The performative use of sample symbols is determined by this new factor. Thus, double axes are used in spaces, such as pillar crypts, and horns of consecration crown impressive architectural elements such as roofs of ashlar buildings and tripartite shrines. Generally, the sample symbols from this area were used with equipment and in architectural environments which indexed palatial contexts, and

more specifically, Knossian contexts: at Tylissos, House A, which was also the most ostentatious architectural structure of the site, contained a concentration of double axe symbolism associated with a pillar crypt, as well as a board game similar to the Knossian one (decorated with ivory figure-of-eight shields); at Nirou Chani, the largest known bronze double axes in Crete were possibly venerated in a special cultic space and displayed periodically in public feasting in front of a tripartite shrine decorated with horns of consecration in a paved court. This pattern appears to have been cross-contextual, as similar practices were noted even in funerary contexts such as that of the Chamber Tomb of Poros, where the only sample symbol from the site was a precious seal ring found in a pillar context with upturned cups.

Another important pattern is that the use of sample symbols was in accordance with the local socio-political and economic priorities of each community: at Anemospilia they stressed the ritual function of the shrine, at Jouktas the communal religious activities of the people of the area, at Nirou Chani they were static foci of small and large ceremonial assemblies, at Tylissos they appear to have imitated closely the Knossian prototypes, possibly as part of a strategy of a local elite to compete or represent Knossos; at Poros they expressed the industrial and commercial prosperity of the local elite and at Vathypetro the renowned production of the local potters.

Late Neopalatial period

During this period the sites were to a greater or lesser extent abandoned or in the process of recovering after the LMIA destruction and produced very little evidence and no sample symbols. Only Poros produced some evidence found in the chamber tomb whose owners continued appreciating the use of sample symbols made of prestigious materials and by highly skilled craftsmen. It appears that the main harbour of North Central Crete was preserved as a crucial centre of activity, despite the general decline of the area.

Final Palatial period

In the Final Palatial period, despite evidence for a relative revival of the area after the destructions, there was a decline in the use of sample symbols throughout the area of North Central Crete with only one example from Katsambas.

Postpalatial period

This period is characterised by the significant revival of certain sites, such as Katsambas, Amnissos and Tyliossos, as well as the appearance of new sites, some of which were founded in LMIIIA. Despite the significant amount of data from these sites, the overall representation of sample symbols is very low. The inhabitants of Tyliossos appear to have been the only ones who used them as part of official performances of palatial type, continuing or reviving the example of the early Neopalatial period. Thus, the two clay models of horns of consecration were possibly associated with the newly founded *megaron* or with a cistern, which appears to have been the LMIIIB focus of ritual practice at the site.

Apart from the example of Tyliossos, sample symbols were mostly found in funerary or domestic contexts. The double axe was only represented on larnakes, occasionally together with horns of consecration. These larnakes, though, were only found in a few of the many new sites of this period and were associated with poor graves of the local population. The triton appeared as central symbol in a domestic ritual context at Amnissos. Thus, sample symbols were no longer elite symbols linked to prestigious structures and palatial contexts but were used by the lower-class in simple and restricted contexts.

The dramatic changes in the context and the social status of sample symbols were accompanied by a marked drop in the value of their materials: clay replaced all exotic and imported materials of the Neopalatial period and even horns of consecration were made in clay, while shells were only natural and no longer manufactured from precious materials. There were also changes in the preference of sample symbol categories: the horns of consecration became comparatively more important, while the double axe became subordinate to it and the figure-of-eight shield entirely lost its previous palatial status.

2.6 North Central Crete: Conclusions (Tables 2.3, 2.20-2.26)

Prepalatial period (Tables 2.3, 2.20)

During the Prepalatial period sample symbols in North Central Crete were reported only at Knossos, the cemetery of Phourni at Archanes, and, in the Late Prepalatial period, at the peak sanctuary of Jouktas. Shells were the main sample symbols used throughout EM, while in the Late Prepalatial period appeared the first double axes and horns of consecration.

The main pattern of this period is that, despite the different contexts (town, cemetery, shrine) where sample symbols were used, there was a common emphasis on the importance of ritual artefacts and ritual action as the main markers of social distinction and elite symbolism. This appraisal was not related to the trade or manufacturing value of these artefacts, as there is no direct evidence for significant local industrial production or advanced trade activities. Rather, the value of the sample symbols was placed in their symbolic content and their performative impact in ritual action.

The way symbolic performance was conveyed differed in each community and, in some cases, different strategies of use were topographically demarcated. At Knossos, the use of perforated shells appears to have been exclusively associated with the West Court. This probably means that shells as symbols were only used by the specific group of people in the town, who used the space of the West Court. At Archanes, shells were used to signal different cultural identities in two distinct graves within the same funerary space of the cemetery. This difference was marked by the distinct symbolic treatment of shells: the users of Tholos Gamma practiced a series of meaningful structured depositions which aimed at signalling the successive stages of the funerary procedure within the burial buildings and the adjacent burial ground of the area of the Rocks; the users of Tholos E viewed shells as personal adornment of the buried individuals.

It is possible to establish a connection between the users of Tholos E at Phourni and the West Court elite of Knossos on the basis of these demarcated strategies in the symbolic use of shells. Tholos E at Phourni and the West Court were the only contexts from North Central Crete, where perforated shells were used for symbolic purposes. The shells in both cases belonged to the same species, the *Glycymeris*. Both groups shared a special appreciation for feasting pottery assemblages (Sakellarakis & Sakellarakis 1997: 379; Panagiotopoulos 2002:

134), which is attested in the use of large amounts of pottery of similar typology and function.

By contrast, the users of Tholos Gamma did not show any appreciation for feasting assemblages. Pottery was altogether an artefact category that was very little represented in the grave. Overall, Tholos E, was culturally detached both from Tholos Gamma at Phourni and from the EM Archanes town, which produced mainly Vasilike ware (Sakellarakis & Sakellarakis 1997: 387), a type of pottery entirely absent in Tholos E. It appears that feasting activities were especially characteristic at Prepalatial Knossos.²⁰ It is, thus, possible that the Prepalatial Knossian elite held a high-status grave at Phourni, sharing similar material culture and symbolism. The lack of any ostentatious Prepalatial graves at Knossos which could be associated with the West Court House elite may support this possibility.

The connection between Tholos E and the Knossian elite appears to have extended in the Late Prepalatial period. A seal incised with a double axe from the MMIA layer of Tholos E finds later MMII and MMII-III parallels at Knossos (Table 2.3), while no such parallels are known from any other grave at Phourni or at Archanes during this or the later periods.

The dynamic presence of the MMIA Knossian elite at Phourni may be further suggested by the palatial character of the most important grave of the cemetery during this period, which was Tholos B. Tholos B presents particular palatial features, such as a ‘pillar crypt’, which was plastered and decorated with frescoes, and ‘royal’ artefacts (Sakellarakis 1992: 96), such as gold rings, ivory artefacts and a bull’s head ring²¹. Although pillar crypts and frescoes were introduced in the following period, their earliest predecessors appeared in the large palaces, such as palace of Knossos (Immerwahr 1990: 21-2; Shaw 2005). It is possible that the elaborate kernos with cut-out double axes, horns of consecration and incurved altars was also associated with Tholos B and its adjacent annexes.

If Tholos B at Archanes was the prestigious grave, where the Knossian elite would display its exclusive symbols (architecture, ritual artefacts, sample symbols), the newly founded cemeteries at Knossos may have belonged to lower-class populations. Indeed, these cemeteries did not contain any sample symbols nor did they aspire to imitate palatial architecture in the Protopalatial period. The fact that Tholos B was the only grave with elite

²⁰ Even poorer graves, such as the one at Monastiriako Kephali, were furnished with modest feasting assemblages.

²¹ A full excavation of the tomb and a clarification of its stratigraphy, especially of the earlier layers, is required (Soles 1992: 135), in order to assess the connection between Tholos B and the palace of Knossos.

symbolism which can be connected to the Knossian elite may indicate that this tomb belonged to the leading families of MMIA Knossos, like Tholos E in the Prepalatial period.

Thus, the possibility stands that the impressive growth of the power of the Knossian elite may have signified a continuity of use of the cemetery at Phourni for the elite burials of Knossos from the previous period with a renewed strategy of signification of its predominance at the cemetery through material symbolism. In this period is dated the most intense building activity known at Phourni, significant constructions related to the palace of Knossos, as well as the foundation of the shrine at Anemospilia. The trend towards a sophistication of the social strategies of the Knossian elite is reflected in the elaboration of previously natural shells into cultural ones (moulded clay shells) in the area of the West Court.

An expansion of the Knossian elite during the Late Prepalatial period in the areas adjacent to Knossos is also suggested by the only other place where double axe symbolism was found in large amounts. The depositions of bronze double axes at Jouktas are unique in North Central Crete, as no bronze double axes were deposited in any of the many, richly furnished and non-plundered graves at Phourni or the Protopalatial shrine at Anemospilia. No bronze double axes were reported from the Palace either, although the absence of bronzes may be the result of later looting/ re-cycling. However, considering that the south Cretan tholoi and neighbouring Phourni received bronze double axes as offerings in the same period and that hoards of double axes were found in later phases of the Palace, their absence in all other sites of North Central Crete except Mount Jouktas may not be coincidental. It appears that this nucleated distribution pattern was perhaps the result of a social and ritual strategy which had the power to engage the neighbouring populations. The depositions at the peak sanctuary of Jouktas were massive and of an impressive diversity of artefact categories. The double axes of Jouktas, which are amongst the earliest offerings to the shrine, were possibly individual dedications (Karetsou 1978: 232) and they may have derived either from members of the elite of Knossos or from individuals who aspired to imitate their established practices as elite practices. This is suggested by the early affiliation of the double axe symbol with the Knossian elite, as discussed earlier, and by the early development of symbolic strategies by the Knossian elite to demarcate territories of influence, as was the case of Tholoi E and B at Phourni.

Regarding the symbolism of the horns of consecration, the spouted vessel with modelled horns of consecration on its rim from a burial at Phourni and the kernos from the area of Tholos B were the earliest appearances of the symbol in North Central Crete. Both artefacts

were ritual vessels associated with ceremonial pouring. It may be, thus, concluded that originally the symbol was associated with the ritual act of libation.

A scenario of an expansion and consolidation of the Knossian elite in the neighbouring areas could also be suggested by the end of the strategic use of structured depositions of shells at Phourni. These strategies reflected possible tensions between the Knossian elite and other cultural groups perhaps belonging to the area of Archanes. The uniformity in the practice of shell depositions in all the new and old graves of MMIA and the supremacy of Tholos B and its annexes, which possessed intense Knossian features, may reflect an end of these tensions by the overpowering of the Knossian elite in the symbolic topography of the cemetery.

Protopalatial period (Table 2.21)

During this period, the symbolic strategies of the Knossian elite in its surrounding area continued (shells at Jouktas and Archanes) and took new forms under the increased importance of the new emphasis on palatial architecture. In the previous period (MMIA) the cemetery at Archanes had been renovated with elite Knossian features and in MMIB the shrine at Anemospilia was founded under the influence of palatial architecture.

The new elite principles were inspired in the rising palatial system and its basic functions: architecture, storage, administration and ritual performance. At Knossos, the Knossian elite reached a high degree of elaboration of this new symbolism with a special emphasis on its rising new symbol, the double axe, marking symbolic topographical areas and architectural structures, which were part of a complex ceremonial network of performative space, and, appearing on ritual storage vessels which were used in ritual performance. Using these strategies together with citations of shell symbolism from the West Court elite of the Prepalatial period, the Knossian elite claimed continuity in the same space and legitimised its power over the newly built West Wing of the First Palace with new symbols.

During this period the symbolic use of natural shells within the Palace of Knossos is gradually replaced by a preference for ‘cultural’ shells that is shells that have been treated or modified by humans or the imitation of natural shells on manufactured artefacts, such as the Shell vessels’. This trend is characteristic of the sophistication of elite symbolic practices of this period. Most importantly, the absence of such vessels at the cemetery of Phourni, Jouktas and Anemospilia, or the Trial KV burial, where only natural shells were used in the ritual contexts, suggests an intended differentiation of Knossos from its subordinate ritual extensions. Certain symbols were shared between the centre of the Knossian elite (horns of

consecration) and its satellites and others were exclusively used within it (double axe mason's marks, 'cultural' shells).

These strategies of the Knossian elite extended to the shrine of Anemospilia: the shrine was built with impressive ashlar masonry and incised with mason's marks (but not double axes), which were the main palatial features related to architecture. In a ritual context in its interior it housed an amphora decorated with double axes, related to the palatial principle of storage. Anemospilia was the only site along with Knossos in Protopalatial North Central Crete which produced a vessel with the representation of a double axe. In both cases, architectural and storage symbolism were used in ritual contexts showing an intended connection with the political symbolic strategies of the Knossian elite.

The early appearance of Knossian symbolism at Anemospilia may also be detected in the use of horns of consecration and the symbolism of the bull at Anemospilia. The presence of at least one pair of horns of consecration from the securely MMIIIA dated contexts at Anemospilia²² may have been the earliest known such example in the area. At the palace of Knossos, the stone pair of horns from the East Hall Palace was found in an unclear context and another one had been integrated in the wall of the South House after a reconstruction of the building, apparently either related to the MMIIIA or the LMIA destruction;²³ a third one was found fallen in the Central Court and is linked to the Second Palace. Regarding the symbol of the bull, the running bull represented on a MMIIIA bucket-shaped vessel found at Anemospilia predated the bull scenes at the palace of Knossos. These scenes are viewed as part of a unified iconographical program carried out during the construction of the Second Palace (MMIII-LMIA) in order to support the propaganda of the Knossian elite (Hallager & Hallager 1995).²⁴

Although more evidence is required to support the earliest appearance of elite symbols outside the confines of the palace of Knossos, it is important to underline the connection between the palace and Anemospilia in the use of this symbolism. It was already shown that these were the two contexts where double axes appeared on storage ritual vessels and where ashlar masonry with mason's marks appeared. The earliest mason's marks at the Palace are

²² At least one of the two horns of consecration can be identified with certainty, while the other one (and a double axe stand) are fragmentary. The lack of a proper publication of this material does not allow a revision of this data for the moment.

²³ According to Mountjoy (2003: 1), the west side of the South House was cut into the earlier Stepped Portico.

²⁴ This view, however, does not exclude the possibility that isolated scenes may have been depicted earlier in the First Palace. According to Hägg (1995: 362), who revised the evidence from the East Hall, the earliest of the few superimposed bull frescoes of the East Hall is dated to MMIIIA: 'in the same MMIII layer belong the spiral and bull fresco possibly belonging to the earliest bull game fresco'. Evans (1921: 313-23; 1930: 522-5) also dated the layer in MMIIIA, above the MMII Loomweight Basement shrine.

dated to MMIB (MacDonald & Knappett 2007: 7-8) while those at Anemospilia must be dated between MMIB and MMIIIA (Myers et al. 1992). The fact that at Anemospilia there were signs other than double axe mason's marks may suggest a further level of subordination of the shrine to the palatial elite. Moreover, the use of horns of consecration symbolism in the East Hall succeeded an earlier similar use in the same space, as is attested by the miniature horns of consecration which were found in the Loomweight Basement shrine.²⁵

The pair in the East Hall, according to Evans (1930: 525), was used as a floor cultic object for interior ritual practices. The same function was possibly represented by the Loomweight Basement miniature shrine, where miniature tritons were either offered to an altar crowned with horns or served as libation vessels to it. At Anemospilia, one pair was reported by the excavator as crowning the building (Sakellarakis 1979: 351). The other one was found in pieces in the antechamber of the shrine together with eight vessels and may have also served as a focus of libations. An association of the symbol with the practice of libation would be explained by its earliest function. The symbol appears as moulded features on Prepalatial libation vessels, such as the spouted vessel and the kernos from Phourni. Both this kernos and the Loomweight basement miniature shrine were decorated with incurved altars adding to the shared symbolic features of the symbol.²⁶ It appears that during the Protopalatial period and with the emphasis of 'architecturality' of the rising palatial system, the horns became independent structural objects of large size and made in stone. Their association with 'architecturality' is emphasised in the Loomweight Basement miniature shrine and partially the Phourni kernos, which emphasise structural shapes. The association of the development of the symbol with the rise of the Knossian elite is evidenced by the contexts where it was found: the East Hall and the Loomweight basement in the Palace, the Anemospilia shrine and Tholos B at Phourni. They were all highly palatial contexts which were connected with the gradual growth of the palatial elite of Knossos.

In addition to architecture (ashlar masonry, mason's marks, horns of consecration) and storage (amphorae), the Knossian elite signalled its power through administrative documents. Seals with emblematic representations of double axes have been found at Knossos and the

²⁵ The Loomweight Basement shrine which underlies the East hall is traditionally placed in MMII (Evans 1902: 28-32) but MacGillivray (1998: 41) has more recently dated it in MMIIIA. This would mean that the succession of the two phases of the shrine took place within MMIIIA.

²⁶ Banou (2008) overlooks the importance of these two artefacts and the early association of the horns of consecration with the ritual practice of libation, which is continued in the following periods in parallel with their use as crowning elements of architectural structures. Her association of the horns of consecration with 'architecturality' aims rather at referring to the established view that the symbol was associated with the Egyptian sign of the horizon. Here it is suggested that the association of the symbol with 'architecturality' was part of the formation of elite symbolism in line with the rise of the Minoan palatial system.

first appearance of the figure-of-eight shield is on a seal from Knossos with a similar type of representation. However, the lack of contextualised evidence of the sealing documentation does not allow any further discussion on the matter.

Performance was conducted either in public or limited spaces. Jouktas was a largely open-air shrine which received large numbers of offerings of diverse artefact categories reflecting varied types of populations. If the bronze double axes were offerings of the Knossian elite, they must have counted as prestigious depositions amongst a diversified group of artefacts representing different classes of people. The ‘shell vessels’ were most probably used as part of the prestigious feasting assemblages and formed part of the performative strategies of control of the Knossian elite within the Palace. The Knossian elite monopolised the largest and richest feasting assemblages of the site and thus predominated in what was traditionally the main means of the Knossian people to understand elite symbolism.

By contrast, the East Hall and the Loomweight Basement, as well as Anemospilia did not possess large open spaces for the arrangement of large numbers of people and must have attracted a limited number of participants. A good example of an exclusive performance is suggested by the structured deposition at Anemospilia of the single shell that was carefully placed on the floor with pebbles of different colours. The shrine displayed a well-planned spatial arrangement with separate ritual functions of limited access, where the symbolic value of the shell could be individualised in a more restricted ritual context.

The symbolic use of the natural shells indicates an association with chthonic beliefs. They were deposited in all the burial structures of Phourni and the foetus burial at Knossos and they were offered around a deep chasm at Jouktas. At Anemospilia, the shell was offered in association with rituals that may have aimed at preventing an earthquake disaster (Sakellarakis 1981b). The similarity of meaning across different contexts and site types in the area which was under the control of the Knossian elite indicates a uniformity of symbolic perception which reinforces the effect of its strategy.

From the above it can be concluded that during the Protopalatial period already existing symbols such as the double axe, the horns of consecration and the shells were transformed or re-invented by the palatial elite of Knossos as the means by which to create a distinct identity and to demarcate its authority over the area.

Early Neopalatial period (Table 2.22)

This is the period with the greatest number and expansion of sample symbols in North Central Crete. The palatial elite of Knossos continued to monopolise the highest numbers and

diversity of artefact categories of the sample symbols in the area (Table 2.22). In the Protopalatial period the Knossian elite redefined these symbols for the construction of its identity and set the standards of elite symbolism in the whole area. A long-lived strategy of the Knossian elite was the use of elite palatial architecture and sample symbols in ritual spaces outside the confines of the town as a way of political control of the surrounding area. Perhaps the best example which proves that this strategy continued in the early Neopalatial period is the construction of an altar and a shrine with ashlar masonry over the Protopalatial pyre at Jouktas. The shrine was crowned by a pair of horns and the altar was built on a foundation deposit which included the collection of the 35 bronze double axes, previous offerings to the pyre (Rutkowski 1972: 186). This symbolic act signalled the re-establishment of cult at the peak sanctuary as Knossian and at the same time enhanced the social prestige of the Knossian elite (Moody 1987: 130).

However, in the early Neopalatial period, sample symbols were no longer found only in ritual spaces outside the Palace of Knossos, but they were also mainly used in towns, many of which were founded or reached their peak during this period. That is why it is important to examine how the North Central Cretan towns were related to the Knossian elite regarding the social role of the sample symbols.

It was shown that the Knossian elite controlled strictly the use of early Neopalatial sample symbols in its immediate surroundings and allowed the reproduction of certain palatial ritual contexts (double axe stands in pillar crypts, tritons as libation vessels) in structures which 'cited' palatial architecture. Outside the area of Knossos the distribution of sample symbols does not seem to have followed any specific pattern (Table 2.26). Each site possessed one or more of these symbols, but never all of them, like the palace of Knossos, and the preferences or selection of certain symbols do not appear to follow some kind of prescribed hierarchical order. It is not clear, for example, why double axe mason's marks, a symbol category which appear to be strictly controlled by the Knossian elite from the previous period, were reproduced on elite palatial architecture at Archanes and Amnissos, but not at Tylissos, Vathypetro, Nirou Chani and Jouktas. Tylissos was the only site in the whole of North Central Crete which reproduced the double axe stand context (double axe symbolism, pillar crypt, libation receptacles). Poros, perhaps the richest town of North Central Crete in imported exotic and manufactured goods and very rich in ritual deposits, did not produce equally rich sample symbols. However, it was the only site in the whole of North Central Crete which produced a sealing document with representation of sample symbols. While most sites used large horns of consecration, Amnissos possessed a double axe mason's mark,

but no large horns of consecration, a circumstance which is not known in any palatial context of North Central Crete so far. Nirou Chani was the only site outside of Knossos with a fresco representing a sample symbol, and a concentration of other important symbols such as a large pair of horns of consecration and four bronze double axes, which are the largest found so far in Minoan Crete, but did not have any double axe stand or any mason's marks.

Considering that this disparity and random distribution of palatial symbolism in North Central Crete does not justify a centralised hierarchical prescription in the use of sample symbols, it is reasonable to assume that local elites were to some extent free to emulate the elite symbolism of the Knossian elite. The Knossian elite in the previous period had established elite symbolism in strategic ritual outposts of the area. Because of the powerful position of the Knossian elite in North Central Crete, exemplified in the construction of the largest palace on the island, this symbolism became widely acknowledged as the unquestionable and objective set of criteria of social distinction. By employing this symbolism in their communities, the local elites drew power in order to establish authority and claim a dynamic role in North Central Crete. The differential adoption of the palatial symbols of Knossos indicates that the Knossian elite did not exercise a strict control on the ways of use of palatial symbolism in these communities. Apparently, there was significant space for local interpretation of the symbols or aspects of their use, which best conveyed palatial authority to the local perception of negotiation of social power. The political independence of North central Cretan communities as resulting from the distribution and use of sample symbols agrees with the results of Ellen Adams (2007: 392) on the mechanisms of centralisation evidenced through the Knossian built environment and those of Dimopoulou (1997: 437) on the social aspects of the industrial economy at Poros, which suggest a significant degree of autonomy of the local populations from the palatial bureaucratic centralisation.

The political autonomy of the North Central Cretan towns and their relative freedom to use Knossian elite symbolism seems to be verified by the decreased use of these symbols in those towns which had already developed complex criteria to define social differentiation from the previous period. For example, the harbours of Poros and Amnisos offer very low representation of sample symbols. Even though they are regarded as Knossian harbours, they appear to have enjoyed political independence. The local elites had long learnt to negotiate social power in their communities on criteria such as exotic and industrial symbolism. This also explains the long absence of sample symbols at Poros already from the Prepalatial period. The close interdependence between Knossos and Poros remained stable throughout

these periods and is evident in the shared material culture. The chamber tomb of the Poros cemetery may have ‘hosted’ actual representatives of Knossos, perhaps officials responsible for the provision of imported products to Knossos.

There was one sample symbol which the Knossian elite controlled very strictly and that was the figure-of-eight shield. It appears that the figure-of-eight shield was the main emblem of the Knossian elite: if not as characteristic and widespread as the bull symbolism, it appears more exclusive. Unlike the bull symbolism, which was common in Prepalatial ritual contexts before the rise of the Knossian elite, the figure-of-eight shield was probably the only sample symbol which was introduced in the first place as a purely Knossian product. Its first appearance in North Central Crete was on a Protopalatial seal from Knossos most possibly associated with the emerging administrative system of the Palace. Moreover, unlike the bull symbolism, which in the early Neopalatial period was found in, admittedly restricted numbers, outside Knossos²⁷, the figure-of-eight shield was almost absent from all other sites apart from the Palace at Knossos. Even within the site of Knossos, the town, the Villas and the cemeteries did not produce one single example. By contrast, the Palace possessed an impressive number of a large diversity of artefact categories and highly valuable materials, such as faience and ivory, and ritual objects, such as figurines, or rare artefacts, such as the elaborate board game and a fresco. Most importantly, however, it produced a series of sealing documents exclusive to the Palace and, unlike bull representations, not found in any other site of North Central Crete. As already discussed, the men carrying the shields on these seals/sealings were probably officials of the palace of Knossos closely related to its powerful administrative authority. This is perhaps further confirmed by the fact that the symbol was strictly inaccessible to the elites of the other sites. The figure-of-eight shield was not, as the other symbols, a sign evoking palatial authority, but an actual token of the authority of the palace of Knossos, which could not be widely imitated. It strictly represented the real authority of the Palace and the real people, perhaps the actual military officers, who exerted this authority which was unique to the palace of Knossos.

Unlike the figure-of-eight shield, the large stone horns of consecration was the one symbol with most even and regular representation in the towns of North Central Crete. Knossos produced most examples, while Vathypetro, Archanes, Jouktas, Nirou Chani and perhaps

²⁷ Perhaps the only artefact category which was exclusively used by the Knossian elite was the bull scenes on frescoes. Otherwise, bull rhyta, representations on vessels and sealing documents were found outside Knossos (Rehak 1995; Hallager & Hallager 1995).

Tylissos²⁸ possessed one pair of horns each. The common denominator of those pairs of horns with known context is that they crowned structures related to cult in front of open areas available for communal cult. Such were the two tripartite shrines at Nirou Chani and Vathypetro, the Theatral area at Archanes, the Central Court of the Palace at Knossos in front of the Throne Room, the open area around the chasm and its new altar in front of the new shrine at Jouktas and possibly the area in front of the Temple Tomb. The uniform acceptance of the horns of consecration as the one symbol which was emblematic of elite symbolism may be explained by the increased importance of elite architecture which was uniformly acknowledged after the emergence of the palatial system and the construction of large and complex palaces.

A pattern which is also uniformly found in North Central Crete during this period is the popularity of bronze double axe hoards. At Tylissos, three or more small bronze double axes were deposited as offerings in a pillar crypt shrine. At Nirou Chani, four impressively large bronze double axes were stored in a small space of the Villa, where they were the focus of acts of veneration indicated by a hearth and a stone ritual vessel in the same context. At the peak sanctuary of Jouktas the double axes, which were offered in the Protopalatial period as individual depositions, were now collected into one unified hoard and placed in the foundation deposit, where the altar of the shrine was erected. At the cave of Arkalochori they were deposited together with other metallic artefacts. In no case were these double axes matched with any of the known double axe stone stands. It appears that their purpose was to emphasise the symbolic value of the double axe by the multiplied effect of accumulated double axes which could act as offerings, foci of cult or means of consecration.²⁹ Just like the single double axes in the Knossian pillar crypt contexts, these hoards retain the concept of unseen, concealed ritual treasure: at Tylissos they were confined in an isolated pillar crypt, at Nirou Chani in a small interior space, at Jouktas they were buried and at Arkalochori they are deposited in a remote cave.

The bronze double axe hoards of Arkalochori are exceptional and particular to the character of the specific cave shrine. The cave received mainly weapons, such as daggers and swords, and no other artefact categories, suggesting a ritual character possibly associated with a

²⁸ Its size is not recorded.

²⁹ The use of the two miniature ones from the 'Ivory Deposit' at Knossos may have been different (Evans 1901-2: 71-2; 1930: 401; Buchholz 1959: 37). The rest of the assemblage does not reveal any central role of these double axes and objects such as the ivory acrobats and the bull's head indicate that the objects of this deposit may have been parts of a bull leaping composition in small size. Unlike all other cases, these double axes were of minute size (2 cm long) and gilded.

military elite. It is not clear whether they were separate depositions of prominent individuals representing the elite of different sites from the area or the result of accumulated depositions of the Knossos palatial elite which demarcated its early Neopalatial boundary in this area. The military character of the offerings would justify the latter possibility, all the more when strategies claiming areas of control through symbols seem to have been commonly used by the Knossian elite since the Prepalatial period.

The tritons and common shells represent a pattern entirely different from what has been described so far, because it is related to citation of the past and the persistence of symbolic traditions. During this period, tritons and shells were not found in ritual contexts on the coastal sites of North Central Crete, but in inland sites, such as Knossos, Archanes and Jouktas. In reality, this means that the inhabitants of inland locations had to carry natural shells to their communities, but those communities which were close to the sea did not recognize their symbolic value. This peculiarity must be attributed to the long-lasting tradition of ritual use of shells at Knossos, Archanes and Jouktas inherited from the Prepalatial and Protopalatial periods. These people had learnt to appreciate shells as symbolic of the sea, a remote element which was associated with chthonic beliefs. On the other hand, the sophistication of symbolism within the palace led to new uses. Characteristically, natural tritons in ritual chthonic contexts were found outside the Palace of Knossos. Within the Palace, tritons were manufactured in precious materials and formed components of rich ritual assemblages. Natural tritons were found in ritual contexts outside the Palace.

In summary, the social role of sample symbols in early Neopalatial North Central Crete was determined by the Knossian elite. Thus, the introduction and use of new exclusive symbols, such as the figure-of-eight shield and the restricted use of others, such as the pillar crypt-double axe context and the use of double axe mason's marks established a widely recognized measure of social ranking in the area. The control of the Knossian elite over the use of these symbols allowed the differential emulation of a low number of these symbols and the isolated reproduction of certain palatial contexts by the local elites of North Central Cretan towns. In this context, the horns of consecration had been established as the most recognizable palatial elite symbol and it was adopted by almost all communities.

Late Neopalatial period (Table 2.23)

Most sites of North Central Crete were to a larger or smaller extent abandoned or in process of recovering after the LMIA destruction. Sample symbols were only found in three sites: Knossos, Archanes and Poros.

The communities of Archanes and Poros increased in social differentiation and, in parallel, intensified the criteria of elite symbolism of the previous period. Thus, at Archanes, the nucleation of symbols in the 'Palace' culminated in this period with the exclusive use of sample symbols only within its confines. The elite of Archanes imitated the strategies of the Knossian elite of the previous period and largely excluded the surrounding townspeople of elite symbolism. At the same time, it emphasised the element of structuration of ritual performance within the 'Palace' with structured depositions, groupings and oppositional arrangements of sample symbols.

Similarly, the traditional emphasis of the elite of Poros on a combination of material/exotic symbolism and elements of Knossian influence continued in LMIB, and, like in the previous period, was nucleated in the chamber tomb. Instead of the reproduction of double axe stand contexts, the Knossian influence was now represented by the repeated use of figure-of-eight shield symbolism.

At Knossos, however, huge changes brought a deep break with any known MMIII-LMIA pattern. The huge nucleation and diversity of sample symbols in the Palace and their controlled use within its confines was replaced by the use of pottery decorated with sample symbols and a wide diffusion of this pottery in the town and the villas. The pottery, belonging to the Special Palatial Tradition style, was a product of the palatial workshops, but it was an artefact category not popular for the representation of sample symbols in the previous period. These changes indicate that the MMIII-LMIA Knossian elite had largely renounced its previous strategies (exclusive use of material wealth, control and structuration in the use of sample symbols and highly significant performative contexts). The diffusion of figure-of-eight shield symbolism at Poros and the common use of Special Palatial Tradition pottery with representations of sample symbols in both Knossos and Archanes may reflect displacements of the Knossian elite during this period. However, the ways and the reasons why these happened are not clear. According to MacDonald (1990) the extensive LMIA destructions at the palace of Knossos caused a prolonged period of reconstruction throughout the LMIB period (*ibid.*) which may have led the early Neopalatial Knossian elite to move to Archanes. However, important MMIII-LMIA Knossian symbols were used in different ways in LMIB Archanes, showing a discontinuity or a local peculiarity: horns of consecration

appear to have been used only in interior spaces as foci of cult and not as crowning elements on the buildings, and double axe stands were not found in pillar crypts with mason's marks, but in elaborate ritual contexts. Also, tritons and shells were not found in libation contexts with pouring ritual equipment, as in MMIII-LMIA Knossos, but served as complementary in contexts where horns of consecration and double axe stands were foci of ritual practices. Similarly, the elite of Poros still emphasised material wealth in funerary contexts like in the previous period. It appears that the towns of North Central Crete retained their previous autonomy and local reception of Knossian symbolism.

Another argument against a displacement of the Knossian elite to Archanes is that the LMIB Palace of Knossos was the only site which produced sealing documentation bearing sample symbols. Such documentation was not found in the surrounding town of Knossos, Poros or Archanes. Seals and sealings show iconographical consistency with the previous period, revealing continuation with the previous elite system at least at an administrative level. A seal depicting a female figure with a ceremonial double axe and what could be a sacred garment and others representing the double axe crowning a bucranium, sacred knots, horns of consecration and a figure-of-eight shield from the Palace, as well as a small stone pair of horns of consecration from a ritual context in a building on the Royal Road show that, despite the lack of evidence, sample symbols probably continued to be used in the Palace during this period.

The presence of sealing documentation at the Palace of Knossos may suggest that the site was actually flourishing during this period. The absence of more complete evidence may be explained by the intense disturbance of LMIB layers at the Palace in subsequent periods. In case the Palace continued growing during this period, it can only be assumed that the Knossian elite may have actually expanded its power over the area of North Central Crete after the elimination of the local elites. In this scenario, the strict nucleation of elite symbolism in the Palace of Archanes would be interpreted as a more or less direct Knossian influence. Figure-of-eight shield artefacts found at Poros may have served as insignia of Knossian officials stationed in the harbour town of Knossos.

Final Palatial period (Table 2.24)

Just like in the previous period, the main sites which concentrated activity and the use of sample symbols during the Final palatial period were Knossos, Archanes and Poros. However, Archanes and Poros were in visible decline compared to the previous period and it appears that the Knossian elite may have controlled the two sites.

Overall, the patterns in the use of sample symbols reflect wider and dramatic socio-political changes. One major such change is the systematic and intense use of the cemeteries in all three communities, which constitutes an unprecedented circumstance in the Bronze Age history of the area. The cemeteries were not simply burial spaces but had become in this period arenas of display of social power with the deposition of prestigious grave offerings.

A second change was that the elite of the Palace relied much more on sealing documentation revealing a priority for strict administrative control that was not known in the Neopalatial period. A third change was that the Knossian elite of this period was much more keen to mark the stratification of the elite through symbols than ever before and this symbolism was more visible in the funerary contexts than anywhere else. All this indicates that the ruling elite of Knossos was not the same of the previous periods. Strategies of control were much more rigid and relied on static symbolism such as structured depositions for few participants, accumulation of material wealth and emblematic decoration rather than ritual action and performance engaging large numbers of people.

Sample symbols were considered as elite symbols and were nucleated in tombs which were prestigious either in their architecture or in their contents. The two female burials at Phourni represent the richest and most elaborate burials of LMII-III A North Central Crete. Their impressively rich assemblages, elaborate ritual practices and the dense use of the figure-of-eight shield symbolism establish a strong connection with the Knossian elite. These prominent female figures were probably buried at Archanes in an attempt to revive the early Neopalatial practice of using Phourni for the most prominent Knossian burials. The distribution of elite symbolism reflected burials of higher and lower elite status, thus illustrating high social hierarchy of the LMII-III A Knossian society. Thus, the LMII-III A elite of Knossos 'cited' traditional social strategies of symbolic topography of its predecessors in an attempt to claim power.

The citation of powerful Neopalatial elite symbolism was a primary strategy of the new Knossian elite. It was not only the burial of its high members at Phourni which invoked Prepalatial and Neopalatial elite traditions, but also the reproduction of double axe symbolism and contexts: pillar crypt context with double axe mason's marks and the possible physical transfer of an actual Neopalatial stand from the most prestigious Neopalatial grave/shrine and of slabs incised with mason's marks from the Neopalatial Palace to a LMII-III A tomb. These citation strategies work according to the scheme suggested by Jones (see above Section 1.2.3): they make reference to past practices but have new layers of meaning.

In this case, the new Knossian elite was associating past symbolism of mainly ritual function in the palaces and the shrine with funerary contexts, the distinctive feature of the new elite. In the same way can be interpreted the use of figure-of-eight shield symbolism. The main emblem of the Neopalatial Knossian elite was adopted by the new elite of the Palace but was used in the context of a rigid and much more centralised ruling system. Firstly, it overshadowed numerically every other symbol at Knossos. Secondly, it was nucleated in the palatial contexts and was adjusted to the rigid stratification of the elite: signet rings, which bore figure-of-eight shields and belonged to the two prominent females from Tholoi A and D at Phourni were made of gold, while those seals with the same symbol used by the officials at the Palace and their graves around Knossos were made of stone. Thirdly, figure-of-eight shield artefacts were highly prestigious: pieces of furniture decorated with ivory, sealing artefacts, pendants, made in precious material. Fourthly, there was a whole new series of sealing documents with standardised representations of the symbol related to the increased importance of administration at the Palace. These were found exclusively within the Palace. The impressive rise and the rigid control of the figure-of-eight shield symbolism in all the palatial and elite contexts reflects the growing awareness by the new elite of the significance of symbolism for the consolidation of its power. Thus, the revival of the figure-of-eight shield must be viewed as part of a strategy to appropriate the symbols of power of the MMIII-LMIA dominant Knossian elite by the new ruling elite of the Palace. It is interesting that in this process symbols like the horns of consecration or the bull were discarded. This may be partially interpreted as a rejection of the previous preference for performative activities which were exposed to open-air ritual spaces and to large populations, such as bull-leaping, bull hunting or large gatherings in the Central Court where the horns of consecration were standing. The double axe contexts were traditionally confined to interior spaces and to a few people for exclusive ritual performances and the figure-of-eight shield was the Neopalatial symbol with the greatest degree of exclusive and inaccessible use. The same is suggested by the structured deposition with the alabastra decorated with figure-of-eight shields in the small and interior space of the Throne Room. At the cemetery of Phourni, ritual is also conducted in small exclusive ritual spaces with emphasis on structured deposition as evidenced by the sacrificial performances in Tholos A and Tholos B. Moreover, the figure-of-eight shield was a symbol closely associated with the military aspect of the palatial elite, a profile which appears to have been intentionally underlined by the new power.

Postpalatial period (Table 2.25)

During the Postpalatial period, severe destructions affected the area and the Palace of Knossos was irreparably destroyed. There is evidence for partial re-habitation of certain spaces in the palace and from the villas used as small domestic shrines. The complete disappearance of the figure-of-eight shield symbolism explicitly indicates the definite fall of the Knossian elite. The sharp nucleation of a large number of sample symbols at Knossos during the two previous periods was replaced by a wide distribution of low numbers of symbols in dispersed sites of North Central Crete. These sites were mostly located to the north of Knossos, where Tylissos, Amnissos and Poros revived together with a number of newly founded settlements in their hinterland.

Generally, the distribution patterns of the symbols indicate a dichotomy in the area. Sites which were closer to Knossos and traditionally under its influence display an emphasis on the use of horns of consecration as focal objects of ritual practice. This was the case at the Palace and the surrounding Knossos villas, but also the town of Tylissos, while a sherd with the representation of horns of consecration and a double axe was found on Jouktas. It appears that the horns of consecration and the double axe were the elite symbols of these populations and were used in small shrines. On the other hand, settlements which were new in the area between Knossos and the north coast regarded innovative sets of symbols (fish, bird, papyri, octopi and the palm tree) as elite symbolism and downgraded the horns of consecration and double axes to lower-class symbols. The difference between the two groups is also reflected in the use of contexts. While both areas produced town and funerary contexts, the sample symbols in the 'Knossian' group were nucleated in town contexts of ritual performance, while in the new communities they were nucleated in the funerary contexts.

These patterns reveal two different trends: one favouring the modest revival of the main palatial symbols of the Neopalatial period within the communities which once generated them; and the other favouring the introduction of new popular symbols in recently founded small settlements of the hinterland.

2.6 Conclusions

Overall, the changes in the patterns of the symbols in North Central Crete essentially reflect the process of the emergence, rise, transformation and fall of the Knossian elite and the effect that these changes had on the surrounding populations of the area.

In the Prepalatial period, the emerging Knossian elite of the West Court House employed strategies of ritualisation in ritual spaces of the surrounding area and demarcated its identity in the cemetery of Phourni by differentiating symbolic practices and uses of material culture and sample symbols from Tholos Gamma. During the Late Prepalatial period, changes in the use of these practices indicated the end of tensions at Phourni and the supremacy of the Knossian elite. At the same time in the Palace of Knossos Minoan symbols were reinvented by the elite to construct its identity. In the Neopalatial period these symbols came to be recognized as the main means to measure high social status in the area and were adopted by the elites of North Central Crete for the legitimisation of their own power in their local communities. The control of the Knossian elite over the use of these symbols reached its peak and was reflected in its controlled emulation and the isolated reproduction of certain palatial contexts by the local elites of North Central Cretan elites and possibly by the role of the Palace of Knossos as the centre of performative activities which attracted ceremonial delegations with the respective symbols from the elites of the surrounding communities. In the Late Neopalatial period, the situation in North Central Crete is obscure. However, despite the lack of evidence from the Palace, it is possible that the Knossian elite recovered and continued flourishing after the LMIA destructions. In the Final Palatial period, major socio-political changes indicated the change of the appearance of a new elite at the Palace of Knossos which altered important cultural features, but at the same time appropriated emblematic symbols and symbolic practices of its predecessors in order to consolidate its new power. In the Postpalatial period, the Knossian elite was definitely defeated and only remnants of its old power were identified in the use of its old symbols in the Palace of Knossos and some of its main areas of former control. The emergence of new settlements with innovative symbolic motifs indicates the presence of new populations which played a significant role in the area.

The above summary of the main conclusions from the study of the social role of symbols in North Central Crete has shown the close connection between the sample symbols and the important socio-political changes which took place in the area. According to the theoretical and methodological framework, as established in the introduction of this study, these changes

were viewed as the results of human action and especially the elite of Knossos and the smaller communities of the area. It was also possible to detect the agency of symbols and their independent action according to the views of Peirce's synechism and semiosis. Horns of consecration started as a symbol related to libations in funerary contexts and was soon attached to an increasingly emphasised 'architecturality', taking the most conspicuous symbolic place on the palace at Knossos. At a next stage, its position established it as the most recognizable symbol of elite power and was reproduced by the surrounding communities as a political means for the legitimisation of their power within their own communities. After the fall of the Knossian elite, it was still remembered by the locals or appropriated by the successors at Knossos in the Palace and its areas of control, as an object with strong effect on the local memory and the long history of the place which established it as the emblem of elite power. For this reason, it was given special importance to examples of citation, a major feature in North Central Crete which showed that contemporaries and descendants of the Knossian elite repeatedly drew symbolic power from their most effective strategies in order to claim effective recognition of authority. The use and impact of structured depositions were also highlighted in this study. It was shown that structured depositions were used to demarcate cultural identity in the Prepalatial period and a strict control of symbolic power in the Protopalatial (Anemospilia) and the Neopalatial period, when the use of symbols and their context in the Palace took a highly prescribed form, with areas of the building attracting certain symbols (horns of consecration in Palace) and others being arranged in juxtaposed (double axe frescoes in Palace) or radiating (double axe stands in villas) areas. These structured depositions were placed in interplay between them, promoting mobility of people and symbols in the area of the Palace and the Villas. In the Final palatial period, by contrast, they became an indicator of rigid and static performances, reflecting the centralised political and administrative power of the period.

In terms of Peircian analysis, most sample symbols in North Central Crete served as indexes of aspects of the power of Knossian elite in its various stages of rise, maturation and fall. The Knossian elite systematically indexed its own symbolism by reproducing symbols and context of the Palace of Knossos in the spaces which it desired to control. This was achieved already with the perforated shells of the West Court elite which were also deposited at Phourni, and later by the storage symbolism, the mason's marks and the horns of consecration at Anemospilia, and, at the peak of its power, with the controlled distribution of its symbols in North Central Crete. It was shown that the symbols which each North Central Cretan community adopted were different or formed different combinations, thus creating a

seemingly arbitrary distribution. Thus, the indexical relationships between the Neopalatial communities and the Knossian elite symbolism were largely defined by the interpretant, that is the local elites or the Knossian elite, in the case they were assigned the specific ceremonial role played by the symbols. It may also be suggested that the horns of consecration which relied on much more 'objective' criteria of relationship with the Knossian elite in some way functioned as icons of political power and were therefore adopted as the most recognizable emblem in the area. By 'objective' criteria, I mean that being, arguably, the most visible symbol in the most conspicuous position on elite architecture contributed to the high degree of identification with its conceptual source. The same may be suggested for the figure-of-eight shield symbol which was iconic of the Knossian military elite, in this case because of its exclusive association with this group of people and no other.

Performance was at the centre of the discussion on the social role of symbols in North Central Crete. Given that the main means of political influence of the Knossian elite in its surroundings was ritualisation, it is understood that performance was the action which materialised this strategy. As a consequence of the power of the Knossian elite over the area of North Central Crete in the Neopalatial period, performance was perceived as reproduction of the ritual action which was associated with the adopted symbols by each community. It is clear that open spaces in front of elite buildings crowned with horns of consecration were the major ceremonial spaces of the Palace and most of North Central Cretan communities. Feasting assemblages, libation vessels and offering tables speak of large gatherings of people in these spaces. Other ritual spaces were confined to interior spaces and destined to hold smaller groups for exclusive performative events. These were the contexts which were related with the double axe stands and were possibly associated with sacrifices and libations of private character. It was hypothesised that Knossos assigned certain ceremonial duties to each of the communities in the area and that periodically they may have attended ceremonies at Knossos where they participated representing the specific symbolic role they were given. This type of performance would have strengthened the ties between the Knossian elite and its surrounding communities and would have provided the opportunity to renovate its power in the centre of its authority and with the emotional impact which the architectural monumentality and the material wealth and importance of the symbols of the Palace offered. The above chapter has considered the data on the published sample symbols from the selected sites of North Central Crete. The main patterns regarding the social role of symbols have been discussed within the frame of the present knowledge of Minoan bibliography regarding the political changes in Bronze Age Crete. The interpretation of these patterns has so far

produced important new proposals and suggestions on the dialectical social dynamics between the communities of this area and the selected sample symbols. The following chapter expands the same study to the area of East Crete.

Chapter 3: East Crete (Figs. 3.1-58; Tables 3.1-3.30)

Unlike North Central Crete, the study area of East Crete does not include an area which is geographically unified and clearly defined by its natural borders (mountains, coastline). East Crete is a rugged and fragmented geographical area, where communication was achieved mostly by maritime routes which connect coastal towns. Therefore, the sites of East Crete selected for this study - Pseira, Mochlos, Gournia, Palaikastro and Zakros - form geographically isolated units and include their immediate surroundings (fig. 3.1). Apart from this difference between North Central and East Crete, the criteria of selection of sites in both areas are the same: a) adequate publication record; b) they appear to have played a significant role in the socio-political developments of the area, on the basis of their size, location and wealth of material culture. Thus, two neighbouring harbour towns, Pseira and Mochlos, provide a comparable set of data for small Minoan urban units; Gournia represents a middle-sized town, which appears to claim a 'palatial' role through the presence of a 'palatial' building; lastly, Palaikastro, one of the largest and most complex urban centres in Minoan Crete, albeit without a known palatial building, stands in strong contrast to Zakros, where an extraordinarily rich palatial building lies next to a small harbour town. Examining the social complexity of these sites and the relationship between them will also help to establish a more uniform framework for comparison between the complex network of diverse sites in North Central Crete and the isolated settlements of East Crete.

3.1 Pseira (Figs. 3.2-3.8; Tables 3.1-3.4, 3.7)

Pseira is a Minoan town located on a small island off the coast of north eastern Crete (fig. 3.2). Occupation of the site lasted from the FN period to LM III and, as many East Cretan sites, it was violently destroyed in LMIB, at the time of its greatest size and prosperity. The island was first explored in 1906–07 by Richard Seager (1910) and was further investigated between 1984 and 1992 by Philip P. Betancourt and Costis Davaras in an American-Greek collaboration as part of their Pseira Project. A complete series of publications of the results (Pseira I-X) has proven to be a valuable tool in the present study, both because of the critical revision of Seager's early excavations and because of the systematic recording of important new data.

The town, built on a rocky promontory on the south east of the island (fig. 3.3), is mainly dated to LMI. EM-MM remains are limited and scattered, and in LMIII the site was only partially reoccupied.³⁰ The LMI town comprised approximately 60 buildings that were arranged in blocks and accessed through a network of streets (fig. 3.4). The main streets converged to a central open square (*Plateia*), which was the focal point of the town. A second major topographical landmark was the harbour at the lower edge of the town, which was connected to the main settlement through the so-called Grand Staircase. The east-west axis created between these two focal points divides the town into two main areas, which the excavators have called area A, to the south, and area B, to the north.³¹ The cemetery of Pseira is situated 310 m to the south west of the Minoan town, on the south slope of a hill overlooking the sea (fig. 3.3). It was in use from the FN period to MMIIB, when it was suddenly abandoned and no LMI cemetery has been discovered so far on the island or the coast opposite it (Pseira VI: 21).

Prepalatial period

During this period, the evidence from the town is very scarce and sample symbols are only represented at the cemetery. Their use presents some interesting patterns regarding the social role of symbolism.

At the cemetery natural shells and tritons are the only sample symbols recorded during this period. Their exact use is not clear, but the preponderance of edible species, such as

³⁰ The occasional habitation is supported by the little pottery of limited types (Mountjoy 2011), which has not yet been published (Betancourt 2004: 26).

³¹ Areas C, D and F, which extend to the north west of the town, are not considered here, as they have been only been partially excavated (Pseira IV).

Monodonta and *Patella* (Tables 3.1-2) seems to indicate a symbolic consumption of shells, either as part of a funerary ritual of the living or as part of offerings of ‘food’ to the dead. The same species were predominant in domestic contexts of the town and they appear to have formed part of the daily diet of the Pseiran people. Thus, at Pseira shells served as indexes of domestic contexts and extended social practices of the living in the funerary space.

The domestic character of the grave goods at Pseira has been already identified (Betancourt 2004: 22) and stands in accordance with a generally modest burial space that was the Pseiran cemetery. Comprised of 19 small and simple tombs, which were repeatedly used for burials throughout its history, it reflected the conservative and traditional character of the Pseiran people and their reluctance to introduce mortuary innovations (Betancourt 2011a: 99): new types of prestigious funerary architecture, such as the house tombs, popular in other East Cretan cemeteries, were represented by only two ‘much more informal’ (Pseira VII: 125) examples at Pseira; exotic and rare objects, typical imports in other EM-MM harbour towns, were represented only by bronze and obsidian tools, which were, however, widely distributed across the cemetery (fig. 3.5, Tables 3.1-3.2) and consumed as standard categories of simple domestic goods (common implements and tools, Pseira VII: 129-130); ritual practice at the cemetery was very limited with cooking pots and cups being notoriously absent (Pseira VI: Tables; VII: 129-130). Overall, the architecture, the grave goods and the ritual action at the Pseiran cemetery reflect very low intention of social distinction.

There appears to have been, however, one exception to this pattern, which is also outlined in the symbolic use of shell at the cemetery of Pseira. Grave 7 produced a massive concentration of 157 shells (Pseira VII: 136), when the average number in all other Pseiran graves was just five (Table II.A-B). The same grave also included the highest percentage of tritons and murexes (figs. 3.5-3.6, Tables 3.1-3.2) found in any other grave of the cemetery. Unlike *Monodonta* and *Patella*, tritons and murexes are species which are hard to fish (Pseira IV: 126) and their presence in the grave indicates an intentional display of its owners aimed at showing off accessibility to rare objects.

Grave 7 (Pseira VII: 63-8), appears to have been exceptional in more respects: firstly, it was built close to the cliff, at the far end of the cemetery, next to the oldest FN-EM graves; secondly, it stopped being used in EMIIB, as is indicated by the associated pottery, whereas all other graves continued in use until MM (Pseira: Table II.B); thirdly, a unique EMIIB golden artefact was found inside the grave, which is unparalleled at Pseira (Pseira VI: 135).

It appears that this grave must have belonged to a thriving family, which enjoyed a prominent position in the Pseiran community. According to the excavators, the Pseiran graves were

family graves and their total number of 35 corresponds to the estimated number of 50-60 houses (Pseira VII: 135). Ending the use of one of them (Grave 7) must have meant that a new burial space was needed for that family and it appears that the community was ready to provide it. It may be, thus, suggested that the 'sacrifice' of the specific burial space was carried out in communal consensus.

The use of shells by the owners of Grave 7, who clearly stood out in the Pseiran community, is indicative of the significant role of shells in the symbolic social practices of the people of Pseira. The fact that abundant numbers of similar species of shells were found spread both inside and outside the grave suggests that they were deposited in one single episode when the grave was 'sealed' in EMIIB. The sudden pause of pottery and the deposition of the unique gold ornament are also dated in the same period. Most importantly, the event of terminating the use of the grave appears to have been celebrated with feasting activity. The terrace next to the grave, few animal bones and a rare cooking pot fragment (Pseira VII: 128, 136) attest to a funerary feasting ceremony, which involved structural arrangements and equipment that are unique at the cemetery of Pseira.

In summary, the overall use of sample symbols in Prepalatial Pseira was poor and in accordance with the modestly furnished graves and the low sophistication of funerary ritual. Shells, including tritons and a variety of mostly edible species, were deposited in the graves of Pseira. However, the example of a distinct burial in Grave 7 revealed that the quantity and the rarity of certain species of shells, including the triton, formed important components of social distinction at Pseira together with symbolic topography, the sacrifice of burial space, as well as the display of rare metals and ritual performance. Lastly, it has to be noted that with the exception of the special appreciation of the tritons in Grave 7, shells at the cemetery of Pseira were viewed as symbolic only in a generic way and no special symbolic value was attributed separately to the species representing the common shell.

Protopalatial period

Tritons and shells continued being widely offered as ordinary grave goods by the Pseiran people, but no special use of them or any other symbols are reported from this period. In the town, two scoops - a typical East Crete vessel type - were decorated with rockwork and 'cockleshells' (common shells) on the rim. This would mean that in the Protopalatial period the common shell acquired a cultural symbolic expression and was viewed as an icon of its natural counterpart. The Pseiran scoops were found in the elite contexts of the Protopalatial

town, such as the rich House AA and the Plateia Building, and they seem to have been considered as prestigious items.

Early Neopalatial period

Not much evidence is known from this period, as the LMIB reconstructions in the town left little remains of the previous periods. A significant storage jar decorated with double axes alternating with bucrania is dated to this period, but it does not form part of any meaningful pattern within the site. However, it forms the earliest appearance of the double axe symbol in Pseira and the fact that it was found in Building AB, the wealthiest house of the town, shows a continued connection between sample symbols and the Pseiran elite.

Late Neopalatial period

LMIB is the best represented period at Pseira in terms of evidence and the study of the patterns of the sample symbols has produced significant results. The main sample symbol used in this period was the triton. Its use formed part of a pattern which involved a number of standardised ritual assemblages found at different locations across the town. These assemblages, here referred to as the ‘Pseiran assemblages’, are identified by standard components repeated in all the examples: one triton shell, one bull-shaped rhyton, one or more rhyta of other types, and occasionally a high quality stone vessel (figs. 3.7).³² It has to be stressed that the tritons in the ‘Pseiran assemblages’ may have played the role of pouring vessels, as is indicated by the technical adjustments of some examples (Pseira I: 44, Pl. 148). This significant property and the predominance of rhyta and libation vessels define the Pseiran assemblages mainly as groups of ritual pouring equipment (Table 3.7). Therefore, it can be suggested that the triton as component of the ‘Pseiran assemblage’ was perceived by the people of Pseira as an index of the act of pouring with strong performative properties in ritual action.

Four such assemblages have been identified in different parts of the town: the Plateia Building (PB), Building BQ, the ‘House of the rhyta’ (AF) and Building AB (fig. 3.7). The topographical distribution of the ‘Pseiran assemblages’ in the town seems to be the result of an intentional selection of structured depositions within the urban space: the extreme southern tip of the town (AF), the port which formed the main entrance to the town (BQ), the wealthiest house of the town (AB) and the main building of the central square (PB) (fig. 3.7).

³² Betancourt (2001: 145) identifies three similar assemblages based on the presence of rhyta, and calls them ‘rhyta hoards’. Here, a wider set of criteria is preferred, as explained in the text.

Thus, their location marked foci of ritual performance which were functional not only in terms of active ceremonial space, but also in terms of relative symbolic topography.

The 'Pseiran assemblages', however, were not perceived as static structured depositions but as active symbols, whereby movement stressed their performative properties. All the four examples were associated with rich amounts of feasting vessels (Table 3.3), which exceeded the needs of an ordinary household. For example, a significant number of rhyta found in Building BQ were placed inside each other, suggesting a temporary state of storage of ceremonial equipment in the building (Pseira I: 12). This suggests that even the domestic spaces, where 'Pseiran assemblages' were found, occasionally acquired public character. Whenever evidence was sufficient, it was clear that these assemblages were stored in an upper floor in isolated parts of the houses. This pattern points to a temporal 'appropriation' of the prestigious cultic material by certain families in the town. A better look at the evidence shows that these houses may have also been part of a newly organised set of ceremonial facilities in the town, which deliberately displayed a mixed domestic-public character. The plan of the 'House of the Rhyta' resulted from LMI modifications and additions to the pre-existing Block AF. Similarly, Building AC was founded after the LMIA destruction over older structures (Pseira II: 129) and was decorated with palatial style relief frescoes. Buildings PB and AF have recently produced painted relief frescoes of the same technique and dating (Betancourt 2001: 147), implying a close association to Building AC/'Shrine'.

The performance of such feasts would have required large urban spaces for the accommodation of large groups of participants. Building AC could be one such space as it presents prominent palatial and ceremonial features (Table 3.4) and has been characterised as an independent public shrine of the town (Seager 1910: 32; Betancourt 2004). Although it did not contain any 'Pseiran assemblages', it did produce significant evidence for feasting activity, as well as fragments of a few natural tritons (Pseira II: 126-130; Betancourt 2011b: 405-6). However, the most spacious area in the town was the central square (fig. 3.8), which has been characterised as 'very large for a small town' (Betancourt 1995: 165). The same area produced the piece of a triton with marks of sawing, the leg of a possible bull-shaped vessel and two more rhyta (Pseira IV: 141, 182). Most importantly, on one of its sides was found a kernos (Pseira IV: 167, 298), which may have served as the receptive locus for the libations offered by the 'Pseiran assemblages' (fig. 3.8).

From the above it becomes clear that an apparently predetermined selection of symbolic artefacts, assigned to symbolically strategic locations within the settlement, allowed the libation and feasting equipment to be visibly transferred from its storage spaces of non-use

and through procession to the focal places of performance (Betancourt 2001: 148). It is therefore clear that the intention of storing the assemblages in places other than those where they were actually used was to make them conspicuous to the community through ritual movement. This ritual procession would culminate in the active use of the Pseiran assemblages with the participation of the onlookers at selected foci of performance.

In accordance with these innovations, the components of the 'Pseiran assemblages' belong to new categories of artefacts not known previously at Pseira, such as the bull vessels and the rhyta decorated with newly introduced symbols, such as double axes and figure-of-eight shields of the so-called Special Palatial Tradition (Betancourt 2004; 2011).³³ The symbols of the double axe and the figure-of-eight shield were exclusively associated with the 'Pseiran assemblages' and not found in any other deposit, context or even artefact category in the town.

All this indicates that in LMIB certain households in the town acquired an elevated position in the community. These families displayed their new status through innovative architecture with palatial decoration and contents, built at strategic locations of the town. Most importantly, though, these families had acquired the right to play an active role in the storage and perhaps also the ceremonial procession of the Pseiran assemblages, the main components of public ritual performance in the town.

In this highly structured and socially meaningful symbolic pattern, the exceptionally prominent role of the triton seems to bear a special significance. Its fixed presence and patterned behaviour in the main symbolic units, which regulated the performative activities in the town, suggest its elevated importance in Pseira, compared to the less used double axe and figure-of-eight shield, which appear only on pottery and had a less visible impact. It would be methodologically hard to establish a connection of the shell symbolism between the cemetery of the previous periods and the LMIB town, both because of the chronological gap and the relative importance of the triton in the Prepalatial/Protopalatial funerary context. The high valuation of the triton in LMIB Pseira must be interpreted in its own context. The LMIB contexts favour the concepts of performance and ritual action. And although tritons still formed part of the LMIB Pseiran daily diet, the selected examples, which composed the 'Pseiran assemblages', were treated as very distinct objects from their secular counterparts. In their new LMIB ceremonial function, they were viewed not as containers of food appropriate for feasting, but as objects whose shape was naturally adequate or technically adapted to

³³ It has to be noted that only six Marine Style sherds are recorded from Pseira, of which only one bears tritons (Mountjoy 1972, fig. 2). No context is provided for this vessel and for this reason it is not included in this study.

receive and serve liquid. They embodied the properties of a manufactured rhyton, but as objects of nature they indexed the flow of the sea water, whence they derived. These properties adjusted perfectly to the needs of libation, which, highlighted through the elaborate and structured ‘Pseiran assemblages’, were elevated to the focal act of ritual performance in LMIB Pseira.

Final Palatial/Postpalatial periods

The town was only partially inhabited during these periods and has produced no sample symbols.

3.1.1 Conclusion

In summary, symbolism in Pseira started in the modest Prepalatial cemetery with natural shells and tritons commonly deposited as ritually consumed food or as symbolic nutrition to the dead extending the simple daily practices of the townsfolk to the cemetery. However, the transformation of ordinary daily practices into simple symbolic acts could occasionally take the form of distinct symbolic events by effectively increasing the quantity, quality (rarity) and performative potential of the symbol, as indicated by the example of shell deposition in Grave 7.

The Protopalatial and early Neopalatial periods show an emerging concern with elite symbolism, first with the ‘shell scoops’ and later with the large storage vessel decorated with bucrania and double axes. These elaborate objects were found in rich private residences or public spaces, indicating the involvement of families in the dynamics, which promoted social developments at Pseira.

In the late Neopalatial period, this trend took a highly developed and fixed form, with the renovated elite households of the town being actively involved in the storage and display of public performative symbols, the assemblages and contexts of use of which were highly structured and formalised.

3.2 Mochlos (Figs. 3.9-3.23; Tables 3.5-3.12)

Mochlos is a small island off the north eastern coast of Crete. In antiquity the islet was connected to the adjacent plain by an isthmus that provided excellent shelter for ships and a bridge for land traffic (fig. 3.9; Soles 2009: 108-9). The first excavations on the island were carried out by Seager in 1908. A second series of excavations are being conducted in the last 20 years by a Greek-American collaboration directed by Costis Davaras and Jeffrey Soles (Soles & Davaras 2003; Barnard & Brogan 2003; Soles 2008; Soles & Davaras 2011). So far three campaigns have been realized (1989-1994, 2004-5 and 2009-2010) uncovering significant LMIB remains on the island and the opposite coastal plain (fig. 3.9). EM and LMIII evidence, from the cemeteries on the island and on the coast (Limenaria) respectively, adds valuable information about the history of the site (fig. 3.9-10).

The LMIII and later historical occupation layers, denudation and a possible plundering of the best preserved houses after the LMIB destruction (Seager 1909: 277; Soles 2009: 11) are mainly responsible for the fragmentary surviving evidence of the town.

Prepalatial Period

During the EMII period, Mochlos was one of the most prosperous settlements in Crete standing out for the locally produced specialised artefacts and the exotica which were imported in its vigorously active harbour (Branigan 1991; Carter 2004; Colburn 2008). Despite the settlement's wealth, the Mochlos cemetery, perhaps the richest burial site in EM Crete, produced a surprisingly small number of sample symbols (Table 3.5). This paucity concerns both its prestigious West Terrace house tombs I-II-III and IV-V-VI and the more modest South Slope cemetery (figs. 3.11, Table 3.5-3.6). No sample symbols have been so far reported from the urban site either, despite some recent evidence for a similarly thriving Prepalatial town (Soles 2009: 9-10; 2010: 3).

A contextual analysis of the few sample symbols may shed some light to the reasons of this paucity. Three small metal double axes were found together in Chamber II of Tomb I-II-III (fig. 3.11). They are unique mainly because they are the earliest known in Minoan Crete, with slightly later specimens deriving from similarly rich burials in South-Central Crete (Branigan 1970: 84). Both in Mochlos and in South-Central Crete, the bronze double axes were small-sized or fine objects, not fit for use as tools or weapons. Thus, the earliest appearances of double axes in Minoan Crete do not appear to have served any utilitarian purpose.

It has been argued that the double axe has eastern origins and was introduced to Crete in the EM period (Hood 2003). Indeed, the contemporaneous Near Eastern examples were also used for symbolic purposes and very early on they had been disassociated from their previous practical utility as military weapons (Buchholz 1959; Hood 2003). Moreover, their adoption by rich Minoan graves can be understood as part of a wider strategy, which had raised the importation of exotica from the East to one of the primary components of the construction of elite status identity (Schoep 2006). Prepalatial elites 'actively transformed their knowledge of and access to distant lands into powerful symbols of elite status' (Colburn 2008: 205 citing Sheratt & Sheratt 1991, and Knapp 1998). The double axes of Mochlos should, therefore, be seen as products of a wider elite strategy of social differentiation based on the display of 'exotic symbolism'.

This is further supported by the context of the Mochlos double axes. They were found in the most prominent tomb of the cemetery (I-II-III), which contained the largest amount of exotica in a total of 28 tombs (Colburn 2008), was entirely constructed in stone masonry and was situated in the most prestigious area of the cemetery, the West Terrace area (fig. 3.11). Thus, the 'exotic' double axes of Prepalatial Mochlos were not viewed as symbols in their own right, but were attached to a generic 'elite symbolism'. They functioned as indexes of elite status for the wealthy merchants of Mochlos, together with the accumulation of other exotica, prestigious funerary architecture and symbolic topography.

Estimations of the correlation between the numbers of burials and the population of the settlement suggest that the Mochlos tombs were family tombs (Soles & Davaras 1992: 424-5; Soles 1992). The family of Tomb I-II-III was the most successful in securing for themselves the most prestigious grave at Mochlos. Evidence from this grave shows that the competing elite families of Mochlos did not just accumulate exotic wealth to deposit it in prestigious funerary buildings. Their claim for power was becoming explicit as they displayed those artefacts in daily life. It has been argued that most of the Mochlos cemetery artefacts were used as body ornaments in life, as they bear traces of wear (Colburn 2008: 215, 219). This means that they formed portable and repetitively conspicuous manifestations of social status. This appears to have been the case also for the small Mochlos double axes from Tomb I-II-III. The two lead ones were found together with two small 'buckle-shaped' lead objects (Seager 1912: 22-37), which apparently provided an attachment mechanism to the double axes. Double axes as bodily ornaments are known from Prepalatial Mesara in the form of pendants (Branigan 1970: 84). It is very likely, therefore, that the Mochlos double axes were not simply deposited as votive offerings (Seager 1912: 22-37), but they were used as body

ornaments and played an active social role in constructing and maintaining status identity for their owners during their lives but also after. This function is in accordance with the performative properties of symbols as defined by Preucel and post-processualism,³⁴ who stressed their ability to stimulate emotional experience and enhance historical continuity and memory. The bronze double axes of Mochlos were not used in active ritual action, but it may be suggested that, by stimulating undoubted cognitive and long-lasting responses as symbols of social distinction in the community of Mochlos, they possessed ‘social performative properties’.

During the same period, in the more modest South Cemetery of Mochlos (fig. 3.11) social strategies of symbolism adjusted to less impressive resources. The owners of the later MMIB Tomb A had encased in its construction two EMIIA burials possibly transferred from elsewhere (fig. 3.12; Soles & Davaras 1992:420-1). One of the EMIIA burials contained three jugs and fragments of natural tritons, a deposition which could be characterised as poor in comparison to the West Terrace burials.

Tritons seem to have been ‘disqualified’ from the rich graves of Mochlos because they were natural objects available in the local environment, as opposed to the ones which required highly specialised skills and prestigious materials and were imported from distant and exotic lands. Objects such as a manufactured shell rosette, a shell matrix and a ring made of conch shell (Seager 1912: 48-49, fig. 20; Watrous 2005: 112) were deposited inside Tomb I-II-III together with other valuables. By contrast, concentrations of natural shells such as simple limpets and cowries were only deposited outside the same grave (Soles 1992), possibly as later offerings. This pattern illustrates how shell symbolism was subject to the social criteria of elite symbolism at Mochlos. Natural shells were viewed by the Mochlos inhabitants as low-class symbols, while those treated by specialised workmen were of elevated symbolic status. The latter would then be accepted within the elite burial architecture, while the natural shells would be limited to a simple offering deposition outside it.

At first sight it is not clear why the Protopalatial owners of Tomb A would have wanted to attach their burial to poor EMIIA ones. The Syrian cylinder seal (fig. 3.12) found in Tomb A indicates a desire to claim part of the exotic symbolism of the rich West Terrace burials, but, as a whole, its grave goods can be characterised as rather poor. The two encased EMIIA burials are also poor, but they display exceptional performative aspects with the inclusion of the earliest known cremation in Crete (Soles & Davaras 1992: 419-420) and with a set of jugs

³⁴ See introduction, Section 1.2.3.

and one or more tritons possibly used as libation vessels. The emphasis on ritual practice forms a wider pattern in the South Slope Cemetery, as opposed to the West Cemetery (Tables 3.5-3.6). Moreover, the antiquity of the attached graves enhanced the concept of ancestral reverence and converted the act of burial encasement into an act of integration of tradition and commemoration, and consequently of further enhancement of ritual practice and ideology. It appears, then, that the owners of Tomb A in the poorer South Slope Cemetery, being unable to compete with the material criteria set by the West Terrace elite, emphasised the symbolic effect of performance (cremation and libation) and of citation of past time and past ancestral space, in order to claim a higher social position in the Mochlos community.

In conclusion, the exotic double axes of the West Terrace elite and the 'humble' natural tritons of the South Slope lower-class people summarise the symbolism of social differentiation in Prepalatial Mochlos. In light of the above, it is now understood why sample symbols were so scarce in the impressively rich cemetery of Mochlos, as it is evident that mostly elements of 'foreign' and skillful manufacture were symbolic for the EM Mochlos inhabitants. The ostentatious display of material wealth was regarded as sufficient to convey elite identity to their owners, while lower-class inhabitants would resort to ritual practice and performance as a means of conspicuous symbolism when access to exotica or specialised artefacts was not possible.

Protopalatial period

During this period there was a decrease in the population of Mochlos and the cemetery underwent significant decline in its use and wealth. Despite the important evidence for ritual activity deriving from the town, apart from a possible schematic representation of a double axe on a seal, no sample symbols are known from the up-to-date recorded and published material (Seager 1909; 1912).

Early Neopalatial period

At the cemetery, a large burial jar bearing incised double axes on the rim was used for an infant internment. The burial, like all other infant burials at the cemetery, did not contain any grave goods. Moreover, being a single example, it does not fall in any pattern which could reveal aspects of the social role of the symbol. In the town, two bronze double axes found in a hoard were tools and their social role will be discussed in the following section, where similar LMIB material provides more information about their function.

Late Neopalatial period

During this period, the settlement expanded to the plain across the island, developed a significant industrial unit known as the Artisans' Quarter (henceforth, AQ) and intensified the exploitation of the rural landscape through farmsteads, while the 'international' character of the Mochlos harbour was revived (fig. 3.9). The importation of copper from Cyprus raised Mochlos to one of the major staging points on the trade routes connecting Crete to the Levant and, once more, brought with it wealth and a range of exotic imports.

In this framework, it is not surprising that the best represented category of sample symbols are double axes made of bronze. An impressive number of bronze double axes were found in larger bronze artefact hoards distributed across the town of Mochlos (fig. 3.13; Table 3.7). Most of these hoards were concentrated in two buildings, B2 and C3.

B2 is regarded as the ceremonial centre of LMI Mochlos (fig. 3.14, Table 3.8), while C3, which is located right next to it, appears to have been the main centre of production and circulation of bronze artefacts in the settlement (fig. 3.15).³⁵ The bronze hoards of Mochlos can be divided into two different categories, found in B2 and C3 respectively: those in B2 contained mostly large basins and ingots, while those in C3 contained mostly tools and implements (Table 3.7).

Surprisingly, the hoards found in the ceremonial centre B2, albeit of ritual nature, did not contain any double axes. They comprised large bronze basins, which were probably used in drinking ceremonies (Soles 2008: 143). By contrast, the double axe hoards found in C3 do not appear to have had a ceremonial character, as they were dominated by tools.³⁶ Indeed, two of them have been characterised by the excavators as a foundry and a trader's hoard respectively (Table 3.7). The third hoard found in C3 contained the only double axe safely identified as ceremonial. However, only half of this double axe was deposited and was probably destined to be melted and recycled for bronze together with the other incomplete and broken implements found in the same hoard. Overall, it appears that the C3 hoards were not assemblages of primarily ritual but rather of industrial character.

Despite the lack of sample symbols in the ceremonial centre B2 and the utilitarian nature of the double axes in C3, the character of the bronze hoards of Mochlos was symbolic in the Peircian sense, since these bore a special and very significant meaning to the inhabitants

³⁵ A number of stone seals were associated with the house indicating its administrative importance (Brogan 2013)

³⁶ The double axes have not been published in detail and it is not possible to classify them as ceremonial or as tools on the basis of their own characteristics. It is here assumed that they were tools because of the utilitarian character of all other artefacts of these hoards.

(interpretants) of Mochlos. When C3 was being reconstructed in LMIA, a foundation hoard with a bronze shovel and two double axes was deposited in its basement. B2 contained two more foundation hoards: one consisting of six basins and the other of an ingot and a trident from Syria on top of it. The foundation hoards, which, by definition, have a consecrating purpose, consisted of artefacts similar to those of the common hoards found in these buildings suggesting their overall symbolic nature. The deposition of ingots in B2 can be interpreted as the materialisation of the local thriving copper trade at Mochlos,³⁷ which was under the protection or perhaps even the management of the main ceremonial building of the town. The idea of exoticism and foreign symbolism is also present in the hoards of both these buildings, which yielded objects such as a sistrum and a trident (Soles 2008: 145).

It results from the above that the double axe at LMI Mochlos was not perceived here as a powerful symbol in its own right. The scarcity of double axe stone stands³⁸ and the absence of the symbol on pottery further prove that. In reality, the double axe was viewed generically as a bronze object belonging to the category of Mochlos products deriving from the local copper trade and manufacturing production. Copper, and the bronze implements into which it was transformed, were the actual symbols of LMIB Mochlos. The enhancement of the copper symbolism was achieved through accumulation of bronze artefacts into hoards.

Actually, the effect of copper symbolism at Mochlos had a much wider impact than that of conditioning the representation of the double axe. Other symbols, such as the horns of consecration, the sacred knot and the shell were entirely absent at the settlement and there is only one figure-of-eight shield bead and three natural tritons, the symbolic nature of which is disputable (fig. 3.16; Table 3.9). Moreover, it appears that artefact categories other than bronze artefacts were of diminished importance. Pottery from Mochlos is mostly undecorated (Seager 1909: 285; Barnard et al. 2011) throughout LMI. Palatial Style Tradition Pottery is almost absent and only one Marine Style vessel has been identified so far. This means that the inhabitants of Mochlos were not interested in producing or importing fine decorated ware. Similarly, no frescoes have been detected in the town including B2, a building with important palatial-elite features. Instead of fine ware and frescoes - the usual palatial equipment of elite Minoan buildings - , what is on display in B2 are large bronze basins and bronze ingots. These objects were placed in such a way as to be visible to passers-by through the windows of the ground floor. Ingots, therefore, embodied the capacity of the Mochlos merchants to

³⁷Scientific analysis has shown that most of the copper ingot pieces came from Cyprus quarries (Soles 2008:143).

³⁸ A possible example will be discussed later.

acquire copper and turn it into a commercialised unit ready for transformation into specialised artefacts.

The contextual distribution of the Mochlos hoards had as its focus the ceremonial B2 with a tight nucleation in the adjacent houses. Only one hoard was found outside this core, in the Artisan's Quarter. It appears then that the importation, manufacture and recycling of copper was mainly under the control of the ceremonial house B2 and the few families which occupied the surrounding houses. In another house, in Block A, a figure-of-eight shield carnelian bead was found inside a highly valuable ivory pyxis (Soles & Davaras 2010: 1-3). This object reflects the high level of life shared by the Mochlos inhabitants, who benefitted communally from the thriving harbour and industrial activities. However, only a small section of the community had access to what had become the local symbol of social distinction, and that was copper trade and production. This elite was topographically demarcated around the ceremonial building B2, where bronze artefacts were treated as ritual objects. B2 was also the place where the largest concentrations of obsidian (the second most important imported and manufactured material at Mochlos) were found, with more than 800 pieces related to the most sacral spaces of the building such as the ashlar faced East wing and the Minoan Hall (fig. 3.14; Carter 2004: 298-301, 'craft as ritual action').

In conclusion, Mochlos forms an exceptional example, where symbolic expression focused intensely on local elements, such as the town's predominant role in the wider trade network of the island and the achievements of its artisans in specialised craftsmanship. Symbolism in LMI Mochlos entirely emphasised the thriving local trade of copper, drawing on associations with its strategic location, which suggested a dynamic place in the acquisition and distribution of the metal in Crete and the active local manufacture.

Final Palatial Period

During this period radical political and social changes took place in Mochlos (Brogan 2006: 131). The break with previous periods is reflected in a number of changes in spatial organisation and patterns of artefact distribution in both the town and the cemetery.

By contrast to the relatively wide distribution of LMIB symbolic assemblages, the most highly esteemed objects in the Final Palatial period were in the possession of the owner of one building. House A appears to have been a special building in the community of Mochlos during this period: it was located apart from the rest of the settlement (fig. 3.17), it the largest residence in the town and it was the only building that was entirely constructed with stone. Its owner circulated the largest amount of obsidian (Mochlos IIC: 115) and possessed the only

imported Canaanite jars for exotic wine found at the site (Soles 2005: 432; Mochlos IIA: 28). Most importantly, House A was the only house which produced evidence for ritual activity in the whole town. The residence, concentrating topographical, architectural, economic and ceremonial features of distinction has justifiably been associated with a very important individual of Mochlos (Brogan 2006: 132), perhaps a local ruler with religious power.

In room 4, a column, a rhyton and a double axe stone stand appear to have been associated to form a ceremonial assemblage and possibly served as a ritual focus during LMIIIA (fig. 3.18). This combination of ritual equipment reveals awareness of Neopalatial Minoan ceremonial practices and the intention of the powerful owner of House A to draw on palatial symbolism from previous periods. It is tempting to assume that the stand was actually removed from a LMIB Mochlos context, such as the pillar crypt in B2, and that it could have supported the ceremonial double axe, half of which was found in the recycling hoard in House C3. The possibility of such a removal is reinforced by the presence of a fine LMIA bowl decorated with a double axe and a sacred knot motif found in the LMIII layer of House A (fig. 3.21 up left). Whether from Mochlos or elsewhere, the objects were intentionally removed from their original Neopalatial contexts, with the aim of being reintegrated in LMIII antiquies contexts. Thus, it is concluded that in LMIII the citation of Neopalatial ritual contexts was an effective strategy to legitimise new elites.

At the cemetery of Limenaria (fig. 3.19), the picture of rigid centralisation of power attested in the town is repeated. The structured use of a range of burial containers and grave good types reflects a well-defined social stratification (Soles & Davaras 2011). Tomb 15, associated with the powerful owner of House A (Soles & Davaras 1996: 210-222; Soles 1999: 787-92), was distinguished from the other burials through the amount of imported goods, rich feasting assemblages and its distinctive type of burial container. 'Killing' of ritual objects and the presence of a dagger possibly denoted the dual ritual and administrative authority of the prominent deceased (Mochlos IIC: 201). Tomb 16, regarded as the burial of his wife, produced the richest jewellery in the cemetery and the only imported hematite bead (*ibid.*). Despite their exceptional wealth, Tomb 15 contained no sample symbols at all, while Tomb 16 contained only a seal with the schematic representation of a double axe. This paucity of sample symbols and the emphasis on exotic imports and elaborate ritual equipment suggests that, despite the emerging changes in social dynamics of the Final Palatial period, imported exotic goods, the accumulation of wealth, and their ceremonial display continued to play the leading role in the signification of social distinction at Mochlos.

During LMIII, the inhabitants of Mochlos who discredited decorated pottery in the Neopalatial period as an ‘unworthy’ means of social symbolism, succumbed to the widespread popularity of LMIIIA figurative pottery. However, the innovative LMIIIA2 pyxides with horns of consecration and double axe motifs were related only to socially modest houses and female burials (fig. 3.20, 3.21 right). No such pyxides were found either in House A or in Tombs 15 and 16. Thus, the selective reception of the innovative pottery ware at Mochlos reflects once more the rigidly demarcated use of symbolic material culture that is characteristic of this period. The ruler of House A signalled his power, not through the adoption of this new ware, but through the acquisition of an original LMIA bowl with a double axe-sacred knot motif, used by representatives of the Neopalatial elite. This object embodied the ability of its owner to acquire Neopalatial symbols from the past and exhibit them together with rare exotic imports as markers of his/her centralised authority.

Thus, in the Final Palatial period, citation of Neopalatial exotic and manufactured symbols, as well as Neopalatial symbols of ritual performance were the main means of signalling power by the Mochlos elite. In the Final Palatial period, however, citation reflected the centralised and controlling strategies assumed by the new elites of this period.

Postpalatial period

There is a dramatic decrease of symbols during this period. In the second (LMIIIB) phase of House A, when its plan was simplified, the stone double axe, which had been removed from a LMIB context and used in the LMIIIA House A, was hollowed out and used as a mortar (Mochlos IIC; IIA: 27-8). This radical alteration of the function and the symbolism of an object, which in the previous phase epitomised ruling authority, signalled an apparent decline in the ritual and social significance of House A as a whole. Thus, the rise, maintenance of power and finally the fall of elite power in LMIII Mochlos were intrinsically manifested through the treatment of the double axe symbolism.

3.2.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, the use of sample symbols at Mochlos was diachronically determined by the emphasis put by its elite on the role of trading and exchanging valuable and exotic materials and of transforming them into prestigious items. Sample symbols were subordinate to the symbolic code of the locals throughout the history of the site. In all the periods the double axe remained the absolutely predominant symbol at Mochlos. It was the symbol which managed

to incorporate the changing symbolic perceptions of the Mochlos inhabitants during each period, emphasizing respectively exotica in EM, copper manufacture in LMI and citation of Neopalatial economic and ritual contexts in LMIII.

3.3 Gournia (Fig. 3.22-3.49; Tables 3.10-3.12)

The site of Gournia is located on the north east coast of Crete on a ridge overlooking the Gulf of Mirabello (fig. 3.22). Evidence from the town suggests continuous occupation throughout the Bronze Age. Systematic excavations were conducted by Harriet Ann Boyd (Hawes) in 1901-4 and revealed a LMI town, built on earlier EM and MM layers, which flourished until the end of LMIB, when an extensive destruction allowed only a partial revival in LMIII (Table 3.10; Boyd 1904; Boyd Hawes *et al.* 1908). Recently the town was re-investigated by Soles (1991; 2002) and the Gournia Project (1992), carried out in three consecutive field seasons (1992-4), under the direction of Costis Davaras (Fotou 1993). A series of surveys led by the Buffalo University in New York continues the investigation around the main site (e.g., 1999; Watrous *et al.* 2000; Watrous 2012). The latter revealed that, what until now was thought to have been one of the most fully excavated Minoan towns, is actually only partially known and the real size of the town is now estimated to be six times larger (fig. 3.23; Watrous *et al.* 2000; Watrous & Heimroth 2011: 204; Watrous 2012).

To the north of the town extend its two cemeteries, the North Spur Cemetery, used during EMII-MMIII/LMI (Boyd 1908; Soles 1973: 8-10) and Sphoungaras, used until later in the LMI period (fig. 3.22; Hall 1912; Soles 1992).³⁹ In LMIII, the burials were confined within the small section of the town, which was still in use on the Gournia hill, while some burials were found on the opposite slope to the west of the settlement (Cadogan 1992: 104).

The study of symbols at Gournia is conditioned by the non-stratigraphic and non-contextual recording, the still unpublished material from the early excavation (Betancourt 1983; Fotou 1995), as well as the poor preservation of the hill, caused by erosion. Nonetheless, the site forms a substantial unit of information about Minoan urban life and provides the potential to study its symbols in a well-represented context.

Prepalatial Period

During the Prepalatial period, Gournia developed into a thriving town and one of the most significant trade stations of the region, exporting finished products, such as metal tools, fine and coarse pottery and importing goods, such as pottery from Mochlos and the Cyclades and obsidian from Melos (Watrous & Blitzer 1999: 908; Watrous *et al.* 2000: 475; Harrison 2012: 22-30).

³⁹ Hawes (1908: 56) thought it belonged to some other unexcavated nearby settlement. However, Hall (1912) and Soles (1992: 1-40) attribute it to the town.

In this period, shells and tritons seem to have played an important role in the social life of the Prepalatial inhabitants of Gournia. Given that the Prepalatial town is archaeologically very little known (Table 3.10), this evidence derives mainly from the rich funerary deposits of the Gournia cemeteries (Table 3.11). A concentration of shells derived from a deposit found outside one of the finest architecturally and richest in grave goods tomb of the North Cemetery, House Tomb I (fig. 3.24). This deposit seems to have been created by offerings to EM burials, which were re-deposited in this pit when the MMI House Tomb I was constructed, and possibly after the collapse of the tomb that housed them originally (Soles 1992: 9). The EM burials contained gold, silver and ivory artefacts, stone vases and ritual vessels and must have belonged to the richest early tombs of the cemetery (Table 3.11). Their re-deposition in a later burial context, whether aiming at ‘housing’ the material of an earlier collapsed tomb or at appropriating the material of deliberately spoiled burials, reveals a desire of the wealthy MM families of Gournia to ‘cite’ EM elite material culture and contexts.

It is important that the claim for social power by the Gournia elite through citation of ancestral material culture involved shells together with the richest manufactured artefacts. Moreover, the fact that, during the transfer from the ancestral grave to the newly built and prestigious House Tomb I, the ‘humble’ natural shells were not discarded as ‘unworthy’, indicates that their symbolic value persisted in MMI. Unfortunately, the species of the shells are not described and it is not possible to know if the shell symbolism was generic or specific for some species of shells.

The second example of EM shell symbolism derives from the richest deposit of the cemetery at Sphoungaras, Deposit A (fig. 3.25). Hall (1912: 50-53) refers to triton shells found together with bronze, ivory and gold objects, which indicate similar social practices of shell symbolism to the North Cemetery, but she does not offer any further details.

Overall, the evidence from Prepalatial Gournia shows that shells and tritons were viewed by the elite of the town as prestigious grave goods and as appropriate offerings in the wealthy built house-tombs of the North Cemetery and in the modest rock shelter and jar burials at Sphoungaras (Soles 1992: 2-3; Harrison 2012: 25-6). Social differentiation in both high and low-class cemeteries of Gournia was signalled through funerary architecture and the accumulation of traded and manufactured wealth, as well as ritual elaboration.

Protopalatial Period

No sample symbols were recorded from this period, despite some evidence for ritual activities in the cemeteries (Soles 1973; Soles 1979: 161-7) and the town (Hawes et al. 1908:

38). It must be noted that evidence from the Protopalatial town is highly biased by the lack of stratified and consistent recording.

Early Neopalatial Period

During the Neopalatial period, the town of Gournia grew into the most important regional political centre of the area by absorbing the surrounding populations into a nucleated administrative system. This development was reflected at town level in the organised plan of the settlement with cobbled streets and blocks of houses built on the slopes of a hill and around a central administrative building known as the 'Palace'. The primary activity of the town was industrial and commercial (Soles 1991; 2002: 123, 129), with a wide range of workshops producing bronze tools and weapons, pottery and stone vases, while an active harbour (Watrous 2007: 105) connected the town to other Minoan and overseas centres.

It is not clear to what extent the striking absence of sample symbols in this context reflects an actual situation or is the result of lack of MMIII-LMIA deposits due to the intense architectural remodelling of the LMI period. Characteristic of the overlapping of evidence between the two periods is the case of a clay rhyton in the shape of a triton from Eb 13, dated by Soles (1979: 165) to the 'Early Town' (MMIII-LMIA), which was probably produced by a mould found in a context (E 13) dated to LMIB (Hawes 1908: 48). Overall, however, it appears that, despite the extant MMIII-LMIA evidence for ritual activities, the town and the cemetery (Table 3.11, Soles 1973: 40-43; Soles 1979) did not produce any notable number of sample symbols.

Late Neopalatial period

During LMIB, the 'Palace' was remodelled and acquired distinct palatial features, such as the extensive use of ashlar masonry, a complex and monumental system of access to its entrance comprising a Processional Way, a public Central Court, a monumental facade and a grand staircase. In addition, it was the largest building in town occupying the most prominent location at the top of the hill. The Gournia residences, by contrast, did not display any palatial features, and vernacular architecture was shared uniformly, regardless the size or the proximity of the houses to the 'Palace'. These architectural and topographical differences established a sharp contrast in the urban landscape of Gournia between the 'Palace' and the rest of the town. The exclusive access of the 'Palace' to palatial architectural features suggests that it was controlled by an elite with significant political authority. The only building which aspired to compete with the leading role of the 'Palace' was a sizable

structure known as the Hill House,⁴⁰ which occupied a prominent location on a hill adjacent to the town.

The sample symbols, which in this period mark a dramatic increase in numbers and artefact categories compared to the previous periods, were found in uniform distribution across the private residences of the town, the Hill House and the 'Palace' (fig. 3.26). Factors such as the proximity of the houses to the 'Palace' or their size did not affect the distribution of symbols⁴¹ (fig. 3.27). Apart from the sample symbols, ritual symbols (fig. 3.26 in purple), such as altars, bull's head rhyta, ritual vessel groups, figurines and exotic cultic objects (fig. 3.28) and social status objects, especially of metals (fig. 3.29), were also evenly used by the families of Gournia. Thus, despite its political authority at Gournia, the elite of the 'Palace' did not condition the use of symbols within its confines.

All the above evidence contradicts the established knowledge of Minoan Palaces as centres which controlled the use and the display of symbolic social and ritual material. A recent study revealed that the agricultural potential of the Gournia area for the estimated LMI population of the settlement was insufficient, a fact that is reflected in the low total storage capacity of the town and the 'Palace' (Watrous & Heimroth 2011). The low reliance on agriculture was compensated at Gournia by the active industrial production, which, however, developed in significant independence from the 'Palace' and involved the largest part of the households. This sharing of economic activities between the townsfolk and the palatial elite may have accounted for the even distribution of symbols in the town.

However, it appears that the elite of the 'Palace' developed certain strategies to differentiate itself both on an economic level, by nucleation of the major amount of economic activities, and on a symbolic level by exclusivity of means of performance and equipment. On an economic level, the storage capacity of the 'Palace' (17 pithoi) exceeded its needs (ibid: 211) and its involvement in the accounting of the industrial production was decisive. Characteristically, distribution patterns concerning storage, measuring and recording of industrial products (figs. 3.29) show a clustering around the Northern area of the 'Palace', which is adjacent to the road that led to the harbour. This location indicates that the main 'market zone' of Gournia was most likely under the control of the palatial elite, who were probably also responsible for the storage, administration and exportation of production.

⁴⁰Although extensively excavated, very little is known about the building due to its insufficient recording and publication (Hawes 1908: 26; Fotou 1993: 29; Pl. XV). However, its economic and political role is suggested by the largest accumulation of bronze products at Gournia, which included ingots and hoards (Fotou 1993: 29, 97).

⁴¹Based on the research with mapped correlations between site parameters and social differentiation at Gournia by K.A. Easton (2001).

At a symbolic level, the highest impact of the performative effect of symbols seems to have taken place exclusively in the area of the 'Palace'. The distribution of sample symbols shows that the large majority was found in the houses which were built on the main Ring Road. This road circles the town and eventually leads through a processional way to the 'Palace', where the only spacious area for public gatherings was available in the town (fig. 3.26). The proximity of the symbols to the main road, the fact that the natural extension of this road ended in an open space which was only accessible through a processional way, and the lack of any other available spaces for public gatherings at the site, raise the possibility that the Ring Road was the space where sample symbols and other ritual objects would start their performative use through ritual processions, and that the court of the 'Palace' was the space where such performative activities would culminate.

The contextual distribution patterns of the sample symbols further supports this suggestion. Two double axes, which can be safely identified as ceremonial because of their fine blades, were located in a town house and the 'Palace' respectively (fig. 3.26). Two stone stands for double axes were found in a different house. If the two bronze double axes from Gournia belonged to these two stands, joining them would require a physical transfer of either one or both parts of the symbol. The movement of separate parts of the symbol to shaft them together would signify a ceremonial transfer conducted in the public space of the town's Ring Road. It is reasonable to assume that, if the shafted double axes were used as foci for public ritual practices, they would be eventually placed in the available space of the court of the 'Palace'.

Ritual vessels present a similar pattern: in pottery, double axes⁴² and the combined motif of the double axe with the sacred knot recur in a number of vessels across the site in equal distribution between the town and the 'Palace' (fig. 3.26). Moreover, in both contexts the vessels display a similar array of typology, such as strainers, rhyta cups and pithoid jars, all implying ritual practices related to storage and the flow of liquids. Clay tritons and a marble shell appear to have served as libation vessels (Boyd 1908: 48). Although they may have been used for household ritual practices in the spaces identified as the utility rooms (Soles 1979: 165), it appears that at least part of the material, which is discussed here, had a communal use.

⁴² In Hawes (1908) and Betancourt & Silverman (1991), at least four more sherds with representations of double axes are mentioned but without clarifying the context. These specimens are not included in the Data Table, which is used for the contextual associations of the artefacts. They are only mentioned here as further evidence for the dominance of the double axe symbol at Gournia and its high representation in pottery.

This is suggested by the large pottery assemblages, such as rhyta groups and concentrations of conical cups, which exceeded the needs of their households, and, although stored in private residences, were mostly nucleated in houses close to the Ring Road (A20, A13, C58, E33, B7) (fig. 3.26 in purple). A number of kernoi placed outside the houses were apparently used as receptacles of libations poured from the vessels used during processions along the Ring Road.⁴³ This pattern shows that the symbols were not viewed as static objects, but that their function was fulfilled through ceremonial action and public display, actively involving the families of the town in libation and feasting ceremonies.

The culmination of such performative activities in the 'Palace' shows that the palatial elite controlled symbolism in the town of Gournia, not by physically constraining the symbols to its confines or its immediate surroundings, but by establishing its domain as the focus of their performative climax. In this way, the justifiable claim of the inhabitants to store symbolic artefacts, which were products of the town, complemented the claim of the palatial elite to withhold the authority of the exclusive use of these symbols in active communal performance, which would solidify its conditioned but unquestionable power over the town.

That the performative use of symbols was intentionally regulated by the palatial elite is confirmed by the exclusive use of symbolic equipment: two categories of symbols, which present an entirely different pattern to the sample symbols described above, the horns of consecration and the double axe mason's marks. The former were not exclusively associated with the 'Palace' and the Hill House. Similarly, a double axe mason's mark was only found on an ashlar block at the entrance to the Palace's court (fig. 3.30). The palatial character of the horns of consecration and the double axe mason's mark can be justified by their close association with architecture, the primary features which divided the Palace from the town.

The position of the two symbols in the 'Palace' accentuated this association: the double axe mason's mark (fig. 3.30-3.31) was visible on the southern wall of the Palace on the paved passage, which connected the Ring Road to the large court in front of its entrance. Once inside the court, one encountered the monumental facade of the 'Palace's' entrance, crowned by a large pair of stone horns of consecration (fig. 3.31). The operational role of these two, unique for the site, symbols is characteristic. The mason's mark signalled the end of the processional movement and the entry into palatial ground, while the horns of consecration signalled control of the place of performance. The proximity of these two symbols and their

⁴³ 'Roadside altars' according to Boyd (Hawes et al. 1908: 26, Pl. 19; fig. 6); Soles 1979: 165.

exclusive use in the most significant ritual space of the town show that there was some sort of structured hierarchy in the selection and the use of symbols at Gournia.

This hierarchical use of symbols is confirmed by the possession of a smaller pair of horns of consecration by the inhabitants of the Hill House, a building with a significant economic role (fig. 3.32; Fotou 1993: 29). Furthermore, considering its size and location, it can be assumed that the Hill House was only second in ranking to the 'Palace'. This position was acknowledged by the display of a pair of horns of consecration, which, however, ought to be of lesser size than the one used in the 'Palace'. The superiority of the 'Palace' over the Hill House was further signalled by the exclusive use of a mason's mark at the 'Palace'.

In summary, the use of sample symbols during LMIB was determined by the active contribution of the town's inhabitants to the local economy and by the regulating strategies of the palatial elite to impose its role as the centre of authority. Symbols as artefacts were largely produced in the workshops of the town, but their ritual use reached its maximum performative impact in the domain of the 'Palace'. The 'Palace' reserved for itself the exclusive use of palatial architecture and of those symbols which appear to have been iconic of its political supremacy: the horns of consecration and the double axe mason's marks.

Final Palatial Period

Very little evidence is known from this period and no sample symbols are recorded.

Postpalatial Period

In the Postpalatial period only the western section of the hill appears to have been reoccupied (fig. 3.33; Kanta 1980: 139). The recorded sample symbols show a sharp nucleation in the two new foci of symbolism of the town, namely the shrine, identified from the concentration of current LMIIIB types of ritual equipment (Gesell 1985: 43), and the so-called *Megaron* of Gournia, identified as the ruler's residence on the basis of its impressive architecture and size of the building (fig. 3.33). The rest of the buildings were mainly equipped with domestic material and the burials were poor (Boyd 1908: 45- 46, Pl. X). Few other ritual objects from the town and the recorded graves (Table 3.12) indicate a sharp divide in the use of symbolic material culture between townspeople, on the one hand, and the *Megaron's* ruler, on the other.

Regarding the sample symbols themselves, only double axes and horns of consecration survive at Gournia in this period from the full range of symbols represented in LMIB (fig. 3.33). In the *Megaron*, the description of the symbol by the excavator is: 'a pair of horns of

consecration was found in H34 and a bull's head in the outside space between NW and SW corners of He and Hb respectively'.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, neither the size nor the material are specified. Room 34, where it was found, is the least accessible of the *Megaron*. Possibly this pair of horns did not crown the building, but was used as a cultic object in an interior small shrine within the administrative building. In the independent shrine of the town, a double axe and a pair of horns of consecration were represented as relief motifs on clay vessels. The double axe possibly decorated a pithos, and the pair of horns three of the 'snake tubes' found in the shrine. No large pair of horns crowned the religious building nor any stone double axe stand was found in it.

Thus, compared to LMIB, the Postpalatial symbols at Gournia appear diminished in size, diversity of symbols, artefact categories and quality of material (in LMIIIB mainly clay). Innovative elements, such as snake tubes and large female figurines combined with the symbols, indicate significant changes in religious expression. Important changes took place regarding their role in socio-political function, as they were now strictly confined to high administrative and religious officials. The performative impact and visibility of the symbols was also minimised, with action taking place inside small spaces with no arrangements for public gatherings. The new administrative centre was not built over the Neopalatial one and did not face the Central Court with the clear intention of breaking with past symbolic perception of the ceremonial use of space. However, despite this break with the past, it appears that consolidating power in the Postpalatial period required the citation of those two symbols, the horns of consecration and the double axe, which in LMIB were viewed as the most effective means of conveying exclusive palatial power.

3.3.1 Conclusions

In conclusion, Gournia is an extremely interesting site regarding the study of symbolism, due to the marked changes made in the use of sample symbols throughout the Bronze Age: in the Prepalatial period, shells and tritons were elite symbols; in LMIB, and after a long period of paucity, sample symbols suddenly became the main tools through which intense socio-political dynamics between the Gournia palatial elite and the townsfolk were illustrated, employing refined strategies for the negotiation of power; in the Postpalatial period, the exclusive use of sample symbols by the ruler of the town reflected the new centralised political structures imposed on the town.

⁴⁴ This is the only information provided on these objects and no details of size, material or decoration are given. Fotou from Boyd's notebooks (HB/NB III, p.63, 68).

3.4 Palaikastro (Figs. 3.34-3.49; Tables 3.13-3.14)

Palaikastro is located on the east coast of Crete (fig. 3.34). It has been excavated by the British School at Athens in four campaigns: 1) in the early part of the twentieth century (Bosanquet et al. 1901-2 (PK I); 1902-3 (PK II); 1903-4 (PK III); 1904-5 (PK IV); 1905-6 (PK V); Bosanquet & Dawkins 1923 (PKU I); Hutchinson 1939-40 (PKU II)); 2); in 1962 and 1963 (Sackett & Popham 1965 (PK VI); 1970 (PK VII)); 3); a campaign running from 1986-1996 (preliminary reports: MacGillivray, Sackett et al. 1987; 1988; 1989; 1991; 1992; 1998; MacGillivray et al. 2000; MacGillivray & Sackett 2007); 4) the current excavations, which started with a survey in 2012; three excavation seasons carried out in 2013 – 2015 (Directed by Knappett, Livarda and Momigliano; Momigliano pers. comm). A survey conducted in the area in 2001 revealed that the city occupied 36 hectares, making it one of the largest Minoan habitation sites after Knossos (Boyd et al. 2006).

The town is mainly dated in the Neopalatial period, preserving a wide LMIB horizon, which resulted from a major catastrophe accompanied by fire. After this disaster, it immediately recovered and was rebuilt in LMII-LMIIIA1 (Kanta 1980: 189-192; MacGillivray & Sackett 2010: 574). After a second destruction by fire in LMIIIA2, it was extensively rebuilt and finally abandoned following an earthquake in the middle of LMIIIB (Kanta 1980; Cunningham & Sackett 2009).

The excavated town plan is dominated by a main street and secondary alleys on either side, dividing it into blocks which are named after Greek letters. The lack of a public space for gatherings and large storage facilities of public nature has established in Minoan scholarship the conviction that a palatial building must be located in the unexcavated surroundings (Cunningham 2001: 83).⁴⁵ Evidence for the use of sample symbols outside the main town is provided by the habitation site of Kouremenos in a bay to the north, and the peak sanctuary at Petsophas to the south of the site.

The outlying cemeteries of Palaikastro were founded and used in different periods between EM and LMIII. The Prepalatial cemeteries at the Gravel Ridge, 100m north east of the main site, and at Hellenika, 300m to the north of it, were in continuous use during the Protopalatial period, when another two cemeteries at Patema (to the east of the town and on the north slopes of Petsophas) and Sarandari (to the northeast of the town) were founded (Soles

⁴⁵ Recent geophysical investigation suggested a possible area to the east of the main site as the location of the palace (Boyd 2006). However, the 2013-2015 excavations conducted in this area seem to indicate that this is not the case (Momigliano, pers. comm.).

1973:116-7). The LMI period is generally underrepresented in burials, while Sarandari and Hellenika were reused in the LMIII reoccupation period.

Limitations in the study of the site derive from the usual drawbacks of early excavations and publications. A particular difficulty lies in the partial knowledge of Palaikastro in terms of chronological sequence and topographical completeness. The evidence for earlier MM or EM phases is scarce, as the site was severely struck by earthquake and floods in MMIIIB and was overbuilt in LMI (MacGillivray et al. 2000: 35). Moreover, the excavated portion of the town appears to represent an elite section of the settlement (Driessen & MacGillivray 1989: 106-7; PK 1984; PK 1998; Driessen & MacDonald 1997; Driessen 2000: 35). This, together with the absence of evidence for a central administrative building or 'palace' (Driessen & MacDonald 1997: 228) partly hampers the attempt to offer interpretations on the social role of symbols used at Palaikastro.

Prepalatial period

During this period evidence for the use of sample symbols derives only from the cemeteries and includes only tritons (fig. 3.35). There is one well-described example from Tomb II at the cemetery at Hellenika (Table 3.36). A triton together with a clay boat model and a few clay vessels were offered in the larger of two compartments in Tomb II, which was used for the deposition of offerings.⁴⁶ The smaller compartment contained a single burial. This arrangement is unique in the funerary architecture of Palaikastro and is one of the features which make Tomb II stand out amongst the other graves of the cemetery. Other features of distinction include: the fact that it was probably the earliest at the site (3.36; PK III: 196-7). It was built at the edge of the cemetery and close to the cliff of the hill. It was the only grave containing a single burial, and, finally, it was the only one furnished with anything more than just ordinary pottery. It appears, then, that a prominent individual was buried in this tomb and received ancestral offerings in a specially designated space, a sort of 'mortuary chapel' (PK III: 197-8).

It is of interest that the criteria of social distinction in Tomb II were not the display of material wealth and the possession of valuable or exotic objects, but modest artefacts which emphasised religious symbolism together with symbolic use of time and space. The common association of the triton and the boat model with the sea and their physical ability to be used

⁴⁶ The fact that the pottery included both EM and MM vessels led Soles (1992:181-3) to the conclusion that the tomb must have contained more burials from different phases which were eroded and not preserved today. However, the available evidence offers arguments which favour Dawkins' first impression (PK III: 197-8) that the burial was single and served as a locus of offering depositions in the phases following the burial.

as containers of liquids suggest a possible connection of the triton with the chthonic symbolism of water and the ritual practice of libation.

At the end of the Prepalatial period the use of tritons in funerary symbolism continued. One sufficiently recorded example derives from the Gravel Ridge cemetery (3.35, 3.37), which displayed relatively rich ossuaries belonging to the families of Palaikastro (MacGillivray & Sackett 2010). Tomb VII contained 97 skulls, more than 140 pots, stone vases, ivory and stone seals. One of the skulls was placed over a triton and furnished with a few clay vessels (PK I: 296). The position of the triton beneath the skull is reminiscent of contemporaneous treatments of skulls at Palaikastro, where a cup would be placed either underneath the skull or on top of it (Caloi 2011). An indexical relationship between a triton and a cup may be established on the basis of their capacity to hold and offer liquids in association with skulls. One can assume that libations were offered during the funerary rituals to the ground where the skull would be placed in order to consecrate it. This indexical referencing is suggested by the inverted cups associated with burials in Tomb VII. All these burials were secondary, while the only primary burial of Tomb VII was found right outside the building and no offerings were reported in association with it. It is possible, therefore, that the inverted cups were associated with libations offered to the deceased after their bodies were decomposed and they had passed to the state of ancestors, while the recently deceased did not receive any offerings. The performative effect of the libations was symbolically perpetuated by the permanently inverted placement of clay or triton ‘vessels’ on the ground.

The deceased of the secondary burial with the triton in Tomb VII was distinguished from the others because of the use of a triton instead of any common vessel and because it was the only one possessing what appears to be some kind of feasting set (two cups, a bowl and a tripod cooking vessel). The differentiation indicates that for the people of Protopalatial Palaikastro the criteria of social distinction lay in the degree of elaboration of symbolic equipment and of the elaboration of ritual performance.

In summary, the only sample symbol used in the Prepalatial period at Palaikastro was the triton. It is remarkable that no other shell species with symbolic use are recorded from the site, although this could be the result of biased data recording. Throughout this period the triton was associated with religious and mortuary beliefs and considered as proper offering for the most distinct burials.

Protopalatial period

During the Protopalatial period, new patterns emerged in the use of symbols. As opposed to the previous period, sample symbols were now only found in the town. The double axe replaced the triton as the predominant symbol and was incised on pots and loomweights made of coarse clay (fig. 3.38). Contemporaneous loomweights from the site also bear other signs, such as the fish and the cross. It is possible that these signs were potter's marks used in the process of manufacturing or indicating different properties/uses of the loomweights.

Apart from the incised double axes, the town also produced a pot-sherd decorated with shells in relief. Stylistically it belongs to a Protopalatial ware especially popular in the palatial centres of Central Crete (Betancourt 1985: 142-5). Also, the incised pots and loomweights demonstrate confidence in identifying the origin of manufacture and using the new symbols which were popular in the emerging Cretan palaces. Whether imported or locally made, the incised potter's marks and the 'Shell vessel' indicate a desire to keep up with the popular palatial fashion of this period.

All these artefacts were found in Block Δ, which appears to have been a residential area of the Protopalatial elite of Palaikastro. There lived the people who were able to meet the new criteria of social distinction, which were based on trends of innovation and the exclusive accessibility of 'fashionable' designs and emerging symbols of the leading Cretan Palaces.

Early Neopalatial period

During the early Neopalatial period, sample symbols derived exclusively from town contexts, but there was a marked expansion of symbols across the residences of Palaikastro compared to the Protopalatial period (fig. 3.38-9).

The families of Block Δ still predominated in the elite of the town. They possessed the most impressive example of pottery, a large bucket-shaped vessel decorated with motifs of double axes crowning bucrania on both its sides (fig. 3.39). Moreover, the claim of social prestige at Palaikastro continued being expressed through the indexing of palatial symbolism of the leading palaces of Crete, and during this period mainly of the Palace of Knossos. The vessel from Block D has a close Knossian parallel (Evans 1921: 563, fig. 409) and was found with a fine goblet, an elaborate incense burner and a stone lamp in the 'Megaron Hall' of the house, which represents a feature of Knossian palatial architecture. Thus, the family of House Δ appears to have played a long-lasting and critical role in the importation of innovative palatial symbolism into Palaikastro as an essential component for the construction of its elite identity.

The most striking pattern of this period, however, concerns the use of the horns of consecration. It is the most numerous and diverse sample symbol in MMIII-LMIA Palaikastro. All its large examples can be associated with Building 6 (fig. 3.42), as is suggested by their uniformity in material, size, treatment, relative context and period of use (Table 3.13). All the pairs were made of sandstone, and those examples whose preservation and detailed description allows specification present similarly large size and red colour. The coloured horns of consecration match perfectly the characteristic ‘polychromy’ (PK 1988: 261) of Building 6, which was brightly decorated with frescoes, reddish plaster linings and serpentine door jamb bases (Driessen et al. 1995: 381).⁴⁷ One of these pairs was found within the building itself, another one outside its wall and three more pairs inside Well 576 (Deposit 4b)⁴⁸ of Area 6, the area which succeeded Building 6 after its destruction. All the examples were chronologically associated with the LMIA destruction, which led to the abandonment of Building 6.

The concentration of at least five safely identified pairs of horns of consecration in one building is exceptional by Minoan standards, including the largest Minoan palaces, and indicates the great socio-political role of Building 6. This is further indicated by the use of exclusive palatial architectural features and especially its ‘Minoan Hall’ (pier-and-door partition, colonnade, slab floors, frescoes), usually found in palaces and Villas (Driessen et al. 1995: 381; 2007: 1, 12), and its elaborate decoration (PK 1998: 256). The horns of consecration accentuated the distinct architectural and decorative features of Building 6.

A single example of large horns of consecration was found outside the town, at the peak sanctuary at Petsophas (fig. 3.40). Its exceptionality lies in the combination of different-sized multiple representations of pairs of horns in one object. It is so far unique and its function is debated. Several Minoan scholars tend to associate the Petsophas device with astronomical observations (Davaras 2010: 74-75; MacGillivray 2000: 129; 2004: 331; 2007; Banou 2008). However, when considering the structural and conceptual indexical relationship between the multiple horns of consecration on the model from Petsophas and the contemporaneous Building 6, a different interpretation appears plausible. On the one hand, the Petsophas model presents a primarily architectural expression and an overall structural aesthetic value, which

⁴⁷ The building has produced evidence for the manufacture of deep red pigment based on murex shells (PK 1998: 239).

⁴⁸ This deposit has been dated to the LMII-III A1 (PK 1998: 261) or the LMIB destruction layer of the town (MacGillivray et al. 2007: 1, 12). However, as mentioned in the same work (ibid. 223, 242), there was no building activity in Area 6 after the LMIA destruction of Building 6 and the area was enclosed for some purpose, which means that even if the deposition took place in LMIB, it would have included architectural debris and decoration from the latest building period which was LMIA.

makes direct reference to the most monumental and elaborate town building of this period. On the other hand, it represents the desire of the elite associated with Building 6 to extend this authority to the nearby peak sanctuary in unmistakable and visible ways.

Smaller versions of the symbol were also found in the town. The two known examples derive from Block B and Building 7 (fig. 3.41; Table 3.14), both of which contained Linear A tablets and were located next to Building 6. The small size of the horns of consecration and their low visibility compared to the large pairs of horns, which crowned Building 6, seem to indicate the lower ranking of the two buildings compared to it. In Building 7, a small pair of horns was modelled on the rim of a kernos found together with jugs, cups, a cylindrical stand and a tripod offering table. The miniature pair of horns from Building B was also associated with pouring ritual activities (an offering table with three cup-like depressions, jugs and cups, a scoop and a kernos). It appears then that the horns of consecration, when in small size, had a different function to the large ones, and were associated with the ritual act of libation in domestic cultic contexts. Their performative effect was confined to the use of the 'lesser elite' families of the town. Thus, different sizes of horns of consecration were related to different ritual contexts and indexed different social strata.

The above analysis of the distribution and use of symbols describes a pattern, according to which the sample symbols were nucleated in the most important buildings of the early Neopalatial town excavated so far, where the elite of Palaikastro lived. This is indicated by the large size of many of its houses (McEnroe 1982: 13), 'the width, axuality and construction of the street grid and the profusion of elite architectural features, including 11 buildings with ashlar masonry, 4 with 'Palaikastro Halls', 2-3 with 'lustral basins', 14 with frescoes' (Cunningham 2007: 99), and the numerous symbolic objects and cultic assemblages suggesting communal feasts, such as the 980 conical cups and ritual vessels found in Block E (ibid. 102). The material wealth and the ritual activities of this area appear to have been concentrated closer to the Main Street. This street was lined with the largest and best constructed houses, including Building 6, Building 7, Block B and Block Δ. A large rounded boulder, located just before the intersection between blocks Δ-Γ-B and Building 6 with the Main Street, is regarded as a baetyl (Cunningham & Sackett 2009: 85). A similar baetyl was found inside Building 6 together with feasting equipment. This distribution possibly indicates that the Main Street may have served as a public space of display of symbolism and ritual performance under the leadership of the Palaikastro elite.

In summary, the use of symbols during the early Neopalatial period appears to have been significantly controlled by the elite of Building 6. The sample symbols identified in the town

show a distribution pattern, which is in accordance with the elite hierarchy of the town: large and visible horns of consecration were exclusively used by Building 6 and its connected sacred space on the peak sanctuary of Petsophas; smaller horns of consecration and the finest vessel with double axe decoration were confined for domestic use in the adjacent House Δ, Block B and Building 7; symbolic architecture and feasting assemblages with ritual vessels were accessible to the rest of the large and wealthy houses on the Main Street.

Late Neopalatial period

During the late Neopalatial period, a number of destructions led to the abandonment of Building 6 and, after a series of important architectural refurbishments, the elite area of Palaikastro appears to have shifted to the 'Harbour Road' and Buildings 1, 3, 4 and 5 (Table 3.14). Despite these radical changes, the large stone horns of consecration continued indexing elite architecture. Building 1, the only building of Palaikastro which had ashlar masonry on all its four sides (fig. 3.43; Driessen et al. 1995: 380), possessed the only large pair of horns of consecration visible in LMIB in the town.

Apart from the horns of consecration, double axe mason's marks emerge as a new symbol of elite architecture. On the ashlar wall of Building 5 which faces the 'Plateia', an open area on the 'Harbour Road', a concentration of five double axe mason's marks was incised. Building 5 had also been remodelled in order to accommodate the new Kouros shrine (fig. 3.44; Driessen et al. 1995: 386) and served as a ceremonial centre. There is an apparent association of the large horns of consecration and the double axe masons marks with ashlar masonry and elite architecture. It appears that the use of the two sample symbols was associated with exclusivity, architectural monumentality and conspicuous location.

Most other sample symbols, which were now represented in a wide range of different artefact categories, were, as in the early Neopalatial period, nucleated in House Δ and Block B (fig. 3.45). However, instead of representing confined domestic assemblages, they belong to rich pottery assemblages. A natural triton was found in one of the two assemblages from Block B, which included hundreds of vessels, Marine Style pottery, figurines and a bull's head (material not specified). Δ4 produced the largest concentration of rhyta in the settlement, containing 17 conical and pear-shaped rhyta with decoration of tritons and horns of consecration. Block E produced a goblet with double axe decoration, together with 1000 conical cups, a wild goat clay rhyton and the ear of a steatite ox model, whose estimated full size must have been considerable. The symbol of the double axe and the triton occupied a

distinct position in the decoration of this equipment as they were represented on rhyta. Natural tritons may have been used as libation vessels in this context.

The assemblages from these houses suggest massive feasting events, where drinking and libation were the predominant ritual practices. They exceeded by far the domestic needs of their owners and only a communal use can be suggested for them. Most of these assemblages were stored in buildings facing the Main Street, suggesting that the street may have been used as a space of performance in its own right or for processions leading to some other open ceremonial space, perhaps the 'Plateia', or some unexcavated area of the town. The fact that communally used pottery was stored temporarily in the houses of the traditional elite families of Palaikastro is significant. Conspicuous feasting and public performance were apparently the main means of social distinction. Participation in the storage, preparation and performance of the prestigious feasting equipment must have been considered an honorary privilege for the elite families of the town.

However, feasting and the use of sample symbols could have maintained a domestic character of performance. A large pair of plaster horns of consecration, which was probably broken in one of the successive destructions that struck Block B in LMI (MacGillivray 1997: 276), was buried in a narrow slit between the walls of the doorless compartment 20 and the 'Palaikastro Hall' at the centre of the house (fig. 3.41). Inserting an architectural slit to accommodate the deposit next to the 'Palaikastro Hall' appears to have been an intentional choice, as the slit affected the symmetry of the careful plan of this well-built house. The same deposit contained a rich feasting assemblage of cups, jugs and animal bones, indicating that its destruction was accompanied by a feasting event and a ritual 'burial' following an architectural adjustment in the most prestigious space of the house.

In an upper floor domestic shrine of House N, two double axe stands were associated with jugs, six cups and a stone pounder, indicating food preparation and drinking for a limited number of people, as well as miniature vases and a wild goat rhyton suggesting ritual pouring offerings (fig. 3.45). A miniature pair of horns of consecration in the same context 'cited' the early Neopalatial domestic contexts where small horns of consecration were associated with libations. One more example of a double axe stone stand from an upper floor shrine indicates that the double axe stone stands were restricted to domestic contexts in LMIB Palaikastro.

Overall, it appears that different sample symbols were used by the people of Palaikastro to indicate different social status: double axe mason's marks and large stone horns of consecration were exclusively used by the elite of the town in the ceremonial spaces of Buildings 1 and 5; double axe and triton motifs on pottery were stored in the elite private

residences of the town and used in the publicly displayed feasting assemblages; double axe stands and small horns of consecration were used by elite or ordinary families in domestic contexts. In all of these contexts, the performative effect of the symbols is a key elements in their function: large stone horns of consecration and double axe mason's marks were static elements, but constantly displayed in the most visible spaces of the main ceremonial area of the town; feasting pottery decorated with double axes and tritons, and natural tritons, were physically removed from their interior domestic spaces to be transported, displayed and become ritually active in public spaces; double axe stands and small horns of consecration would have served as foci for performances, such as libations, in private domestic spaces. It is important that, despite the topographical shift of the main ceremonial area, the elite residing the Main Street residences remained the same as in the previous period. This elite 'cited' contexts and practices of the early Neopalatial period, but, at the same time, developed an impressive reliance on public performance.

Final Palatial period

Despite the rich cultic deposits of several of the houses of this period (PKU I: 75, 84-91; PK 1986: 142; MacGillivray & Driessen 1990: 406; Cunningham & Sackett 2009: 96), the sample symbols decreased significantly in numbers and diversity. Horns of consecration appeared now only in small size and buildings were not crowned with them anymore; mason's marks were no longer incised on the walls and double axe stands were entirely absent.⁴⁹

The few sample symbols were now used in different contexts and the traditional elite buildings of Palaikastro did not produce any sample symbols. Building 7 (Table 3.14) produced a series of contexts with shell symbolism. In two cases, single tritons were found in contexts of storage and their function is not known. On a third occasion, however, it was possible to associate the triton and the shells with the concepts of fertility and sexuality. A shell was centrally placed in a cavity of a stone platform, while in the other cavity there was a standing phallic object. Next to it, there were two tritons and a piece of stalactite with a phallic shape. That all shells and tritons may have been used in similar ways within Building 7 is suggested by the recurrent features in all their contexts: pebble surfaces, raised platforms, offering vessels (bowls, jars, cylindrical stand), stalactites, stone tools, Neolithic axes and pumice were regularly found with the tritons and the shells (fig. 3.46).

⁴⁹ Like in LMI, there are many double axes but none appears to be ceremonial or associated with ritual contexts, although detailed description of them is in most cases lacking.

Building 7 presented the highest nucleation of cultic objects (Cunningham & Sackett 2009: 91). The fact that seven out of its 14 rooms contained cultic contexts and the uniform and regular character of its ritual assemblages, which occur repetitively in different rooms of the same house (Sackett 1996), suggest that it was the public shrine of the town in this period, having replaced Building 5 (PK 1991: 123-133) (Table 3.14).

The ritual contexts with the tritons and the shells from Building 7 were not attested in any of the domestic contexts of the town. The symbols found in the houses reflect small ritual practices which did not extend outside the confines of the private space. In Building 3 a miniature pair of horns was found together with a miniature cup and a miniature jug. In the same building kernoi and a libation tub suggest that the small horns of consecration were still associated with acts of libation in this period.

Overall, there appears to exist a mutually exclusive use of the specific categories of symbols according to private or public context. As opposed to the previous periods, visibility and public performance were discarded by the town elites which used sample symbols only in domestic contexts, while the people of Building 7 favoured structured depositions in patterned ritual contexts.

Postpalatial Period

During this period, there is a pattern of citation of Neopalatial symbolism, especially in contexts related to double axes and horns of consecration. At Kouremenos (fig. 3.47), a bronze double axe without a shaft hole was found, which was too thin to be drilled, and was probably a votive offering. At the same site, a hoard of bronze tools including two large double axes with thin blades was found in a recess covered with plaster, which is reminiscent of a type of cupboards used in the Neopalatial ‘Megaron halls’ and baths of Palaikastro. The plastered surface and the fine architecture of the building further suggest the intention to reproduce elite Neopalatial contexts. This pattern was extended to the cemeteries of the town, the use of which was revived during this period. In one of the burials to the south of the town (fig. 3.48), a cover in the shape of a house model decorated with horns of consecration was associated with a Neopalatial libation table inscribed with Linear A. Another grave, which was built in ashlar masonry perhaps of the Neopalatial period, was reused for rich secondary burials containing, among other grave goods, a fine double axe. On another occasion,

associated with two larnakes and rich grave goods was a strainer decorated with a double axe frieze, the pattern of which imitated an earlier pottery style.⁵⁰

It is possible that this pattern was limited to areas outside the main town. Within the town of Palaikastro, the changes of the previous period were consolidated and created a different pattern: House π , which had not played any crucial role in the Neopalatial period, produced one rhyton decorated with horns of consecration; Building 1, the new ceremonial centre, which replaced Building 7 (Table 3.14), contained cultic contexts of similar liking to structured deposition as those of its precursor (fig. 3.49). Small ritual acts were represented in most of the rooms by the careful placement of ceremonial vessels at selected locations, such as niches, doorways, ritual equipment stored in cupboards. Deposition of shells in contexts of stone tools, stalactites and pebble layers show continuity in contexts and equipment. The main room of the shrine contained a large number of shells ritually deposited on a raised platform that served as a focal point of the room similar to the shell depositions of the LMIIIA Building 7. Nearby, the detached head of a female figurine, crowned by horns of consecration, was placed atop an inverted bowl in a small stone-lined niche, across which was set a row of upturned conical cups.

According to Cunningham & Sackett (2007: 93) ‘the careful placement of so many objects, apparently in situ, at different key locations of the building at the time of its final abandonment would seem to represent a moment of crisis in the town's history’ or that ‘in LM IIIB there was only limited return to some areas for specific reasons’. However, the careful construction and architectural design of Building 1, the evidence for ritual action in the town and the structured deposition of shell symbolism showing continuity from the previous period reflect a pattern of relative stability in ritual habits.

Moreover, it is possible that symbolism at Palaikastro may have been subject to more complex dynamics during this period. For example, citation of Neopalatial symbolism outside the town seems to have been mutually exclusive in terms of topography and context to the structured shell/triton depositions within the town. The shell symbolism of the town was extended to those burials which were closer to it. These burials contained no Neopalatial symbolism. Characteristically, a burial at Sarandari, right to the north of the town (fig. 3.48), presents the elaborate structuration of ritual material found in Building 1: outside a larnax

⁵⁰ Dawkins dated the earliest material in the South Cemetery as Neopalatial (PK IV: 290-2; PK V: 2-7), while MacGillivray (1987: 278) would rather date it in LMII. In any case, there was a clear intention to reconstruct past ritual symbolism and the emphasis on Neopalatial contexts (cupboard, ashlar masonry, double axes, horns of consecration) indicates that the desired period was the Neopalatial.

containing parts of the skeleton and the skull of a 30-35 year old woman, whose mandible was placed on a vase, was found a bronze vase with 4 natural shells and one made of crystal. Near the larnax lay a very fragmented skull with a humerus fragment belonging to a 10-year old child. The possible relationship of a mother and her child buried together suggests that shells were viewed as symbols of birth and female fertility, matching the evidence from the LMIIIA Building 7. Similarly, the so-called 'Tholos Tomb' of Palaikastro, an elite burial to the west of the town, contained a secondary burial deposited on a layer of vessels and associated with a rich group of metallic artefacts. On top of the bone heap lay a stirrup jar decorated with a triton shell (fig. 3.48). No other Neopalatial symbolism was 'cited' in this grave.

The existence of elite contexts in both of these distinct patterns indicates that there may have existed two different social groups, occupying different areas of the site, and claiming power through citation of different past uses of sample symbols: one aspiring to revive Neopalatial symbols, and the other one continuing the innovative trends of the previous period (Final Palatial). The first group emphasised the revival of contextual and artefactual elements of the local Neopalatial symbolic practices, while the second elaboration, precision, dense structuration and innovation in ritual action.

3.4.1 Conclusions

In the Prepalatial period, natural tritons were deposited as offerings or as receptacles for libations to secondary burials to mark distinctive deceased individuals. In the Protopalatial period, an emerging Palaikastro elite claimed its social status by importing or imitating fashionable symbols of the rising large palaces, such as 'Shell vessels' and double axe potter's marks. During the early and the late Neopalatial period, the social role of symbols reflected an increasingly stratified elite system, with the exclusive use of certain categories of sample symbols marking the identity of different social groups and in different contexts. The active involvement of elite families in the storage of the sample symbols and public performance further supported the social structures of Palaikastro. In the Final Palatial period, dramatic political and social changes entirely changed these functions. The distribution and contextual patterns of the symbols reflect new social structures, whereby the previously fluid private and public contexts became two distinct spaces of ritual practice with mutually exclusive use of different categories of symbols. Strict prescriptions, ritual precision and the selection of standardised ritual equipment, which was regularly repeated in the same building,

became the new features governing their use. The revival of Neopalatial symbolism in the Postpalatial period appears to have been a means of cultural distinction from this new trend and the two different trends possibly identified two different social groups at LMIIIB Palaikastro.

3.5 Zakros (Figs. 3.50-3.57; Tables 3.15-3.20)

Zakros lies on the east coast of Crete, where the only safe harbour in the area is located. The site, in the middle of a small valley, is otherwise largely inaccessible from the land and surrounded by a rugged and barren landscape. The main natural pass to the town was the so-called Gorge of the Dead, which also served as the main burial ground of the town (fig. 3.50). The archaeological site of Zakros was first excavated by Hogarth in 1901 (Hogarth 1901-2). In the 1960-70's Nikolaos Platon systematically excavated the town, the Palace and several burial sites around them. The results were published in the Proceedings of the Archaeological Society (PAE) of the years 1961-1973 and 1978-1980, and in a concise publication of the main excavation results (N. Platon 1971b; 1974), while a full publication of the material is still pending (L. Platon 2010: 512-513). The overall study of the site's phases, which continues under Lefteris Platon, has been recently modified and facilitated by a new dating system which is adjusted to the specific stratigraphic conditions of Zakros (Table 3.15; *ibid.* 2010: 513-517; 2011).

The Palace of Zakros, one of the richest sites in Minoan Crete, was found intact after a massive LMIB destruction (N. Platon's 'closed stratum'), thus providing a valuable set of well-dated material culture studied in its original context. Recent research has pushed the foundation of the Palace back to the mature LMIA period, but without secure evidence for the existence of two distinct palatial phases (L. Platon 2010: 516-7). The town, which extended on two hills to the north and north east of the Palace, as well as on the hill of St Anthony to the SW (fig. 3.50-1), expanded throughout the MMIB-MMIIA and MMIIIB-LMIA periods and reached its peak parallel to the growth of the LMIB palace. After a severe destruction of the site at the end of LMIB and the abandonment of the town, buildings from the previous period were partially re-occupied without any new constructions, while the town plan remained the same (Zoitopoulos 2012). The caves and rock shelters in the Gorge of the Dead accommodated EM-MM burials (Table 3.15). More EM burials were found in natural pits and cliff breakages close to the shore at Mavro Aulaki south of the Zakros bay and some of them continued in use in the LMIII period. As is usually the case in the Minoan archaeological record, LMI burials are enigmatically scarce. Apart from the cemeteries, the wider hinterland of Zakros has produced a complex road network dotted with guardhouses, farmsteads, villages and Villas and Traostalos, a peak sanctuary 3 kms north of the main site.

Limitations for the study of the symbols derive from erosion and the agricultural activity in the area, which has affected particularly the eastern section of the Palace. In addition, the extant published material is mostly based on the preliminary description of the main finds and sporadic publications on isolated matters regarding different thematic approaches. Unfortunately, some of the most important aspects analysed in this chapter cannot be discussed fully, because of the obscure description of the stratigraphic sequences and the contexts, as well as the still debated aspects of the dating system (see also Gerontakou 2011: 13-4). The absence of comprehensive maps with all the main components of the site (palace, houses, peak sanctuary, harbour) further affects the efficient and full identification and contextualisation of the symbols.

Prepalatial period

Despite the rich evidence for funerary contexts from this period, the site did not produce any sample symbols. With the exception of an otherwise ordinary burial, which contained a concentration of shells, the burials at Zakros did not contain any sample symbols. Overall, their poor funerary architecture and modest grave goods (L. Platon 1992: 224-248) reflect a low degree of social differentiation.

Protopalatial period

Despite the intensification of use of the site evidenced by the massive burials of the communal graves at Pezoules, Houses D and E, the MM deposits found in the area of the later Palace (N. Platon 1971b: 236) and the peak sanctuary at Traostalos, only a few shell deposits are known from this period (Table 3.15). They were found in the East Building, House A and Traostalos.

In the East Building, the earliest examples of a type of assemblages containing shells were found and are discussed in detail in the following section of the early Neopalatial period, when their pattern of use fully develops. These shell assemblages were found in the deeper (Protopalatial) layers of the building together with important concentrations of conical cups and offering tables, which suggest a use in feasting and ritual offering ceremonies. Similar material derived from the so-called ‘Zakros deposits’, which probably resulted from clearances of the East Building (Boulotis 1983: 153-5). Unfortunately, the poor stratigraphical description of these contexts, and those from House A, does not allow further analysis.

It is, however, possible to reconstruct the emergence of a Protopalatial elite at Zakros. The East Building, also known as the ‘Old Palace’ (N. Platon 1974: 225), displayed early palatial features which indicate a public function (size, masonry, extensive use of frescoes, high quantity and quality of contents and large storage and manufacturing spaces, N. Platon 1970: 241; 1973: 243).⁵¹ The building was located between the harbour and the town and played a leading role in the increasing trade and exchange activities of the settlement. The claim of power by the new Zakros elite did not only derive from the control of these activities and the acquisition of rare imported objects, but also from performance. Ritual consumption of shells in ceremonial feasting events, where prestigious ritual objects were displayed, formed a crucial strategy of social distinction employed by the East Building elite. The family of House A also seems to have played a significant role in the rising social complexity of Zakros. At the end of the period, a clay vessel with moulded rockwork and shells (‘Shell vessel’) from the building indicates the increasing involvement of the family in the trading contacts with the emerging Minoan palaces.

Early Neopalatial period

The main sample symbols of this period (Zakros IV) are the tritons and the shells.⁵² Their use is patterned, as they were mostly found in assemblages with standardised components (Tables 3.16-20) of manufactured products, on the one hand (usually large groups of pottery sherds and conical cups, loomweights, stone vase fragments, grinders, stone lamps, or stone hinges of a door and obsidian blades) and natural objects, on the other hand (pumice, animal bones, wild boar’s teeth or large animal maxillas). These assemblages, here called ‘Zakros assemblages’, contained tritons and shells and are distinguished from common food deposits with shells by the presence of rhyta, offering tables or figurines (Tables 3.16-20). Many of the ‘Zakros assemblages’ also contained single examples of loomweights, conical cups, pieces of pumice, wild boar’s teeth, tritons and shells which cannot have resulted every time from random refuse and suggests structured deposition. The symbolic character of the assemblages is further supported by the represented artefact categories which reflect an intention to include a well-structured set of activities of everyday life (manufacturing, storage, stone working, cereal grinding, hunting, cooking, fishing, weaving, herding and the practice of

⁵¹ I would not agree with Gerontakou (2013:238) who lessens the political authority of the East Building based on the lack of administrative documents. The combination of relative location, architecture and size, but, most of all, the quality of its contents and its ritual equipment, leave no doubt as to its leading role in the community of Zakros III.

⁵² Unfortunately, the recording of shells at Zakros does not involve any specification of the species. Here, they are considered in a generic way acknowledging their important social symbolic role.

rituals). Moreover, their deposition in symbolic spaces, such as entrances, thresholds, staircases, or in foundation or destruction deposits and in layers of repair and architectural modifications, reveals an intention to mark critical architectural areas and their structural changes. Overall, the classified contents and the selected contexts of the ‘Zakros assemblages’ seem to aim at enhancing awareness of the historical continuity and identity of the local community of Zakros.

The contextual distribution pattern of the ‘Zakros assemblages’ shows continuity from the Protopalatial period: half of the tritons and the shells found at the site derived from the East Building and most of the other half of the tritons from the area of House A (figs. 3.52-3). The performative aspects of these strategies, though, are much clearer in this period as a result of more and better recorded evidence. Thus, tritons were found distributed along the route that leads to House A (fig. 3.52), which passes by the ‘Diagonal Building’ and the ‘Open-Air Shrine’, both of which also contained triton assemblages. House A and its adjacent south west terraces yielded important cultic equipment and it is considered that the building was an important shrine of Zakros during this period (L. Platon 1984: 439).⁵³

On the other hand, a large number of shells was nucleated in the north east corner of the later West Court and the West Wing (fig. 3.53). The precise function of the West section of the Palace, before the erection of the latter, is not yet clear. This area marks the beginning of the road to House A, along which a significant number of tritons, but no shells, were found. By contrast, the area of the shells did not produce any tritons. This juxtaposing pattern between the West section of the Palace and the road to House A is further supported by the depositional characteristics of the two categories of shells. Tritons were mostly found as single objects and regularly associated with jugs suggesting a use as libation vessels, whereas most of the shells were found in large concentrations together with pottery sherds suggesting consumption. These differences may indicate large feasting events based on shells in the area of the later north east corner of the Palace’s West Court, followed by procession, which involved libations at the Diagonal Building and the open-air shrine which culminated in House A.

The connection of the East Building to these contexts and its leading role in the conducting of the above described ceremonial performances is suggested by the distinct use of shells within its own confines: a) it contained the majority of triton and shell assemblages in Zakros; b) it

⁵³ There is a debate about the possible administrative or military role of the building, which is based on the presence of 500 sealings found in House A (Weingarten 1983a-b; Wiener 1999). Here I focus more on the ceremonial character of the house, as the role of the sealings is still under discussion.

contained the most complete examples of ‘Zakros assemblages’ with representatives of the majority of components; c) it produced the only examples of tritons and shells with added treatment, such as a triton made in stone, two tritons treated with red colour and a shell with suspension hole; d) it produced the only representative of bull symbolism found in Zakros IV, a bull’s horn and a bull-shaped vessel, which were both components of shell assemblages. The above contextual patterns of distribution and performance indicate that the elites of the East Building and House A preserved their distinct social position from the previous period and that they continued to use shells in their strategies of display of power.

The East Building displayed its predominant role in the town, not only through the manipulation of the popular ‘Zakros assemblages’, but also of other major sample symbols. Characteristically, double axes and horns of consecration were only found in the East Building. Unfortunately, not much information about these symbols is recorded and their context was greatly altered by the later construction of the LMIB Palace. The pottery decorated with double axes is not discussed in terms of typology and decoration,⁵⁴ and the horns of consecration are only described as found in a refuse deposit in the building. A small silver model of a double axe and a loomweight inscribed with the double axe motif associated with a kernos suggest the ability of the East Building to access precious materials for the manufacture of symbols and use them in sophisticated ritual contexts.

Thus, the hierarchical use of shells, other sample symbols and prestigious ritual objects in Zakros and the nucleation of the best representatives of these categories in the East Building, indicates the centre of elite power during this period. Performance and mobility were the main means of display of these objects: conspicuous consumption of shells, processional transport of tritons and offering of libations were combined with the display of other ritual objects that were exclusively accessible to the East Building elite. Conducting such performances and displaying exclusive symbols in areas outside the East Building and along ceremonial routes which crossed significant spaces of the settlement was a powerful strategy of marking and connecting important areas of control across the town to the leading Zakros elite.

This strategy is also reflected in the use of other sample symbols, such as the horns of consecration. Three pairs were found at the site, one in the East Building, another one in the town in Building H and a third one on the peak sanctuary of Traostalos (fig. 3.54). This

⁵⁴ Recorded by L. Platon (1999b: 13) as belonging to the LMIB period, when the East Building possibly served as priests’ residence (L. Platon 1999b: 47). According to Gerontakou (2013), however, the area was turned into an open-air space during the LMIB period and the finds are, therefore, dated, before the end of LMIA. Here the latter dating is used because of the more recent and specialised treatment of the material.

distribution does not appear to have been coincidental. The peak sanctuary and the East Building were closely connected through shared artefact categories, such as concentrations of shells, male and female figurines, stone offering tables and loomweights, as well as figurines of several animals, primarily bulls, but also domestic animals, fish and beetles (Chryssoulaki 2001: 60). Topographically, this connection is marked by a route which crosses the Northern gate of the town between buildings H and G⁵⁵. The pair of horns found in Building H and a rare boat model, with parallel from Traostalos, found in Building G (N. Platon 1970: 236) suggest that this route may have indeed served as a ceremonial route connecting the town to the peak sanctuary. The three pairs of horns in the East Building, the Northern gate and the peak sanctuary served as constant and visible markers which connected the centre of elite power of Zakros to the liminal areas of the town and displayed its control over the major ritual landscape features and underlined the importance of the East Building as the starting point of processions and performance.

The use of symbolic topography to mark areas of control by the Zakros elites appears to have extended beyond the elite of the East Building, to the families of Houses A and Da. The ceremonial role of House A has already been pointed out, while House Da possessed impressive frescoes, which rival those of the East Building, and presented architectural analogies with the Ceremonial Hall of the LMIB Palace (L. Platon 1999b: 43). Both these houses produced double axe stands in similar contexts (fig. 3.55): an impressively high (88 cm) clay stand was buried under the later LMIB floor of House Da. The clay stand was found together with a Zakros assemblage (one animal tooth, one inscribed loomweight and two grinders), while the animal bones may imply a kind of ritual deposition. The excavator characterised this deposit as a rubbish dump (N. Platon 1986: 273), but the importance of the building, the presence of the Zakros assemblage and the symbolic value of the double axe stand suggest the intentionality of this deposition. Its position under the floor implies a foundation deposit which perhaps followed a ceremonial feasting. The stand from House A was also deposited with animal bones as if following some feast. Thus, the two houses contained double axe stands deposited with animal bones, the first possibly as foundation deposit in the later reconstruction of the building and the second in an elite ceremonial context. Whether these feastings were kept at a household level or were public is not clear, as is the exact function of these houses. Their elite character suggests an active role in the community which perhaps involved public ceremonial aspects. Perhaps the fact that

⁵⁵ Building G is characterised as a watch tower (Watrous 2012: 538).

topographically they marked the two edges of the town, House A in the north and House Da in the south (fig. 3.55), had some significance in the way public performance was conducted in the town of Zakros. Considering the complete absence of double axe stands in the East Building during this period, it is possible that public performance at Zakros was under the control of competing elites which used distinct symbols to demarcate their own power in the town.

In summary, during MMIII-LMIA the East Building elite consolidated and increased its power at Zakros, as reflected in the exclusive use of certain sample symbols, prestigious ritual equipment and performative activities with large impact in the local community. The structured use of symbolic topography, and the visibility and mobility of the symbols were the means of displaying power in the town. ‘Lesser elites’, such as the families of House A and Da, imitated these strategies but perhaps did not have access to conspicuous symbols such as the horns of consecration and used different symbol categories such as the double axes stands. Thus, mutually exclusive sample symbols were used to illustrate different elite identities within the Zakros community.

Late Neopalatial period

In LMIB, the Palace of Zakros (phase V) was constructed and the town expanded, while an unprecedented proliferation of a wide range of sample symbols appeared in the site (fig. 3.56).

The most striking pattern of this period is the high nucleation of this rich amount of sample symbols in the newly built Palace as opposed to their impressively low presence in the town (fig. 3.56). It appears that the elite of the Palace had accumulated all the ceremonial bronze double axes and the double axe stone stands, the large majority of double axe mason’s marks, almost all the pottery with double axe decoration, the large majority of the horns of consecration, all the Marine Style pottery with representation of tritons, as well as rarer artefacts, such as double axe and double axe-sacred knot ivory inlays, a clay tablet with a double axe ideogram, a bronze vessel with double axe frieze, a rhyton imitating an ostrich egg and a stone triton.

However, the elite of the Zakros Palace was aware that an impressive quantitative superiority of symbolic wealth (figs. 3.52-3.56) would not be as effective without adequate means of its display. Thus, it developed a number of complex strategies of use of these symbols in order to make a direct indexical connection between them and its socio-political supremacy at Zakros. A first strategy was a very well-structured and hierarchical storage pattern of the

sample symbols within the Palace. The most prestigious versions of the sample symbols of LMIB Zakros were deposited in the West Wing and especially the Treasury (fig 3.56): almost all the bronze double axes from the Palace were found in the West Wing (fig. 3.56), but the ceremonial ones were only found in the Treasury, including the most elaborate bronze double axe known from Minoan Crete and a small votive one. In the same context were found rare examples of double axe symbolism, such as the relief frieze at the rim of a bronze vessel. Examples of sacred knots, at Zakros mostly found combined with the double axe, were found exclusively in the West Wing. In the Treasury were deposited highly prestigious versions of the symbol in ivory and on an ostrich egg. Pottery with representations of double axe-sacred knots and Marine Style pottery with tritons came from the storage spaces of the West Wing.

A second strategy was a complex performative and functional patterned use of the sample symbols within the Palace. Characteristically, although the number of ceremonial axes found at the Zakros Palace roughly matched that of the stands, none of the stands were deposited in the West Wing, where the bronze axes were deposited, and no bronze double axes were found in the East Wing and its adjacent areas, where the stands were found (fig. 3.56). If the double axes were stored in a different section of the Palace than their joining components, a certain kind of movement of the two parts would undoubtedly be required to bring them together. The possibility of such ceremonial transfer is supported by the local iconography: a sealing found at Zakros depicts two female figures in procession carrying respectively a shafted double axe and a sacred garment. It is, moreover, intriguing that iconography precisely stresses the moment of transportation of the symbol and not the moment of the shafting of the symbol. It can be assumed that this transfer was a highly significant part in the use of the symbol or perhaps that the final setting of placement of the joined symbol was an interior space, the representation of which is generally uncommon in Minoan iconography.

The distribution pattern of the horns of consecration reveals a similarly meaningful contextualisation of the symbol. Out of five large pairs of horns of consecration, one was found in a destruction deposit in the north wing of the Palace and another four large pairs of horns were all associated with the East Wing (fig. 3.56). No recorded large pairs were found anywhere else in the Palace or the town or the West Wing of the Palace, where the majority of prestigious sample symbols and most exquisite ritual equipment was kept. This is exceptionally significant for the symbolism of the horns of consecration in LMIB Zakros, as it reveals that the purpose of the symbol was neither to signal the most sacral, in terms of ritual equipment, section of the Palace, nor the one where the double axe symbolism was mostly concentrated. The contextual distribution of the four pairs of horns in the East Wing

provides good hints for the actual purpose of the symbol. One pair of horns crowned the entrance of corridor XXXVIII, which led to the fountain of the East Wing, where another large pair was found. A third pair of horns crowned the corridor at the north east corner of the Central Court, which eventually led to the lustral basin of the East Wing, where painted pairs of horns decorated its interior walls. This means that two pairs of horns of consecration faced the Central Court crowning the two respective doorways, which, through passages, led to two respective contexts related to water in the interior spaces of the East Wing (fig. 3.56). This evidence suggests a function of the symbol as a conspicuous visual marker, which invited participants to follow a route in order to access a place of performance. This performance was associated in both cases with water in a structurally monumental and complex facility, which, however, reserved a large degree of exclusivity and inaccessibility.

A third strategy was the control of liminal areas of the Palace through performative activities of sample symbols. Vessels decorated with double axes or double axes-sacred knots were found at the site and belong to two categories: one associated with storage and another one with libations. The large storage jars were found in the storage spaces of the West Wing, whereas the small libation vases were kept in the shrine of the West Wing with other ritual equipment. However, the most peculiar libation vessel decorated with the symbol was found outside the Palace. The so-called *idiotypon skeuos* (peculiar vessel) combines four circular hollowed tubes and a cup at the top, whose bottom was also holed and bore a double axe-sacred knot motif on each side. The liquid in the cup would follow a multiple direction and complex route down the four rings before it poured through its bottom hole. This vessel was found next to the monumental stepped entrance which connected the Harbour Road to the Palace (fig. 3.56). Considering the originality and ceremonial efficiency of this vessel, as well as the fact that most of the double axe pottery was found in the West Wing of the Palace, it is reasonable to assume that its use was closely associated with palatial functions. Its position at the main entrance to the Palace and the town from the harbour indicates an association with entrance rituals involving libations, perhaps of purificatory nature.

A fourth strategy was the marking of areas outside the confines of the Palace as palatial through the use of highly prestigious sample symbols used mainly in the Palace and the reproduction of palatial contexts in these spaces. Thus, in House A, a strainer decorated with a frieze of double axes was perforated at the bottom to allow the flow of liquids and was found together with rich ritual equipment in a shrine context. This example reproduced ritual contexts of double axe pottery. In House Z, at the south edge of the town (fig. 3.56), which

served as a wine production facility of the Palace,⁵⁶ reproduced storage contexts of the Palace with a large storage jar decorated with relief double axes found next to the press as a storing receptacle of the produced wine. It needs to be stressed that the rest of the town produced majorly ordinary pottery, the finest representatives of which were a few vessels decorated with spirals, the ripple motif or floral style (L. Platon 2011).

Another strategy was to mark symbolic liminal spaces and processional routes whereby sample symbols defined space as hierarchically classified. For example, the distribution pattern of double axe mason's marks took into consideration liminal areas and passes of the site. They were found inscribed on blocks of houses at the edge of the town (fig. 3.56) and within these houses in spaces such as thresholds, staircases to upper floors or entrances (the threshold of House D, the staircase of House B at the north edge of the town and on the exterior corner of the House of the Double Doors built on a crossroad). Their large majority were found in the Palace with few examples in the town. By contrast, multiple double axe marks were found exclusively in the Palace. This means that the single version of the symbol was accessible to town buildings, whereas its multiple one was considered highly elite and confined to the Palace. However, they had a similar function, marking the two main entrances of the West Wing, one at the entrance, which connects the West Wing with the Central Court, and another at the entrance between the West Wing and the West Court (fig. 3.56). As has already been stressed, the West Wing was the most highly sacral area of the Palace, where the most valuable ritual objects were kept, and it is only reasonable to assume that any ceremonial performance involving these objects in either of the two spaces would have required going through these two entrances.⁵⁷

The function of three small pairs of horns of consecration which marked a 'minor' route (fig. 3.54) appears to have been similar: one was found at the entrance of the West Wing on the side of the West Court, a second had fallen from the west wall of the Diagonal Building and a third one was in House N at the north west edge of the town. This route mainly follows the early Neopalatial sacred road to the House A shrine. Apparently, the construction of the Palace conditioned the starting point of the processional way, while the Diagonal Building remained a significant landmark on this route. It is not clear whether this, apparently ceremonial, road ended in the House A shrine or in House N. The horns of consecration from

⁵⁶ The Palace did not possess such facilities within its confines, possibly because of lack of space (N. Platon 1963: 165; Kopaka & L. Platon 1993: 91).

⁵⁷ The special symbolic character of these liminal palatial spaces was further emphasised by a structure resembling an altar right in front of the entrance in the Central Court and a small pair of horns at the entrance from the West Court.

House N were very small and the attachment holes they bear indicate that they possibly formed part of some larger object (fig. 3.57). What appears to be of importance from the above evidence is that the early Neopalatial route from the West Court to the north west area of the town was still ritually significant in this period and that horns of consecration marked that route. The fact that the pairs of horns were in this case smaller compared to those used within the Palace signals a hierarchical relation between the inner and the outer space of the Palace. Moreover, this example indicates that the West Court played a less significant role than the Central Court in connection to the symbolism of the horns of consecration.

From all the above, it can be concluded that strategies of structuring the use of symbols in hierarchical, topographical and performative respects were significant tools for the enhancement of their effect. Controlling the nucleation of prestigious symbols and structuring their performative effect in terms of size, material, visibility and ritual functionality and signification communicated the power of the elite of the Palace within its confines, while the use of exclusive symbols and contexts of the Palace marked areas of extended influence outside it. It is of interest that most of these strategies were already known and implemented in the previous period, perhaps in a less complex form. In the two previous periods, the most prestigious symbols of Zakros were nucleated in the East Building, which controlled and reproduced the use and performative contexts of certain symbols in parts of town and beyond it. Its elite used the most elaborate shell symbolism with models, or painted examples of shells, and controlled the ceremonial consumption of shells in the elite areas of the town. This continuity may suggest either that the East Building elite of the early Neopalatial period constructed and administered the Palace during this period or that a new elite replaced the previous one but inherited its strategies of symbolic display of power.

On the other hand, the elevation of the elite of the Palace to a highly powerful source of control in the area signified a radical break in what was perhaps the most characteristic use of elite symbolism in the Protopalatial and the early Neopalatial symbolism of Zakros, the 'Zakros assemblages'. The 'Zakros assemblages' in LMIB were no longer regarded appropriate for elite symbolism and they were only found in modest areas of the Palace, such as the workshops. Similarly, House A no longer used natural tritons as markers of a sacred route, but horns of consecration. Large concentrations of natural shells deposited mostly outside the Palace along the west outer wall of the West Wing with pottery and animal bones indicate shell feasting in the area, probably related with the route marked by the small pairs of horns of consecration. Within the Palace, the only shell symbolism was confined to highly refined versions of the tritons and the shells, such as sealings, Marine Style pottery and

models manufactured in chlorite and other precious materials, most of which were found in the West Wing.

By contrast, the 'Zakros assemblages' were for the first time widely used by the lower-class families of the town (figs. 3.52-3). They used shell and triton assemblages with single natural shells/tritons to mark liminal areas in the corners, staircases, entrances, niches or destruction fillings of their houses and to also mark episodes of repair or reconstruction. Thus, although their symbolic use in terms of context did not change, their socio-political meaning had shifted and, instead of marking sacred routes connecting the elite centre with other elite landmarks within the site, they were now used only in simple domestic areas of the community.

Thus, the social differentiation between the community and the elite of Zakros became more marked than ever before. Although the Zakros elite used similar strategies as in the previous periods, in LMIB it showed an intention to clearly distance itself from the unsophisticated everyday ritual practices of the townsfolk. It appears that originally the East Building elite drew on the local symbolism of the community, which was expressed by the 'Zakros assemblages'. This fact proves that it actually derived from the local community and was not inserted from some other area or from a different class of people. Increasingly, however, throughout the Neopalatial period, the elite of Zakros broke with the local symbolism and decided to distance itself from the townsfolk by discarding anything that was directly indexing the everyday life of the simple townspeople. Possibly as a reaction, the townsfolk, who maintained a rural and modest way of living despite the huge changes brought on by the elite of the Palace (Chryssoulaki & L. Platon 1987), assumed the 'Zakros assemblages' as symbol of their traditional identity and the distinct features which differentiated them from the elite of the Palace.

Final Palatial period

In what appears to have been the basements of LMIII House A were found two tritons together with storage, serving and drinking pottery, loomweights, grinders and a weight (fig. 3.58). It may be assumed that this assemblage is ritual, because of the possible function of the building as a shrine (Alexiou 1968a: 107-114). The ritual contexts of House A have intense funerary character expressed by new symbolic motifs, which were popular all over the island during this period (fish birds, papyri, bull, griffin; Karantzali 2011: 639). The tritons may have, therefore, been used, either as libation vessels or as instruments with which the spirits

of the dead or some Underworld deity were evoked. The presence of components of the Neopalatial 'Zakros assemblages' in the same context may indicate some continuity in the use of sample symbols from the previous period or an effort to reconstruct LMIB ritual contexts. In general, however, the innovative funerary symbolism and the introduction of new motifs reflect a break with past symbolic strategies. In the adjacent House D, the sherd of a vessel with a double axe frieze was found, but nothing more can be said about its role in the building.

Postpalatial period

According to Kanta (1980), LMIIIB material is present at Zakros, but unknown due to the gaps in the old publications.

3.5.1 Conclusions

The Prepalatial site of Zakros was a simple harbour town with no signs of social differentiation and an almost entire lack of sample symbols. In the Protopalatial period, an elite started to emerge, which signalled its power through the exclusive access to performance of feasting of shells, depositions of offerings and the display of imported trade products and prestigious ritual artefacts. Throughout the Neopalatial period, it consolidated its power and elaborated on the early strategies of symbolism. By LMIB, when the Palace at Zakros was built, it culminated this process with the development of an impressively complex set of use of sample symbols which aimed at displaying power within and outside the Palace. The 'Zakros assemblages' ritualised and materialised the everyday life experience of the townspeople. This local symbolism was used as a marker of identification and acceptance of a newly emerging authority in the MMIII-LMIA, but was rendered low-class by the LMIB palatial standards, which recruited only its most refined aspects. In its partial re-occupation during the Final Palatial period, the site underwent deep socio-political changes which brought a dramatic drop in the use of sample symbols and unprecedented iconographic innovations, although important traces of continuity from the previous periods were preserved.

3.6 Petras (Table 3.19a; Figs 3.59-3.67)

The Minoan settlement and the palace of Petras is situated 1, 5 km east of the modern city of Siteia (fig. 1), overlooking a large maritime bay and offering safe anchorage, not far from a river which could serve as a natural transport means in the area. After limited excavations conducted by R. C. Bosanquet in 1900 (1900-1), the site started to be systematically investigated in 1985-2000 (Tsipopoulou 1990; 2000; 2007, with further bibliography). It appears that this settlement was relocated from an earlier FN-EMI small town, situated on the nearby Hill II (Papadatos 2008), to Hill I (fig. 2-3), which was in use from EMII to LMI. On Hill II, a Prepalatial-early Protopalatial cemetery was founded. EM occupation on Hill 1 was evidenced in the larger part of the lower plateau of the hill, while MMII data were only partially preserved due to the extensive levelling for the construction of the Neopalatial central building (fig. 3-4). This building has been identified as a palace on the basis of its central court, which presents the architectural, structural and functional features of a Minoan palace (Tsipopoulou 1997b: 269). The building was surrounded by a township (fig. 3-4), which is fragmentarily excavated and its extent is not fully known. House I.1 and House II.1, two large two-story Neopalatial houses on the north-northeast slopes of hill 1, are the best investigated so far (Tsipopoulou 2012b: 47). The central building at Petras was destroyed by fire in LMIB and abandoned. In LMIIIA-B, a rather extensive settlement covered Hill II (fig. 3, Tsipopoulou 1996: 17; 1997a: 211). Two houses, the East and the West House, situated to the east of the Central Court and on the north-western sector of the Palace respectively, are the best known. Evidence at the site is biased by the intense use of the space in the Byzantine period and the removal of substantial amounts of stone from it during the Turkish occupation (ibid.25). Until 2015 (Tsipopoulou 2015: 8), 14 house tombs and a burial rock shelter had been excavated at the cemetery on Hill I (fig. 5), thus forming one of the largest Prepalatial cemeteries known in Minoan Crete. Both the large size and complex and varied design of the house tombs, as well as the spatial organization of the cemetery, including two extensive ceremonial areas (Tsipopoulou 2015: 8, fig. 9), reflect a special care for burial customs in Prepalatial Petras. Most of the burials were accompanied by rich grave goods including stone vases, Kamares style figurines, jewellery of gold, silver, bronze and semi-precious stones and seals with hieroglyphic inscriptions. The ceremonial areas produced fine and elaborate cult vessels, feasting pottery, figurines and lamps with evidence for ritual fragmentation and

scattering of the equipment (Tsipopoulou 2015: 9-10). The house tombs belonged to respective Petras families of prominent social status (Tsipopoulou 2012a: 61)

Prepalatial period

The EMI settlement on Hill 2 produced a large amount of good quality pottery, many tools, ground stone and obsidian, as well as amulets and beads made of stone and bone (Tsipopoulou 2012b: 57). Shells were also found, the majority of which were limpets (fig. 6, Theodoropoulou 2012: 90-1), an edible species of shell. The presence of animal bones in the same area (Tsipopoulou 2012b: 57) rather points to their use as food source during this period than as ornaments.

Protopalatial period

The ritual consumption of shells was securely evidenced in the next period in the town and associated them with those social groups which contributed to the formation of the palatial system at Petras. A MMIB pottery deposit, known as 'Lakkos' was found in Sector III, 75m north of the Palace and antedates it (fig. 4, Haggis 2007: 718; 2012: 191). It has been associated with elite buildings that were destroyed during the modification of the hill to accommodate the palace at the start of MMIIA. The presence in the 'Lakkos' of a seal with the representation of a mortal ruler and the evidence for elite consumption indicates an intra-elite competition before the construction of the palace in MMIIA (Rupp 2006: 271-2). It also contained a huge amount of pottery, totally shattered and without joints, the largest portion of which were fine ritual vessels, stone vases, a clay boat fragment and marine shells (Haggis 2007: 718-720). The main shell species was the murex. Its small numbers may indicate a feasting use perhaps associated with high-quality tableware (Theodoropoulou 2012: 97-8). Tritons were also reported (Tsipopoulou 2012c: 131) but their numbers and treatment is not further discussed. It is only clear that they were not perforated (Theodoropoulou 2012: 98), which probably means that they were rather used for consumption than as libation vessels or ritual receptacles. Interestingly, the use of shells presents a similar use in a funerary context of the immediately following phase. A number of feasting assemblages including shells was associated with the MMIIA House Tomb 2, the most prestigious grave of the Prepalatial and early Protopalatial Petras. In its storage spaces 7-8 (fig. 7), were found ritual and storage vessels, animal bones and shells (Tsipopoulou 2012a: 64). The fact that two of the secondary burials in room 2 of the same grave (fig. 7) were accompanied by a large number of limpets,

a pithoid spouted vessel and a fruitstand (ibid: 62), may support the possibility of a ceremonial deposition of feasting material based on shells. This feasting ceremony may have taken place in the large open space next to House Tomb 2 (fig. 5, ibid: 64). In this space was found a third large deposit of Protopalatial pottery with Kamares ware, animal bones and many marine shells, especially limpets and to a lesser degree murexes (Tsipopoulou 2012d: 121-123). There is at least one more similar votive deposit (Votive deposit 2) at the north-eastern part of the cemetery, apparently connected to another House Tomb, not yet excavated. The deposit, itself not completely investigated yet, contained a large amount of good quality Protopalatial pottery, hundreds of marine shells, and, for the first time, also fragments of clay figurines, of the type found on the peak sanctuaries of Crete (ibid: 123). A different use of shell symbolism is reflected in the deposition of a perforated bivalve (ahivada) used as an amulet, which accompanied the richest burial (MMIIA) of House Tomb 2 in Room 3 (fig. 7), together with a golden earring, three bronze tweezers and a golden band. This burial represents the transition to the palatial period with the use of hieroglyphic documents in the earliest larnax (individual burial) found in the cemetery (Tsipopoulou 2012a: 63; Tsipopoulou 2012d). The overall pattern of the symbolic use of shells in the Prepalatial and early Protopalatial Petras is that they formed an essential and steady feature of feasting events. The communal consumption of shells was already evidenced in the EMI settlement, but it started to acquire a clear ceremonial character from the MMIB period onwards and became an emblem of high social status. It is possible that those communal village practices were elevated to highly ceremonial when practiced in a sacral burial context which made use of the ancestral space on Hill 1. Perhaps the ritual consumption of shells and animals in House tomb 2 represented an inherited and legitimising ritual tradition, as opposed to the innovations in funerary architecture (banks, open-air ceremonial space) and political symbolism (seals) which marked the transition to the rising palatial system. During the same period an elite building of Petras produced evidence for the first structured deposition of shells at the site. In a MMIIA floor of Sector III (fig. 4) was found part of a special building with three large column bases which contained a fragmentary faience nautilus rhyton, a nicely cut stalactite, a sea pebble with 16 incised bull's heads (Tsipopoulou 2012c: 131). Because of a similar important Protopalatial structure of ceremonial character found outside the Palace at Malia, it has been supported that the presence of this building represented heterarchical elites competing palatial social groups (ibid.). However, there is not evidence for the use of sample symbols from the Palace to support this suggestion.

Early Neopalatial period

Reversely, in the early Neopalatial period, evidence derived only from the Palace and not from exterior buildings. Moreover, this evidence is scarce, possibly because of the severe looting of the site in later periods. The Palace did not produce any sample symbols except of a few double axe mason' s marks. A characteristic example is the one that was inscribed on the upper surface of a limestone block on the east wall of the magazines of the 'West Wing' of the Palace (fig. 9, Tsipopoulou 1991: 176). It is suggested that most of the ashlar blocks bearing double axe incisions were related to this area of the Palace (Tsipopoulou 2002: 55). The 'West Wing' was the most carefully built section of the Palace, accessed through ashlar door jambs from the east (central court) and leading onto a floor with stone slabs set in a red clay bed. To the west the paved floor there was another paved room with gypsum-and-plaster floor possessing an 'L'-shaped plaster bench, a unique feature at Petras. The space was devoid of finds and badly burnt (Tsipopoulou Palace 1997b: 271). Despite the preservation of two significant destruction deposits at the Palace, that on the monumental staircase at the north end of the Central Court, and that in the sixth and seventh parallel rectangular spaces (Tsipopoulou 1996: 25), no more sample symbols are known from this period at the site. WE can only guess that their absence, especially large stone horns of consecration, is the result of stone plundering from the later periods. What can be affirmed is that certain households claimed palatial symbolism in their domestic space. House II.1 used LMI ashlar masonry, linear A script, a bench built on the west of the house, a polythyron, a pavement with sea pebbles in room E (Mauroudi (2012: 221-6). Moreover, the vernacular architecture of House I.1 shows that there was social differentiation in Petras inhabitants which was expressed through architecture (ibid: 221).

Late Neopalatial period

In the late Neopalatial period, sample symbols are mainly known from private contexts. A fragmentary 'palace style' amphora depicting a row of inverted double axes on a frieze round the neck of the vessel had probably fallen in Room E of House II.1 from the upper floor (fig. 8). Also recorded are two small pairs of horns of consecration (Mauroudi 2011: 124), as part of the household ritual equipment. It appears that the family in House II.1 possessed an important domestic shrine with a large stone bench, a column and a hearth (room E), a lightwell (Space Z), frescoes in the upper floor and ritual equipment including a plastered libation table, a rhyton? with a feline head (Tsipopoulou 1996: 15), a kernos and unfinished bull figurines (Mauroudi 2011: 124). Again, the fragmentary preservation of the LMIB Petras

Palace does not allow an assessment of the relationship between the House II.1 social group and that of the Palace.

Final Palatial period

Little evidence is recorded during this period at the site. No sample symbols are known.

Postpalatial period

In the Postpalatial period, in a partially preserved early LMIIIB room of the West House was found a large fragment of a clay larnax with painted decoration consisting of double axes between horns of consecration (fig. 10). Both the larnax and the pottery found with it was typical LMIII made of characteristic Palaikastro fabric (Tsipopoulou 1996: 17). It is not sure whether this was a reused burial larnax or a clay chest intended for domestic use. Overall, the evidence from Petras is too fragmentary to arrive at any safe conclusions about the social dynamics expressed through the use of sample symbols. The main result of the study of the sample symbols' patterns is that shells played a significant role in the formation of an elite symbolism related to communal feasting at Petras from the beginning of the site's history.

3.6 East Crete: Conclusions (Tables 3.21-3.30)

In the six site-chapters of East Crete I carried out a contextual analysis of the data in order to examine the linkage of the sample symbols to the social practices of the local communities and their social role for the people of each site separately. In the section that follows, I offer a summary discussion of the main patterns from the six sites of East Crete and a study of the social role of sample symbols for the people of these communities on a regional level.

Prepalatial period

The Prepalatial sample symbols from the six East Cretan sites derive only from funerary contexts (Table 3.21). The lack of sufficient evidence from the Prepalatial towns does not allow one to know whether this is actually a meaningful distribution pattern or the result of evidential bias between funerary and town contexts.

One main pattern of this period is the common use of shells and tritons as primary funerary symbols in the six East Cretan communities. Most importantly, they appear to have been commonly viewed as elite symbols, irrespectively of the degree of social differentiation and the criteria of social distinction of each community (Table 3.21-2). However, these parameters did affect the way the local elites contextualised elite shell symbolism: at Zakros, the site with the lowest social differentiation, a simple deposition of shells distinguished one, otherwise average, burial from all others, mainly furnished with only ordinary pottery and occasionally a few bronzes or personal ornaments; at Palaikastro, where ritual symbolism was the main criterion of social distinction,⁵⁸ tritons were used with a visible emphasis on ritual performance (placed in a special ‘mortuary chapel’ or under the scull of the deceased imitating cups) and held a special position amongst the few distinct symbolic offerings, which distinguished prominent burials at the cemetery; at Pseira, where social differentiation was also low with an even distribution of relative wealth in most of its graves, the rarity of species of shells, their large quantity and their role in ritual performance was the means to distinguish a prominent burial from all others. The distinct Tomb 7 was unique in concentrating all these means of elite funerary symbolism and represented an isolated and

⁵⁸ The high priority of this element at Palaikastro is unique in East Crete: in both urban and funerary contexts, which were otherwise modest in finds, elite architecture was related exclusively with highly ritualised spaces, such as Block χ in town and the house tombs at Hellenika cemetery. Characteristically, a figurine deposit from town Block χ was associated with magic practices and the preponderance of cups and jugs in the funerary pottery of the site (see also Rehak & Young 2001: 433) reveal a significant emphasis on ritual performance.

exceptional performative event, which allowed the reversal of average modest domestic symbolism, common in the rest of the cemetery. At Mochlos, where material wealth, exotic imports and specialised manufactured objects summarised elite symbolism, shells and double axes were viewed as products of the same economic sources, trade and industry, and were appreciated in their skilfully manufactured form. Manufactured or ‘cultural’ shells became elite objects as opposed to natural ones, while double axes were displayed as body ornaments manifesting the ability of their owners to get access to exotic symbolism. The equally active, but apparently less wealthy than Mochlos, commercial and industrial elite of Gournia, used natural shells to mark elite burials in both rich and poorer cemeteries. A small pair of ‘horns of consecration’ modelled on the rim of a clay vessel, which probably imitated similar examples from other areas of Crete, reflects a much less expansive elite strategy of the Gournia people, which allowed them to appreciate less exotic and easier to access symbolic trade products.

From all the above it becomes clear that, despite their proximity and their connection through the maritime trade routes, these six coastal sites of East Crete had different degrees of social differentiation and different criteria of social distinction. Similarly, despite a generally common ground of symbolic perception and the shared use of common sample symbols, there was a different perception of what was an elite way to display these symbols. Therefore, local peculiarity and differentiation is one main pattern which results from this comparison.

Another interesting correlation is that poorer communities, such as Pseira and Palaikastro, or low-class people, such as those buried in the South Slope Cemetery of Mochlos, seem to have resorted to a special emphasis on ritual performance when material wealth was not accessible to them. This was the case of the family of Grave 7, which stated its distinct social position in the modest community of Pseira by the display of a series of impressive performative acts: a uniquely rich feast, the deposition of an unparalleled golden artefact, the consumption of large numbers of rare shells, the unique ceremonial act of sealing the grave and turning it into a monument. Ritual performance was also the main criterion of social prominence in both the cemetery and the town of Palaikastro, where no intention of claiming status through material wealth was noted. However, the most characteristic example illustrating this correlation is the case of Mochlos, where the rich graves of the West Cemetery contained a very low amount of ritual equipment as opposed to the poorer graves of the South Cemetery, which relied greatly on a wide diversity of different ceremonial activities.

An additional aspect of the same correlation appears to be that at sites of lower social differentiation, such as Pseira and Palaikastro, the distinct burials were single, while at sites

of high social differentiation, such as Mochlos and Gournia, the burials were communal. The communally buried deceased of the Mochlos West Terrace and the Gournia North Cemetery house tombs were the wealthy traders and skilful craftsmen of a rising upper class, which became prominent by self-attained imports or manufacturing achievements. Their burial in a communal grave and the deposition of prestigious symbols without distinction or personal demarcation represented their achievements and emphasised their identity as members of a class and not as individuals. By contrast, the tombs of Pseira were single and belonged not to separate classes but to individual households of the town, while the two main Prepalatial cemeteries of Palaikastro (Hellenika at Kastri and Gravel Ridge at Palaikastro) were used by two different extended families. In both examples, the community emphasised the single individual, who managed to stand out as a distinct figure of an otherwise socially even community. The sample symbols present a much wider spread in both the upper and the lower class in those communities with high social differentiation and communal graves, as opposed to those which favoured one individual which monopolised the deposition of sample symbols as offerings. In the first case the graves with highest criteria of social distinction concentrated the majority of the elite sample symbols.

Integrated differently in the local communities and according to their peculiar social principles and economic parameters, the shells were treated in all cases as equivalent to objects with the highest economic and ideological values. However, in most examples it was not possible to define the species, which were preferred for the conveyance of this symbolic value, because of the lack of systematic recording of shell species. Apart from the special appreciation of tritons with examples at Palaikastro, partly at Gournia and in the secondary deposition of tritons in Tomb A at Mochlos, the other species of shells were only generically recorded. The systematic and detailed publication of the molluscs from Pseira has been a valuable exception, which suggests that in the Prepalatial period the species of the shells did not play a role in the construction of symbolic meaning and they were indeed appreciated in a generic way.

Last but not least, it has to be noted that the use of shells in Petras, the only site which developed a palatial system in the following Protopalatial period in East Crete, was entirely different than any other East Cretan site of this study. Found in urban and not funerary context, edible species of shells (mainly limpets) appear to have been used as food source for the EMI inhabitants of the site. A future full publication of the evidence may reveal a communal – and thus symbolic in a social sense – character of this consumption, such as a popular village feasting.

Protopalatial period

This period was marked by significant changes which appear to have had a deep impact on the social structure of each community and on the hierarchical dynamics between the six sites as a whole. Political turbulence seriously affected the thriving communities of Mochlos, Gournia and Pseira: the cemetery at Pseira fell out of use in MMIIB at the height of its use and the town suffered a violent destruction (Pseira VII: 139); Mochlos underwent a serious decline in the use of its cemetery and an apparent drop in its population (Soles & Davaras 1992: 426-7). Gournia was less affected, but in relative decline compared to its previous wealth (Soles 1979: 157-160). On the contrary Petras, the only site which produced a Palace during this period presented a steady growth throughout the period (Tsipopoulou 2012e: 179).

As a consequence of these events, those sites with high social differentiation in the previous period decreased significantly in social complexity (Table 3.23). The inability to accumulate material wealth was replaced by a new emphasis on ritual symbolism, which became now the elite symbolism. Thus, ritual architecture distinguished the privileged families in the communities of Mochlos, Gournia and Pseira, and an increased concern for the veneration of the ancestors together with sophistication in the funerary practice was developed.⁵⁹

Zakros and Palaikastro, which had low social differentiation in the previous period, acquired a high social differentiation in the Protopalatial period, possibly because their communities were less affected by the political unrest. The main criterion of social distinction in these sites was elite architecture with components which imitated those of the large palaces of Minoan Crete: Building B at Palaikastro and the East Building at Zakros were founded in this period with architectural and decorative features, which imitated palatial prototypes. In the same context, the sample symbols were now elite symbols because of their association with the achievements of industrial palatial production: 'shell vessels', mason's and potter's marks (Table 3.23). At Petras, the uninterrupted growth from the EM must have played a crucial role to the development of the local palace. The evidence from the town is still scarce to support a full assessment of social differentiation parameters, but there appears to have heterarchical social groups represented by the people who constructed the first palace, those who used the ritual building with the three columns in Sector III and those who conducted the

⁵⁹ These were commemorative offerings to older burials indicating ancestral cult at Pseira, the transfer of an older burial to the newly built Tomb A, special arrangements in the town to reveal older structures at Mochlos (Soles & Davaras 2010), a funerary shrine at Gournia (Soles 1979: 149), architectural elaboration (courtyards, terraces, benches, kernoi, libation receptacles, Pseira VII: 127-137⁵⁹; Soles 1979: 157-160), new types of pottery (Pseira VI: 129) and a variety of rituals, such as libations and depositions of offerings.

feasting events which created the 'Lakkos' deposit in Sector III. Similar differences of elite level have been identified in House Tomb 2 and the rock-shelter burials (Tsipopoulou 2012c: 129). Moreover, it has been suggested that particular symbols and decorative motifs of pottery and seals represented different elite groups of Petras (Tsipopoulou 2012c: 129). Despite the lack of sample symbols, other than the shells, these social groups possessed the main symbolic means of palatial power, that was large and complex architecture, feasting assemblages, seals (one with the representation of a ruler) and metallic artefacts (ibid: 180).

The imitation of the rising palatial components of elite symbolism by the East Cretan communities was carried out by the emerging elite families of each community. In this process, there was a higher degree of access to this new symbolism by the families of the sites with high social differentiation. The latter were also connected directly to the largest and remotest to East Cretan palaces, such as Knossos and Phaistos, while those with low social differentiation were connected to palaces which were closer and easier to access, such as Malia. Characteristically, the elites of Palaikastro (Block D) and those of Zakros (House A and the East Building) produced 'Shell vessels' similar to those found in the large palaces of Phaistos and Knossos.

These individual initiatives which promoted the introduction of elite symbolism in East Crete led to intense local variation in the use of particular palatial symbols. For example, the elite families of the Pseiran House AA and the Plateia Building produced a type of shell vessel, the scoop, which was popular in East Crete and had exact parallels only at Malia. Mochlos and Gournia did not produce any 'shell vessels', scoops or double axe marks during this period. On the other hand, the families at Petras did not use 'shell vessels' or scoops, but were responsible for the construction of the only Protopalatial Palace in East Crete. Similarly, palatial symbolic artefacts such as the conical cups, Kamares ware and bull's head rhyta were popular at Zakros and Palaikastro and very sporadically found at Pseira, Mochlos and Gournia (Table 3.24). Kamares ware was very popular at Petras, but no bull's head rhyta or perforated tritons have been so far recorded. It appears then that the families of Petras were quick to adopt the palatial architecture in East Crete, although with some considerable delay compared to North Central Crete. The families of Palaikastro and Zakros adopted significant elements of the emerging palatial symbolism of the largest palaces, whereas those from Pseira, Mochlos and Gournia remained isolated from these developments, or imitated the closest, and more 'provincial' palace in the region, that of Malia.

Thus, Protopalatial symbolism in East Crete reflected dramatic political and social changes, and new dynamics, which were shaped by the adjustments to new developments related to the

emergence of the palatial system. New criteria of elite symbolism were established by the palaces, which were imitated as status symbols by the rising elites of East Crete according to the degree of social differentiation of each community. This resulted in a shift from funerary to town contexts, compared to the previous period, and to an increased interest in fashionable products of the innovative palatial workshops of the large palaces of Crete.

Early Neopalatial period

The redistribution of site hierarchy dynamics of Protopalatial East Crete was consolidated into an established reality in the early Neopalatial period, with Palaikastro and Zakros growing into the main Minoan centres in the area, and Pseira, Mochlos and Gournia gradually recovering. The higher concentration of significant palatial features of elite architecture in Building 6 compared to the Houses on the Main Street at Palaikastro and in the East Building compared to Houses A and D at Zakros, indicated a stratified elite, and, consequently, a very high degree of social differentiation in the two sites (Table 3.25). However, elite architecture became, during this period, a uniformly recognized means of social distinction in East Crete and was also used by the smaller elites of Pseira, Mochlos and Gournia.

The wide expansion of palatial symbolism is explicitly evidenced by the common use of large storage vessels decorated with double axes by communities with modest or high social differentiation, such as those at Pseira, Mochlos and Palaikastro (Table 3.26). With the exception of the Mochlos jar,⁶⁰ these vessels, and similar ones from Gournia and Zakros and Petras which are dated to LMIB but belong to the same pattern, were found in storage spaces, cellars or manufacturing areas of elite private residences: AB was the richest house in MMIII-LMIA Pseira, E one of the oldest houses in LMIB Gournia and closest to the Palace, Block Δ one of the leading elite houses at MMIII-LMIA Palaikastro and House Z, a palatial wine installation of LMIB Zakros. The increasing emphasis on the symbolism of storage, as a means of elite symbolism is justified by the highly significant function of storage in the Minoan palaces and their association with large storage vessels produced in the palatial workshops.

Despite the widespread distribution of palatial storage symbolism in the East Cretan communities of both modest and high social differentiation, the new elites of the latter clearly developed a much more diverse and complex use of palatial symbolism to consolidate their status (Table 3.25). The elites of Palaikastro and Zakros shared a common and highly

⁶⁰ This vessel was used as a burial container in a slightly earlier (MMIII) context.

sophisticated idiom of elite symbolism with palatial architecture, symbolic topography and public ritual performance being at the centre of their social strategies. Building 6 at Palaikastro and the East Building played similar roles as ceremonial centres, which concentrated the majority of the sample symbols in their respective communities and used them conspicuously in public performance to demarcate their power and express their leading role in the town and beyond it in the main peak sanctuaries of their areas. The 'lesser' elite families of the town claimed a higher status by imitating these strategies. However, they used different sample symbols than the 'old' elites in an intention to distinguish themselves and possibly because they were not allowed to share the high elite symbols. Thus, small horns of consecration and pottery with double axes were used by the new elite families of Block B, Block D and Building D at Palaikastro, and double axe stands were used exclusively by the family of House Da at Zakros. Similarly, at Petras the palace, which represents the 'high elite' of the site, monopolized the use of mason's marks (mainly double axes). The selection of strategic locations, ceremonial routes and gathering spaces of performance for the public display was common practice in both sites. Moreover, the active social presence of the same elite families, which gradually consolidated and expanded their status in the two sites from the Protopalatial period onwards, contributed to the formation of characteristic sets of features for each one of them.

However, despite this common idiom of elite symbolism, Palaikastro and Zakros developed a different conceptual area of emphasis, which largely derived from the specific preferences of symbolic perception that their elites established in the previous periods. At Palaikastro 'architecturality' was the main theme of elite symbolism with the display of large horns of consecration forming part of a complex and very sophisticated network of hierarchical and referential associations of architectural space and size: larger horns were concentrated in unprecedented numbers in the elaborate Building 6, while smaller examples were used internally in adjacent houses of the 'lesser elite', and a complex architectural model imitated Building 6 at the peak sanctuary of Petsophas. The emphasis on architecture as the context for elite symbolism, much more than any other East Cretan community, was a local and inherent peculiarity at Palaikastro. It was evidenced by the early adoption and adjustment to local features of the 'Minoan Hall' of the large palaces, but also in the wider preponderance already in the Protopalatial period of innovative palatial symbolism, which led the Palaikastro elites to display imported fashionable symbols from the large palaces.

By contrast, the Zakros elites relied much more on the elaborate and structured networking of the 'Zakros assemblages', which summarise everyday life in the community since the

Protopalatial period, emphasizing the active engagement of the local population by transferring and depositing them through the symbolic spaces of the town or through conspicuous consumption. In this context, it is easy to explain how Zakros was the only community in early Neopalatial East Crete which retained a very high position for the symbolic use of shells. Thus, from early on the elite of the East Building adopted traditional symbolic concepts which were popular in the town and transformed them into symbols whose display and ritual performance was controlled by the authority.

At Petras, the double axe mason's marks were primarily concentrated in the most prestigious architectural section of the palatial building, which was its 'West Wing'. This preference may imply a more direct effort to imitate Knossian prototypes, but unfortunately further evidence from this period is very limited.

All of the above shows that, despite the absence of palaces in East Crete, there was a strong correlation between the use of sample symbols as elite symbols, palatial symbolism and the relevant hierarchical site ranking. However, local preferences and inherent cultural features supported by the continuous presence of the same elite groups played a decisive role in the selection and the use of these symbols by each elite in communities of both high and modest social differentiation.

Late Neopalatial period

After the destructions of the LMIA earthquake, which affected the whole of Crete, the communities of East Crete underwent new dramatic socio-political changes. The LMIB period in East Crete, with the exception of palatial Petras which undergoes a dramatic decline, is characterised by extensive works of reconstruction and the foundation of new elite buildings in all the East Cretan communities, which reflect changes in the dynamics of the local elites. At Zakros, the East Building was levelled and replaced by a large building comparable to the largest Minoan palaces of Crete. At Gournia, a large palatial building was erected on the top of the town hill. At Palaikastro, Building 6 was abandoned after suffering severe damages and replaced by a complex of buildings (1, 3, 4, 5) with palatial architecture and impressive ashlar masonry. At Mochlos, the ceremonial Building 2 was the only structure in the town possessing palatial features, such as extensive use of ashlar masonry and a pillar crypt. At Pseira, palatial features of architecture were more widespread with ashlar masonry and renovations of palatial type in a number of buildings, while there was a general trend to adjust these features to the traditional local architecture.

These changes may be interpreted differently for each community. Petras appears more attached to the fatal consequences of the LMIB destructions, as they affected North Central Crete. Similar to Knossos, important sections of the Palace were severely affected and reduced to storage space, while its higher elite (House II.1) in the surrounding prestigious residences continued to produce sample symbols. At Zakros and Palaikastro, long-lasting powerful elites were either replaced by others or shifted their previous physical spaces of control to new and remodelled spaces, perhaps in an attempt to reinvent and enhance their symbols of power. Characteristically, at Zakros the Palace was built next to the East Building in a different orientation and with arrangements which aimed at secluding its structure from the surrounding town. At Palaikastro, the destroyed Building 6 was not reconstructed in the same place but was replaced by Buildings 1, 3, 4 and 5. This shift may have aimed at a disassociation from the 'lesser' elites of the houses on the Main Street, which were adjacent to Building 6, and a desire to mark a separate area of a high elite ceremonial centre. Thus, it appears that during LMIIB the two communities with the highest social differentiation in the previous period aimed at a clear physical separation from both the local population and the 'lesser elite' families in order to create a larger social gap between their higher authority and the rest of the community's social groups. At Gournia, Mochlos and Pseira, on the other hand, the elite innovations of this period have to be interpreted in the context of an increase of power of the local modest elites of the previous period.

It appears that the degree of concentration and exclusivity of use of palatial architectural features in one central building compared to the rest of the community may have determined the ranking in site hierarchy during this period (Table 3.27). At Zakros, these correlations indicate the highest social differentiation in East Crete, with the main town displaying none of the elite architecture features of the Palace, apart from selected examples in a few elite houses of the settlement. At Palaikastro, elite features were distributed between Buildings 1, 3, 4 and 5, thus breaking down the centrality and solidity of one palatial building, while other elite mansions on the Main Street shared such features at a lower degree. Gournia may appear as 'more palatial' than Palaikastro, and second in ranking after Zakros, because of the exclusive use of these features in one building, the so-called 'Palace'. The absence of elite architectural features in the rest of the town, with the exception of the Hill House, reflects a high social differentiation at Gournia. At Mochlos, these features were centred in one single building, B2, but they were not as many or as prominent to classify it as a palace or a palatial building. At Pseira they were dispersed in a number of buildings in the town, reflecting looser

structuring of the local community and, as a consequence, a lower degree of social differentiation.

This correlation of determining the ranking of site hierarchy is further supported by the evidence from administrative documentation: Zakros produced the most numerous administrative documents with Linear A tablets, seals and sealings, while Palaikastro and Gournia possessed significantly smaller numbers, and Mochlos and Pseira only a few seals and sealings. Unfortunately, in most cases the exact location of these documents is not known, but, when context is recorded, there is a significant degree of association of these documents with the elite buildings of each community. From the above, it becomes clear that site hierarchy in East Crete was basically signalled through the use of palatial architecture and administrative authority.

It appears that the distribution of sample symbols in the five sites generally followed the same hierarchical order. The criteria of elite use of the sample symbols seem to be: quantity, diversity of artefact categories, quality and rarity of the materials and manufacturing skills involved. Certain symbol categories were exclusively associated with palatial buildings and were not found outside their confines or in lesser buildings. Large horns of consecration crowned only the Palace at Zakros, Building 1 at Palaikastro and the 'Palace' at Gournia. These were the buildings which displayed the most impressive use of ashlar masonry in their respective sites. Lesser buildings with some use of ashlar masonry within these towns, such as House A at Zakros, the houses on the Main Street at Palaikastro and the Hill House at Gournia, or central buildings in other towns, such as B2 at Mochlos and AC at Pseira, did not use such symbols. Mason's marks showed a similar distribution, as they were inscribed exclusively on ashlar blocks of the most important palatial architecture at Zakros, Palaikastro and Gournia. Even at Petras, which is the most atypical LMIB East Cretan example, House II.1 possessed double axe and horns of consecration symbolism, as opposed to House I.1, which represented the 'lesser elite' of the site. These 'lesser' buildings may have represented a 'lesser elite', which had access to some palatial architecture but not to other sources of power perhaps related to administrative documentation. Exclusivity in the use of prestigious sample symbols by the high elites of each community and the use of 'lesser' sample symbols by the 'lesser elites' forms one common pattern in East Crete according to the degree of local social differentiation (Table 3.27-8).

In these contexts, the sample symbols did not signal generically the social status of space but served distinct functions. For example, at Zakros, the West Wing produced all the double axe mason's marks concentrations, but was enigmatically empty of large horns of consecration.

Similarly, at Palaikastro, the Kouros shrine possessed on its main ashlar facade the only double axe mason's marks concentration of the site but no horns of consecration. At Gournia a single double axe mason's mark was inscribed on the outer wall of Space 14 of the Palace, but the large pair of horns was associated with the entrance to the Palace in the inner court. In all the cases, the double axe marks signalled the spaces where the most sacral ceremonial equipment was stored and marked ceremonial routes to or spaces of sacral performance: Shrine 14 and the processional way to the Central Court at Gournia, the Kouros shrine and the Plateia at Palaikastro and the West Wing and the Central and West Court at Zakros. The horns of consecration may have marked entrances to more exclusive forms of ceremonial performance not accessible to the people who gathered in the courts and the squares. This is clear in the case of Gournia (entrance to palatial building) and Zakros (entrances to East Wing with inner use of large horns), but less clear at Palaikastro, as the function of Building 1 is not yet clearly understood. Unlike all the above examples, no connection can be established between the ritual equipment of House II.1 at Petras and the Palace during this period. Retrocession is evident at the site and the shrine of the house is either domestic or used by the community after the abandonment of the Palace.

Apart from the sample symbols which were exclusively used by the high elite of the communities with the highest degree of social differentiation, the rest of the sample symbols were used by the elite families of the community in distribution patterns which facilitated the creation of processional routes between these houses and the central ceremonial building: at Zakros House A and House Da at the edges of the town and on either side of the Palace; at Palaikastro the elite houses on the Main Street and the Plateia in front of Building 5; at Gournia the houses of the Ring Road and the Central Court of the palatial building; at Pseira the elite houses at the edges and the centre of the town and the Plateia. Mochlos was the only site, where this function is not attested and the distribution of the sample symbols was static and nucleated in the elite houses which were adjacent to the ceremonial Building 2.

In this function, sample symbols became primary components of more (Pseira) or less (Palaikastro, Gournia) rigidly structured and large feasting assemblages which were destined to engage large numbers of people. They were stored in domestic or semi-domestic elite spaces of the town and periodically removed and displayed through the main routes of the town to culminate in central public spaces where feasting, libations and other ceremonial practices were commonly conducted. Perhaps at Zakros this function was limited by the intention of the Palace to monopolise the storage and the use of ceremonial equipment and the relevant symbols, which was kept in the West Wing, and to control the space of

performance. However, there is evidence for some feasting equipment in House Da and, most importantly, House A, the shrine of the town, which was possibly connected with the sacral route that started from the West Court.

Generally, the powerful performative effect of feasting with prestigious vessels and sample symbols was not strictly monopolised by the authorities of the town but shared, under conditions, with the ‘lesser elites’ (Table 3.28). There appears to have existed a consensus between the two sides, whose precise nature depended on the specific socio-political and historical conditions of each community: at Zakros, the community of the main town was entirely excluded from this participation and only the elite families of Houses A and Da participated in the feasting performances of the Palace. The discarding of the ‘Zakros assemblages’ as non-palatial and their exclusion from the contexts of the Palace is characteristic of the marked and intended divide between the palatial elite and the townspeople of LMIB Zakros. At Gournia, on the other hand, the Palace was directly connected to the town through a ceremonial route which was marked by symbols (baetyls, altars, double axe mason’s mark, horns of consecration) and invited the townspeople to reach a climax of their processions by bringing the public ritual equipment kept in their houses into the only public space in the town, the court of the ‘Palace’. It was a complementary relationship where the storage and the transfer of the ceremonial equipment was granted to the people, but the actual performance was exclusively held in the confines of the public space of the ‘Palace’, which was marked by the exclusive use of the highest symbols, the large horns of consecration and the double axe mason’s marks. The ‘Palace’ shared and blocked these symbols at the same time. At Pseira and Palaikastro, the situation may have been similar, but the absence of clear evidence for the role of the Plateia Building, in the first case, and for Buildings 1, 3, 4 and 5, in the second, do not allow for definite conclusions. It is possible that these buildings played, under certain conditions, a role similar to that of the Gournia ‘Palace’. Generally, there appears to have been a mutual profit deriving from this concession between the local authorities and their respective smaller elites, by which the authority strengthened its position through the active engagement of the elite section of the population in a controllable exertion of ceremonial power, while the selected families of the town benefited from an honorary distinction of being granted the privilege.

In this sense, Mochlos forms the anti-example of a typical LMIB East Cretan community: it did not produce any pottery with symbols, any bull-shaped vessels, any rhyta assemblages (Betancourt 2004: 26) and very little fine pottery and feasting assemblages. Symbolism was heavily conditioned by the enormous appraisal of the bronze industry and of exotic imports,

with bronze double axes almost monopolizing the representation of sample symbols at this site. Moreover, although palatial hierarchy functioned in similar ways as in other sites, with Building B, the only palatial building in Mochlos attracting most of the bronze symbols, the performative aspects of symbolism were entirely different. Thus, feasting assemblages and the processional display of symbols through the town did not form part of the ritual performance at Mochlos as in the other East Cretan towns. Instead, Building 2 exposed the bronze symbols as static artefacts gazed by the onlookers through carefully placed windows. Unlike the other palatial buildings of Crete, it did not possess any frescoes or ostentatious pottery to display and the bronze artefacts replaced what in the rest of Crete was considered a prestigious spectacle for such a building. Despite the dramatic changes in the use of symbols in East Crete during this period, the preservation of strong social and political configurations based on the economic growth and industrial prosperity of the settlement, Mochlos retained the same symbolic idiom that it had developed in EM. It has been suggested that this 'isolationist stance' was 'deliberate forming a core element in the ideology of the EM Mochlos' elites' (Carter 2004: 296). Branigan argued that Mochlos belongs to a monopolistic type of settlement (Branigan 1991 citing Carol Smith 1976) which controlled exchange as a kind of gateway community. This settlement type occurs particularly on the periphery of world systems, on a line of communication between areas with good mineral or agricultural resources or high craft production. Furthermore, it supports a limited elite hierarchy, which manipulates the social system by control of exchange and of prestige goods. This model definitely applies to Mochlos and describes not only the Prepalatial socially structured funerary use of symbolism but, it also explains the Neopalatial locally prioritised strategies in the use of symbols, which strongly contrast with the much more uniform ways of consumption of material culture across the island during this period.

The example of Petras is different in that it appears to be more Knossian in its fate of steadily losing power during this period, rather than developing and preserving its own distinct symbolic idiom. Moreover, the severe decline of the site after being the largest Protopalatial centre in East Crete must have certainly left a vacuum of economic trade network, which was probably taken over by the other East Cretan centres and contributed in this way to their increasing LMIB wellbeing. The powerful Protopalatial families of Zakros and Palaikastro, and the rising social groups of Mochlos, Pseira and Gournia found in this period new space to negotiate social power with North Central Crete.

Sample symbols were also used as parts not of public, but of private performance. The most characteristic ones are the ceremonial double axes and their stands. They were found related

to secluded spaces, such as the upper floor shrines at Palaikastro, perhaps the pillar crypt at Mochlos, and the examples from the Palace of Zakros. The latter, better known and discussed because of their rich contexts, were brought together after a ceremonial transfer, which is also depicted on sealings. Considering that on these sealings, it is the bronze axes which are transferred, and not the stands, it may be assumed that the performative space of the standing double axes was the space where the stands were kept. At Zakros, these spaces may be identified in the East Wing of the Palace and its adjacent areas. This area was also related to private ceremonies, only accessible to few, as evidenced by the use of the large horns of consecration. The non-public ceremonial use of the double axes and their stands, then, would be the case in both palatial and domestic contexts, as is evidenced by the respective contexts from the other sites.

In any case, in both the public and the private use of the sample symbols, as well as the exclusive, highly palatial and the wider use of them by 'lesser elites', the sample symbols were perceived as symbols in action. Such were the joining double axes in private contexts or the transferred pots decorated with double axes, figure-of-eight shields and tritons, or natural tritons and shells used as libation vessels. Even the seemingly static large horns of the double axe marks in reality were signs which invited people to follow sacral routes in public processions or exclusive ceremonies. For this reason symbolic topography was in each case determined not only by the natural and urban landscape (edges, centre, port/town entrances) but also by those spaces which would create a reasonable network of routes through which these symbols would have been displayed in motion.

In summary, LMIB was a period when symbolism in East Crete was in full action. The local communities had developed a common idiom of use of the sample symbols, which could signal with consistency the hierarchical ranking of sites at a regional level, as well as the social stratification within each community. Accessibility to the different categories of different sample symbols indicated a different social status, political or administrative authority. The sample symbols were used together with other components of elite symbolism during this period, such as palatial architecture, highly valuable artefacts and massive feasting events, which increased their visibility, and consequently, their performative effect. Despite this uniformity and consistency in the use of social symbolism, there was space for divergence from the norm and development of intense local particularities, as is evidenced by the particular use of certain symbols in certain communities, such was the use of small horns of consecration in private contexts where libation was practiced, the Zakros assemblages, which were inherited from the Protopalatial and early Neopalatial period at Zakros and

confined to town use in LMIB, the Pseiran assemblages with strong Knossian palatial features, and most characteristically by the example of the Mochlos community as a whole.

Final Palatial period

After widespread destructions at the end of LMIB, which affected the whole island including East Crete, Pseira was deserted, Gournia and Petras declined severely and Zakros town was limited to a few houses. By contrast, Mochlos and Palaikastro recovered soon after the disaster and enjoyed a new period of prosperity.

With evidence for the use of sample symbols only at Mochlos and Palaikastro, it is hard to talk of East Cretan patterns, even more so considering that Mochlos was an exceptional case in the previous period, which functioned outside the patterns of the East Cretan communities (Table 3.29). It appears that at Mochlos in the Final Palatial period social divisions had become sharper and sample symbols were used to mark these differences. At Mochlos, the ruler of House A and the two graves of him and his wife concentrated the elite symbolism of the site. The local criteria of social distinction of the previous period (exotica, bronzes) were reused, not as components of a continued social structure, but as nostalgic symbols which could legitimise a new, and much more centralised elite. The citation of Neopalatial artefacts and contexts by means of the physical removal of LMIB sample symbols (double axe stand, cup with double axe and sacred knot) and through ritual performance was a primary strategy of elite symbolism, used in rigid juxtaposition to a rejection of new symbolisms (clay pyxides with horns of consecration) introduced by the lower classes of Mochlos.

At Palaikastro, the break with the past was visible not only in the shift of higher and 'lesser elite' spaces, but also in the use of sample symbols. Thus, Building 5 was replaced by a new ceremonial centre, Building 7, and the houses on the Main Street were replaced by new elite buildings. However, the latter did not participate in public performance like before and sample symbols were found in small ritual contexts limited to their household use. These contexts appear to have preferred past domestic uses of sample symbols with the small horns of consecration so typical of Palaikastro being used in private libation practices. By contrast, (what appears to have been) the elite of Building 7 introduced innovative ways of use of the sample symbols which did not refer to any past practices: tritons were used as focal symbols, recurring several times in different small contexts within the building in similarly structured assemblages. The associated symbolic equipment was not related to feasting and did not seem to refer to large numbers of people in any way.

In both communities, the role of sample symbols in signalling the new sharp social divides was crucial. The mutually exclusive use of different sample symbols by different social groups was a common strategy: at Mochlos between the ruler of House A and the lower class and at Palaikastro between Building 7 and the elite houses. At Mochlos, citation of Neopalatial official ritual contexts was considered elite symbolism and innovation was discarded as low-class. At Palaikastro, citation of Neopalatial domestic ritual contexts was confined to private contexts in the new elite domestic spaces, while innovation was regarded as appropriate for public ritual practices. At Zakros there was also a juxtaposition between tradition (possibly reminiscent of the 'Zakros assemblages') and innovation (funerary symbolism), but its socio-political context is not yet understood due to scarce and unpublished evidence.

Thus, social polarisation and strict demarcation of social groups seem to be the emerging patterns determining the role of sample symbols during this period. Local interpretations of what is elite, with citations of past contexts signalling different social intentions, shaped diverse strategies of use of the sample symbols. Generally, the performative properties of the sample symbols were exploited in small contexts, either domestic or official and lost their impact in terms of size, luxury of material and diversity of artefact categories.

Postpalatial period

New changes took place in the habitation of the East Cretan sites during this period: Mochlos fell in decline, Zakros was abandoned and Pseira remained deserted, while Gournia and Petras were revived and partially re-occupied and Palaikastro was re-inhabited after a new destruction at the end of LMIIIA2.

Unfortunately, the Postpalatial evidence from Petras is not yet systematically published and there are no patterns which provide material for comparison.

Interestingly, the decline of Mochlos and the fall of its ruler was signalled by the symbolic defacement of the double axe in House A, which was hollowed and used as a simple mortar, indicating the crucial role of symbols in the denotation of socio-political changes.

Just like in the previous period, the evidence is not sufficient to establish meaningful patterns. It is, however, possible to detect some continuity in general trends from the previous period (Table 3.30).

At Gournia, a sharp divide between the elite and the low-class local population emerged, which was evidenced in architecture and symbolic material culture and is in a way reminiscent of the socio-political context of Final Palatial Mochlos. The existence of a new

and very centralised elite is suggested by the foundation of a ‘Megaron’ and a new independent shrine. Horns of consecration and double axe symbolism, popular in the Neopalatial ‘Palace’, were exclusively used by this new elite, while ordinary families did not use any sample symbols. Compared to LMIB, the Postpalatial symbols at Gournia appeared diminished in size, diversity of symbols, artefact categories and materials with clay being the predominant means. The performative impact and visibility of the symbols was also minimised with action taking place inside small spaces with no arrangements for public gatherings.

At Palaikastro, the Final Palatial divide of the local community between those who used ‘traditional’ local or Neopalatial symbolism and those using innovative symbolism became much more complex in this period. On the one hand, there was a trend to revive Neopalatial symbolism in terms of context and of symbols, such as the double axe and the horns of consecration, and, on the other, a trend towards innovation, with shells playing a central religious role and a number of strictly organised and densely structured ceremonial arrangements. The two social groups appeared to be mutually exclusive both in terms of symbols and in terms of topography, with the first located in the outskirts of Palaikastro, at the habitation site of Kouremenos and the burial caves of the South Cemetery on the slopes of Petsophas, and, the second in the town of Palaikastro and the surrounding grave grounds.

In this sense, the emergence of a centralised authority and the symbolic means that the new elite of Gournia used to display its power were already known in a nearby community of the previous period, while the peculiar separation of the Palaikastro community between ‘traditional’ and ‘innovative’ families mutually excluding each other was developed on the basis of a trend which originated in the previous period. This means that, despite the destructions at the beginning of this period, the transition was generally smooth in terms of socio-political structures and the use of sample symbols.

3.6.1 Conclusions

Overall, the five East Cretan sites preserved throughout the Bronze Age important regional elements, despite their vivid response to the palatial uses of symbols of Central Crete. The common understanding of the social role of symbols, reflected in the criteria of hierarchical site ranking, indicates that there was indeed an East Cretan culture of symbolism. Despite this regional uniformity, the six sites retained strong local elements based on the local traditions and their own historical perceptions of symbolism.

In the Prepalatial period, the use of shells was commonly viewed as appropriate for elite burials with significant adjustments to the local references to social distinction and funerary customs. In the Protopalatial period, the uniform regional framework was temporarily destabilised by political disturbances and the impact of the emergence of the palatial system in Central Crete. Radical readjustments in the rankings of site hierarchy took place, while new symbols appeared in new contexts, reflecting the emergence of the local elite families through the importation or imitation of palatial symbolism. Petras exemplifies these developments and represents the community which more closely followed North Central Cretan developments and founded a palatial building. In the early Neopalatial period, the trend to imitate elite symbolism was consolidated more widely and developed into the appearance of different forms of centralised authorities in the other Cretan sites. Local signalled their power through the rigidly controlled use of palatial symbols displayed in performative acts in public or in conspicuous or strategic positions in the town. Symbols were understood as indexes of social status within their towns, but also indexes of ranking in the site hierarchy of the East Crete region. Despite these dramatic changes, local differentiation was still a main characteristic in the response of the towns to palatial symbolism. In LMIB, the changes of the previous period reached their climax with the full use of palatial symbols in architecture, highly valuable artefacts and massive feasting events. Monumentality, visibility and participation in the performance of symbols were the principal means to achieve high social status, political and administrative authority. As before, local divergence was an acceptable condition, which, occasionally, could take the form of a completely unique example of use of the sample symbols, as was the case of Mochlos. In the Final Palatial period deep socio-political changes affected the island and some of the East Crete sites were abandoned or only partially reoccupied. Consequently, the social role of symbols was changed presenting an obvious decline in the numbers, materials and manufacturing skills of the sample symbols. Localism was intense with the revival of Neopalatial symbols signalling power at Mochlos, and ritual innovation and elaboration at Palaikastro. These changes were further settled in the Postpalatial period, when authority and religious expression in towns became rigidly centralised, highly structured and contextually restricted. Social divisions were intensified by mutually excluding symbols and their contexts.

According to the established methodological tools discussed in the introduction, the examination of the social role of symbol in East Crete took into consideration those patterns of behaviour of the sample symbols which could provide insights into their contextual use in

order to secure an interpretation of these patterns within the wider socio-political frame of each period, with an emphasis on the importance of social practices and the role of the people who acted in it. Contextual analysis was not only used for the understanding of the specific function of each symbol and the setting of patterns, but also for the understanding of indexical relations between different categories of spaces or similar spaces indexed in different periods by means of citations. The performative qualities of the symbols were highlighted as crucial factor in the process of interaction and a number of examples of structured depositions and citations were pointed out which further contributed to the understanding of the social role of sample symbols.

More specifically, there was a special emphasis on analysing the association of parameters such as the degree of social differentiation of each community and the local criteria of social distinction as a grounding for the understanding of social symbolic practice and the role of people in it. Elite symbolism was a crucial element of association of these parameters, as it represents the ways elite people determine which artefacts, structures or actions indicate high social status. Those artefacts, structures and actions are, therefore, indexes of elite status. In the majority of the cases and in most periods, the selected sample symbols of this study played a central role as elite artefacts and therefore as indexes of high social status. In the same context, people were at the centre of this analysis. It was possible through the study of sample symbols to approach their role in the lives of individuals, families, elites and communities and to explore how people responded to established ways of symbolism with the use of new symbols or imitated the established symbolism in order to claim higher social status in their communities.

In terms of Peircian analysis, most sample symbols acted as indexes of certain social statuses ('high elite', 'lesser elite') or certain social groups ('traditional', 'innovative'), while they could also index their physical properties and environments, such as the flow of water when tritons were used as pouring vessels. Certain examples became icons of themselves, as were the example of the Petsophas model which was an icon of the elite Building 6 and summarised those elements which the elite of Palaikastro (interpretants) desired to project as elite symbols ('architecturality', structural complexity and elaboration). Similarly, the models of the tritons and shells which were icons of their natural counterparts were understood by the locals (interpretants) of the Neopalatial period as products of palatial workshops which possessed the prestigious materials or technical skills of palatial workshops to reproduce nature in perfection. The point where symbols become symbols in Peircian terms, that is of the arbitrary relationship between the referent and its object, is less easy to discern because

arbitrariness may be subjective and depends on the degree of understanding by the external observer of the inherent social parameters of a community. For example, the association of the horns of consecration with architecture or the association of the double axe stands with interior spaces and private contexts or the association of the double axe marks with sacral spaces may appear as arbitrary and conventional. However, it is possible to establish a degree of indexical relationship between the physical ‘architecturality’ of the large pairs of horns made of stone with intense structural features. Similarly, double axe stands may have served as foci of animal sacrifices, which may have been costly and resource intensive, and, therefore, limited to the exclusive use of the elite in confined spaces of the Palace.

Performance was central in the discussion of the social role of sample symbols. Performance could be static, as a permanent reminder of elite space, where highly exclusive ceremonial material was kept or used and where the culmination of public gatherings was conceded by the elite of the town to the townspeople. Static, emblematic sample symbols, such as the large stone horns of consecration or the double axe mason’s marks, were high elite symbols. Their performative power was stable, continuous and undisputable, like the authority they represented. They were very different from that of the static sample symbols, such as the buried ‘Zakros assemblages’ in corner foundations deposits and entrances of Zakros. The performative effect of the latter was discreet, part of a common, known and widely practiced and traditional ceremonial pattern which enhanced the communal cohesion and the sentiment of historical continuity. The static bronze hoards with double axes in the houses and the ceremonial centre of Mochlos had to be discovered in the basements or through windows of display or were known as foundation deposits below the elite houses. This pattern of performance relied greatly on the staged exclusivity of what was elite symbolism in the community of Mochlos.

By contrast, the large public feasting, where sizeable concentrations of shells were consumed belonged to ostentatious performance which involved the local population. The LMIB feasting assemblages formed a pattern in East Crete, in which sample symbols played a focal role as portable, highly prestigious objects to be seen on special occasions and used in active ritual performance in front of the community. The performative effect and the emotional impact on the people increased by the participation of the elite of the town in the storage and in the fragmentation of ritual in stages which reflected an analogous social breakdown: ‘lower elite’ people controlled space of storage and space of transfer, while ‘higher elite’ people controlled space of culmination of performance, where the ritual objects, including the sample symbols, were functionally active: vessels used for libation and pouring,

tritons and shells used for pouring. The indexical changes of social space increased gradually the social meaning and the emotional effect involved in this kind of performance. Performance could be private or exclusive as was the case of the large horns deriving from the East Wing at Zakros and the use of the double axes. In this case, the effect of performance was enhanced by the restrained accessibility to the ritual space. In domestic contexts performance probably reinforced the sentiment of cohesion of the family, as the smaller unit of the community, and, as a result, reinforced the cohesion of the community as a whole.

At Mochlos, another type of performance was identified, that of social performance. Elite symbols which were not used in ritual action were displayed on the body as possessions or acquisitions from trade and industrial achievements. However, this type of performance was only characteristic at Mochlos, where material wealth was a value of steady flow characterizing the local sense of elite symbolism. In the rest of East Crete power was understood as materialised in ritual action and public performance. Although ritual performance was occasionally used by the lower classes of the Prepalatial period as a response to social performance and the accumulation of material wealth, this was not the case from the Neopalatial period and until the Postpalatial, when all social strategies used ritual performance, and not wealth, to state their position in the community. Public performance with symbols in action became increasingly important with the rise of the palatial system culminating in LMIB. Its prompt abandonment soon after the fall of the palaces indicates the huge importance of this tool for the smooth functioning of the palatial system and whoever imitated it. From the Final Palatial period, symbols became more static and elaborate in arrangements in their own closed contexts, a strategy which reflected an entirely different understanding of ritual space and ritual action and most importantly of its social and emotional effect.

The above chapter considered the data on the published sample symbols from the selected six sites of East Crete throughout the Bronze Age. The patterns deriving from this study were discussed separately at site level, and in composition at a regional level revealing broader trends in the use of sample symbols in East Crete. The next chapter will proceed to the comparison of the patterns between North Central Crete and East Crete.

Chapter 4: Comparative discussion (Tables 4.1-4.6)

This chapter compares the main patterns regarding the social role of sample symbols in North Central Crete and East Crete. The comparison will be structured in two parts: the first summarizes the patterns from the two regions and compares them at a basic level; the second one focuses on the interpretation of the social role of the sample symbols as it results from this comparison. This interpretation will be articulated on the basis of the main current questions of Minoan scholarship concerning the major socio-political changes of Bronze Age Crete. More specifically, the Prepalatial symbols will be considered through the lens of factors, such as the geography and the historical context of the two regions. The Protopalatial symbols will be viewed as part of the emergence of the palatial system in Crete. The symbols of the early and the late Neopalatial period will be considered as factors in the controversial role that Knossos played in the expansion of palatial power in Crete. And finally, the Final and the Postpalatial period will be discussed as part of the intense debate on the role of the Mycenaean occupation of Crete and the ways it affected local Minoan traditions.

Prepalatial period

The comparison of the social role of sample symbols between North Central Crete and East Crete reveals many significant aspects of the way communities defined their social strategies. A first important pattern derives from the correlation between the economic and political profile of a community and the degree of social differentiation of its inhabitants on the one hand, and the criteria of social distinction and elite symbolism on the other hand. There appear to exist two different categories of communities employing distinct strategies. On the one hand, those with ‘expansive’ economies oriented towards trade and industry and with a high degree of social differentiation defined elite symbolism as related to the products of the commercial and industrial achievements of the elite. Thus, sample symbols were appreciated when they derived from distant exotic places or from the specialised skills of the local or the foreign craftsmen. These were understood as part of a material wealth, which included elite architecture, and was exclusive to the elite of these communities (Mochlos, Gournia). On the other hand, there were communities with rural-oriented economies and a low degree of social differentiation, which defined elite symbolism as related to elaborate ritual and symbolic

equipment and sophisticated ritual performance. The exclusivity of these features differentiated the prominent individuals of these communities (Pseira, Palaikastro).

Knossos forms an example, which, at first sight, would be classified as belonging to the second category, because of the emphasis on ritual equipment and performance and because of the absence of an 'expansive' economy of the commercial and industrial sectors. It is also characteristic, that, at Poros, a site which produced rich archaeological data, there was no evidence for the use of sample symbols. Just like Mochlos and Gournia, the inhabitants of Poros valued exotica and manufactured goods as their elite symbols.

A characteristic example is the use of double axes in the two areas. For the Mochlos elite, the four small metal double axes represented an unprecedented acquisition of exotic/imported symbolism achieved by the local traders and used as personal insignia of their distinct position. By contrast, the double axes in Central Crete are integrated in a much more complex set of topographical and social dynamics, which did not result from local elite strategies alone, but were part of a wider cultural heritage of the area. The use of the double axes in the wider area of Central Crete started as part of a popular practice in the Prepalatial and early Protopalatial period first in funerary contexts of the Mesara graves (Branigan 1969; 1993: 127-139; Peatfield 1989; 1990: 124-5; Nikolaidou 1998; Betancourt 1999: 220-1). In the Late Prepalatial period, it appears that in North Central Crete the symbol was appropriated by the Knossian elite and was increasingly used as its emblem. This is evidenced in the MMIA seal from Tholos E and the individual depositions of bronze double axes on mount Jouktas, which possibly derived from members of this elite or people from the area who attempted to imitate them.

The high degree of social differentiation is reflected in the way symbols become personal objects reflecting the confidence of the emerging elites. The members of the Knossian elite were illustrated as individuals of a rising powerful political group through personal ornamental objects, such as the ornamental shells from the West Court and Tholos E or the seal with the double axe and the bronze double axes which were deposited at Anemospilia in the Late Prepalatial period. Similarly, shells and double axes were viewed as cultural achievements by the elite members of Mochlos and became body ornaments as a means of displaying material wealth and economic power. At Pseira shells were viewed as generic offerings or consumed goods. At Palaikastro, a triton becomes a ritual vessel and is spatially detached from the burial. In the late Prepalatial period, tritons were used as libation vessels, instead of upturned cups, belonging to individual burials, showing an increasing intimacy

with the individual, but again they do not become body ornaments, which aim at enhancing the personal importance (symbolic or material) of the individual.

On the other hand, Knossos presents important elite architecture and relative material wealth as a primary criterion of social distinction, a feature which is not present at Pseira and much less at Palaikastro. It was also shown that the Knossian elite deployed visibly expansive strategies in the spreading of its power in the area. However, this expansion was carried out by means of symbolic strategies rather than economic or purely political means. The Knossian elite reproduced certain performative activities (feasting) and symbolic material including sample symbols (shells), which were used in its elite space, the West Court, and extended it outside its confines, to the cemetery of Phourni. This wide set of artefacts and performances appears to have been intentionally distinct from other cultural groups, possibly local, in order to demarcate its own identity and claim a symbolic and, consequently, a political space in this area. The lack of prestigious graves at Knossos shows that perhaps this strategy was political, not only towards the neighbouring areas, but also towards its own community, from which the Knossian elite was also distinguished by using a special funerary space and elite architecture of a different cultural area (the tholoi of Mesara, Branigan 1970).

The expansive political character of the symbolic strategies of the Knossian elite stands in contrast with that of Pseira and Palaikastro. This difference is reflected in the fact that at Pseira and Palaikastro it was ancestral individuals that were emphasised through citations of locality and ancestry. Symbolic topography was important within the cemetery of these communities either in the form of ritual architecture which appears to have been locally developed for the specific ancestor at Palaikastro (mortuary chapel), or in the form of a grave 'sacrifice' which had to be 'absorbed' by the local community of Pseira. These communities were relatively closed and the political aspect of their symbolic strategies was primarily introverted. That is, it referred to and managed social dynamics mostly within its own space and population. By contrast, the Knossian elite did not distinguish itself from the Knossian population within its own community but extended its power and proclaimed it by challenging its surrounding space, and beyond its confines. Achieving such a challenge legitimised elite power within the community and made a statement in the neighbouring areas. Elite architecture and feasting were its symbolic means. They were visible, repetitive and engaged large numbers of people. By contrast, the feasting event at Pseira appears to have happened once and referred to the community alone. At Palaikastro, feasting assemblages appear to have been much more confined and may have engaged families rather than the community as a whole. In both cases, the performative effect of the symbolic

strategies was less powerful either in time or in space and in population compared to Knossos.

The expansive symbolic politics of the Knossian elite are reflected in the expansion of uniform material culture throughout different contexts, as opposed to the uniformly spread symbolic use of shells in the East Cretan communities. The strategies of the Knossian elite extended beyond community level and created contacts between its centre at Knossos and areas of control outside its confines. Reproducing a similar use of symbolism and similar ritual contexts of performance was a constant strategy which worked irrespectively of the type of site. Feasting was a primary characteristic of the Knossian elite. It differentiated it from the cultural group which built and used Tholos Gamma at Phourni and from every other community of East Crete. Performance engaging large numbers of people was the principal means of expanding political power in the wider area and also of consolidating its power within its own community. This is reflected in the different quality and quantity of feasting assemblages between the West Court and the tomb at Monastiriako Kephali and other parts of the site.

The accentuated value of structured deposition in North Central Crete formed part of this emphasis on political ritual symbolism in the area. It is characteristic that structured depositions were a necessary tool for the social group of Tholos Gamma in order to claim its cultural space at Phourni. In East Crete, where social strategies of differentiation focused on the material divide between elite and non-elite groups and material wealth was juxtaposed to ritual performance, structured deposition appeared only at the end of the period, possibly as a changing local strategy.

Characteristically, the lower-class members of the Mochlos community gradually incorporated structured depositions in their competitive strategies of using ritual performance to challenge the rich depositions of the West Terrace graves.

By contrast, the Late Prepalatial structured deposition of shells used in North Central Crete was abandoned, as Knossos had consolidated its power over the area and the tensions reflected in the use of this strategy rendered it unnecessary. Now massive depositions of shell offerings were the norm at Phourni and Jouktas, two areas which were apparently under the control of the Knossian elite.

The Knossian elite insisted on and expanded these same strategies in the Late Prepalatial period. Elite architecture at Phourni and Anemospilia consolidated its presence in the two areas it wanted to claim. The spread of uniformly distributed depositions of shells and the end of elaborate structured depositions shows the end of activity or the assimilation of the cultural

group of Tholos Gamma and therefore the predominance of the Knossian elite in the cemetery.

The purposeful differentiation in the strategies of use of the sample symbols served the two different functions of the two areas. In the case of Knossos, it served the political expansion of the Knossian elite in its surroundings and its desire to distinguish itself culturally from the social group of Tholos Gamma, which represented another elite, which was not from Knossos, and probably local to Archanes. There was a visible distinction in the material culture and the way it was displayed in its mortuary context and exemplified in the distinct ways of use of shells by its cultural group. In East Crete, these strategies of differentiation were played out at a level of local community with the lower class social group of the south slope cemetery, for example, at Mochlos, emphasizing ritual performance as a counterbalance of its inability to get access to the material wealth of the Mochlos elite.

Despite these large socio-political differences between the two areas, there is a common appreciation of the elite symbolic value placed on the use of shells and tritons.⁶¹ In their symbolic use, they were associated with elite contexts in the large majority of the examples. The predominance of tritons in East Crete, as well as the possible use of shells for feasting, as in Pseira, may be related to the actual use of these shells as sources of ritual food at Pseira or as vessels for ritual pouring at Palaikastro. It was shown that the deposition of shells at Pseira was associated with a unique feasting event which included feasting equipment and structural arrangements. At Palaikastro, tritons were interchanged with upturned cups and at Mochlos they were found with jugs, suggesting libation practices. In North Central Crete, shells were either used as perforated personal ornaments or as offering depositions (structured, as at Tholos Gamma, or not, as at Jouktas), that is in their purely symbolic value. That these depositions were probably not related to feasting is suggested by the characteristic absence of feasting assemblages in Tholos Gamma that was related to these shell depositions and by the fact that the latter could be massive or could represent single shells which could not support a communal feasting. Rather, the depositions of a single shell had an emblematic character and presented the shell as symbolic in its own right.

⁶¹ With the exception of the tritons in East Crete, in most other cases the species of the reported shells is not specified. Thus, it is not possible to know whether there is an early preference for certain species or shape categories. The only exception was Knossos, where *Cerastoderma* and *Glycymeris*, that is shell species corresponding to the shape of the common shells, were recorded as the preponderant species, and at Tholos E, where the pierced shells were also *Glycymeris*. At Jouktas, the species which are recorded correspond to a different shape category, as they all have shapes similar to the tritons and the murex but in small size.

This visible differentiation may reflect the degree of experience of the shells in their natural environment. For the people of East Crete, tritons and shells were the natural extension of everyday experience, they were fished as a food source and they were acknowledged for their capacity to hold sea water and their physical and sensory properties. By contrast, the people of Central Crete appreciated them as acquisitions of the ‘remote’ sea deliberately set in a different context. Therefore, the relationship between the object and its referent was indexical in the case of the East Cretan inhabitants, and symbolic in the case of the people from North Central Crete.

From the above, it becomes obvious that in North Central Crete and East Crete elite symbolism was determined by the local elites, which attempted to create a distinct identity in order to claim power in their communities. A basic difference between North Central Crete and East Crete was that, in the former, the Knossian elite managed to break beyond the confines of its community and claim symbolic space outside the cultural space of Knossos while drawing political power from this claim for its establishment with the community. It may be suggested that geographical factors may have contributed to this differentiation, as North Central Crete forms a large unified area which allows open and intense interaction and expansion, as opposed to the fragmented East Cretan landscape where communities communicated mostly from the coast and along maritime routes. However, the cultural isolation between the ‘ritual’ Knossos and the ‘material’ Poros indicate that human choice may have played a decisive factor in socio-political developments. The long history of Knossos and the early high reliance of its population on ritual for the promotion of social developments appear to have played a significant role in the cultural knowledge of the Prepalatial Knossian elite. Knossos in the Early Minoan period was one of the largest towns of Crete and was built on a Neolithic tell, which formed the oldest settlement of the island known so far. Rich in ritual life, Neolithic Knossos produced figurines and shells that were treated with colour. It was ‘one of the special ‘places where memory is stored, places which carry the mark of time’’ (Schnapp 1996: 13; Nora 1997 ‘*lieu de mémoire*’; Hamilakis 2013). Thus, the fact that the Prepalatial elite of Knossos employed as a main strategy of expansion the projection of ritual symbolism in sacral spaces of its surrounding areas was not detached from its local historical and cultural environment. At Archanes it was a grave, at Anemospilia, and later on the peak sanctuary at Jouktas, it was shrines. By contrast, the main harbour of Knossos, Poros, whose main significance was associated with economy, was not viewed as suitable for this strategy and symbols were entirely absent there. Despite the direct connection of the two towns, imported and exotic objects popular at Poros did not make their

way to Knossos and, conversely, ritual feasting pottery, popular in Knossos, did not make its way to Poros (Wilson et al. 2004).

Protopalatial period

During this period, the social role of the sample symbols in both North Central Crete and East Crete communities was determined by the effects of the rising palatial system. A main difference derived from the fact that North Central Crete, and especially the Palace at Knossos, was geographically situated in the centre of these socio-political developments, while East Crete may be characterised as a periphery of the emerging palatial system. Thus, while socio-political developments in the East Cretan communities were determined by the criteria of social distinction set by the local elites in North Central Crete, the Knossian elite was promoting a new elite symbolism which derived from the primary conceptual principles related to the newly built First Palace ('architecturality', storage, administration and performance). Continuing a Prepalatial strategy which relied on ritual symbolism for the promotion of its political interests outside the confines of the Knossos town, it consolidated its power (Cherry 1978; 1986: 31; Watrous 1987: 67-8; Peatfield 1989; 1994; Reid 2007: 96) in outlying spaces of ritual importance (Jouktas peak sanctuary, Anemospilia shrine, Phourni cemetery).

Knossos was a main source of this new symbolism. The town aspired to expand beyond the limits of its own settlement and built its new elite identity on symbols which were already known from the Prepalatial period in the wider area. Double axes were common in the Prepalatial graves of the neighbouring area of Mesara and horns of consecration were known on the rims of vessels, such as the Late Prepalatial example from Phourni. Double axes were reinvented at the palace of Knossos as mason's marks and were exclusively used in it during this period. Horns of consecration gradually became structural elements, first on vessels (Tholos B kernos), later on miniature architectural models and then as independent large stone elements attached to structures (altars, interior spaces or ashlar masonry roofs). Shells were also redefined as 'palatial' with the replacement of 'natural' shells by 'cultural' ones moulded on fine vessels. New symbols were also invented to serve the rising Palace. The earliest Minoan representation of a figure-of-eight shield was engraved on a seal from Knossos and was associated with the new administrative system of the Palace.

These symbols were functionally related to strategic spaces of performance, both within and outside the Palace of Knossos, where the Knossian elite displayed its power through ritual action. Such were the mason's marks which connected the West Porch of the first Palace to

the West Court, the original space of the Knossian elite and space of performance in this period; the double axes as representations on amphorae in the West Court and the shrine at Anemospilia; horns of consecration in ritual spaces of limited access (Loomweight Basement, East Hall, Anemospilia shrine). The ‘cultural’ shells replaced natural shells and were used exclusively by the Knossian elite in its area of control, possibly as elite ritual vessels in feasting events. By contrast, natural shells appear to have been considered as chthonic symbols and were related with contexts such as a cemetery (Phourni), a chasm(Jouktas) and a ritual appealing to chthonic-seismic divinities (Anemospilia).

While the Knossian elite signalled the expansion of its control by the reproduction of palatial contexts outside its confines (horns of consecration and an amphora with double axe representation at Anemospilia, bronze double axes at Jouktas), at the same time it kept to itself certain symbol categories in order to create a relationship of subordination with these sites (‘cultural’ shells, double axe mason’s marks).

East Crete, on the other hand, appears from the evidence to have been relatively isolated from those developments which led to the emergence of the palatial system. The new features of elite palatial symbolism were not the result of the local socio-political dynamics but were imported as characteristic features of the rising palatial system which was increasingly recognized at island level as the leading power of Crete. Even at Petras, the only site which provided evidence of a palatial building, that belonged to an ‘atypical’ (Tsipopoulou 2002: 58), not fully developed type, was adjusted to the local economy.

Petras presents an interesting example which combines the use of local tradition as a means of legitimisation of social power through links with the ancestral past on one hand, and the introduction of dramatic changes in the use of material culture which breaks with the past and marks the identity of new social dynamics, on the other hand. Thus, the leading elite of Petras manipulated the ceremonial use of feasting with shells and animals, which was inherited from practices of its EMI ancestors. However, in the phases before the construction of the palace, feasting became ostentatious in both its ceremonial equipment and in its ceremonial space. The Protopalatial elite of Petras displayed its social superiority within the town and the cemetery with multiple feasting events, which may as well represent competing factions. This increased activity reflects the dynamics which led to the construction of the Palace in ways which are similar to those of Knossos and against all other East Cretan sites. In the Prepalatial period, Pseira, Mochlos, Palaikastro and Zakros used shells as funerary symbols. By contrast, the people at Petras consumed them in their town, just like at Knossos. While the ceremonial use of natural shells dramatically dropped in all East Cretan sites in the

Protopalatial period, at Petras it became a focal practice which finds parallels in the wide use of shell depositions at Archanes in MMIA, when the large number of new burial structures takes place.

The close connections with Knossos are also attested in the use of red plaster in an EMII building (Tsipopoulou 2012c: 129) reminiscent of the structures of the West Court at Knossos. Generally, the main Protopalatial features which led to the rise of Knossian palatial system are found here: architecturality (House Tomb 2, palace), storage (palace) and performance (feasting). It appears then that at Petras, the importation of the palatial system was direct and was the result of a dynamic relationship with Knossos, one that can explain the complete change of the architectural plan of the palatial building in MMIIA. Despite that, the Petras palace was a political and social formation with strong local characteristics and the low potential of a small town. Characteristically, compared to Knossos the social differentiation reflected in the diversity of wares points to a 'less sharply vertical, diacritical, or patron-role feasting' (Haggis 2012: 201).

Unlike Petras, in the rest of the East Cretan sites, the adoption of palatial symbolism was not an organised and systematic procedure but resulted from the separate action of certain families which claimed a higher social status relying on these new symbols. It was shown that the elite families from those communities with high social differentiation were connected directly to the largest and remotest to East Crete palaces, such as Knossos and Phaistos, while those with low social differentiation, were connected to palaces which were closer and easier to access, such as Malia.

As a result of this, the reception of elite palatial symbolism in East Crete was spatially and temporally differentiated. Ashlar masonry appeared first at Protopalatial Palaikastro and later in the other East Cretan communities; double axe mason's marks appeared first at MMIIILMIA Petras and only in LMIB and only at Palaikastro, Zakros and Gournia. The double axe and the bull symbolism arrived at Mochlos already in MMIA, but at Pseira only in LMIA. Similarly, conical cups, typical of palatial feasting and widely spread in Protopalatial East Crete, remained entirely absent at Pseira during the same period (Pseira VII: 130; Wiener 1984).

These objects were irregularly distributed in isolated and private contexts indicating the involvement of individual initiative in this process. Scoops and shell vessels were used by the elite families at Pseira, Palaikastro and Zakros, while a seal with an engraved double axe was

deposited in one of the Protopalatial Mochlos graves. East Cretan families had started to import elite symbolism from Central Crete already in the Prepalatial period and it appears that it was a strategy which was extended and consolidated in the Protopalatial period. Characteristically, the earliest bull symbol found in East Crete, with parallels in Mesara (Gesell 1985: 15), was deposited in a Prepalatial Mochlos grave. Similarly, a vessel with horns on the rim possibly imitating the one from Archanes and others from Mesara (Gesell 1985: 16) came from another grave at Gournia.

The social strategies, which these individuals or families pursued in their communities through the reception of palatial elite symbolism, were different. In those towns which had developed high social differentiation in the Prepalatial period, such as Mochlos and Gournia, the new symbols were used by the lower-class as innovative artefacts with added performative value in order to challenge the established social status. For example, the owner of the Protopalatial bull vessel at Mochlos was a member of the lower class buried in the poor section of the cemetery. The acquisition of this imported or locally imitated Mesara product was a token of access to the most elaborate and fashionable ritual equipment of the period. This strategy was part of a wider social practice identified at the cemetery of Mochlos, by which the use of ritual equipment and apparently of ritual performance challenged the exotic imported items or elaborate manufactured artefacts of the rich traders of the West Terrace cemetery. The seal with the double axe from Mochlos and the vessel with the horns of consecration on its rim from Gournia were also offered to low-class individuals of these communities, as evidenced by their modest graves. Similarly, the earliest clay jar with double axes in East Crete was used as burial container of an infant at Mochlos and did not contain any offerings. All of this evidence suggests that the emerging symbols of the Central Cretan Protopalatial elites were imitated by relatively modest East Cretan families as a strategy for claiming social status against those who ‘controlled’ the local established symbols of their towns.

On the other hand, in those towns with low social differentiation in the Prepalatial period, such as Zakros and Palaikastro, it was the dynamic emerging elites which adopted the new elite palatial symbolism. The families occupying Block D at Palaikastro and House A at Zakros acquired the earliest Central Cretan symbols. These families became the elite of their towns and retained their high status throughout the Neopalatial period, as is evidenced by

symbolic artefacts concentrated in these buildings.⁶² It is characteristic that in these cases the imported symbols were associated with public performance and could have a wider impact in the local community rather than being used in domestic or private contexts. For example, conical cups, Kamares ware and bull's head rhyta became popular at Zakros and Palaikastro but were very sporadically found at Pseira, Mochlos and Gournia (Table 3.24). At Zakros, evidence for large feasting events was associated with the elite of the East building. In the same context, there appeared a trend to imitate those elite strategies which aimed at extending control in the surrounding areas through the marking of ritual sites. This imitation led to patterns of shared elite symbolism, as was the case of the pair of horns of consecration found on the peak sanctuaries of Petsophas and Traostalos.

Thus, in East Crete appears a range of different degrees and ways of adoption of the rising palatial system, from the directly imported Knossian model of Petras, to the more varied processes of the other Cretan sites. Social complexity, regional competition and individual connections seem to have played a leading role in this process, which the local elites used to their benefit in order to consolidate their newly attained status.

Early Neopalatial period

This is the period when the Knossian elite reached the peak of its power with the construction of the Second Palace and with the wide acceptance of its symbols as an elite symbolism employed both for the marking of social distinction and authority by the local elites of North Central Crete and for the promotion of expansive strategies in the area. Compared to this, East Crete appears to have played a secondary role, as the palace of Petras as starting to decline during this period. However, it was shown that the elites of the East Cretan communities, and especially the elites of those communities with high degree of social differentiation, such as Palaikastro and Zakros, were stratified, and dynamic systematically importing or imitating elite palatial symbolism. As already stated, the new impulse was enhanced by the power vacuum left by the diminishing palace at Petras.

In other words, the local elites of North Central Cretan and East Cretan towns both recognized the political effect of this new elite symbolism and its impact in the negotiation of social dynamics within their own communities and used it to their benefit: the first as a direct emulation of the largest Palace of Crete in its immediate area of political and cultural

⁶² Block D in Palaikastro was dubbed the 'Palace' because of its impressive ashlar facade and its fine contents (Driessen 1999: 230).

influence and the second as an indirect reception of the palatial symbolism of the larger Minoan palaces.

Both areas developed similar strategies of control of the sample symbols in their communities. For example, elite architecture and performance were the main themes of palatial symbolism associated with the contexts of the sample symbols and they were concentrated in spaces controlled by the elite. At Archanes and Tylissos, it was respectively the early palatial building and House A which concentrated most of the sample symbols and the palatial performative contexts (interior shrines with frescoes, pillar crypt) and a hierarchical order was retained for their distribution in 'lesser elite' buildings or non-elite buildings. Similarly, Building 6 at Palaikastro and the East Building at Zakros concentrated the majority of the most important symbols in their confines and were the centres which orchestrated spaces and routes of performance. The hierarchical use of symbols within the sites was common in North Central Crete and East Crete and imitated similar Knossian strategies. Elites used large horns of consecration only in the central palatial buildings (Palace of Knossos, Archanes palatial building, Tylissos House A, Palaikastro Building 6, Zakros East Building) and placed smaller ones in strategic spaces of their control (Archanes-Troullos, Tylissos-House C, Palaikastro Block B-Building 7, Zakros-route to House-shrine A). Similarly, prestigious symbols, such as the stone manufactured tritons, were exclusively used in the Palace at Knossos and the East Building of Zakros.

However, it appears that East Cretan communities were much more consistent in importing full sets of sample symbols than North Central Cretan towns and in ways which visibly imitated strategies of the large palaces. In terms of elite symbolism and its social role, East Cretan communities probably viewed themselves as small-scale palatial centres. No North Central Cretan town possessed palatial buildings incised with double axe mason's marks and crowned with horns of consecration at the same time apart from Knossos. In East Crete, this combination was found at the Palace of Zakros, Buildings 5 and 1 at Palaikastro, which seem to have functioned as a ceremonial complex, and the palatial building at Gournia. It is characteristic in this sense that Zakros and Palaikastro projected these sample symbols in strategic areas of their communities, such as entrances or other liminal areas, shrines and the neighbouring peak sanctuaries in their surrounding environment, thus copying patterns of reproduction of palatial contexts of the large palaces, such as Knossos. There was a hierarchical ordering of the East Cretan towns, according to which those sites with higher social differentiation, such as Zakros, Palaikastro and Gournia, were entitled to use these sets, while those towns with lower degree of social differentiation were not. This is also evidenced

by the fact that horns of consecration and double axe marks were limited to communities with high social differentiation, while in North Central Crete they were recognized as the only almost standard component of elite symbolism in all communities. By contrast, in North Central Crete, isolated palatial symbols were preferred by the local elites without any obvious common factor of reference at regional level. Thus, reception was much closer to its prototypes in the periphery rather than the immediate area of production of this symbolism. This patterning of response to elite palatial symbolism must be interpreted as the result of the absence of any large palatial centre in East Crete. The Protopalatial palace at Petras could not play the catalytic role that the palace at Knossos played in this period, when it determined the formation of an idiom of elite symbolism that was imposed over a large part of North Central Crete. The presence of relatively moderate palatial formation in East Crete provided the necessary space to fully develop local ways of adopting palatial elite symbolism without restrictions. It also naturally resulted in a self-determined hierarchical scale and customs showing which towns were entitled to use a different degree of elite symbolism according to their position in the region.

By contrast, the flexibility noted in the use of palatial symbols by the North Central Cretan sites was always conditioned by the undisputed and absolute supremacy of the Palace of Knossos. The concentration of a large number of sample symbols in one town around Knossos was probably viewed as threatening to the Knossian elite, which apparently possessed the power to prevent such a possibility. On the other hand, the emulation of the Knossian symbols by the surrounding sites confirmed its authority as a recognized and accepted power in the area and was encouraged by the Knossian elite to the degree that was not disputing its dominant role in North Central Crete. It is also possible that relations between Knossos and the towns of North Central Crete were not competitive but complementary.

Perhaps these towns were assigned specific roles or identities regulated by the Knossian elite which connected them to specific symbols or specific uses of these symbols. An example of this was the diversified use of the double axe symbolism according to the specific role of each site. In the country Villa of Vathypetro, where rural activities and local production of pottery was the most important economic factor, marks on a potter's wheel are the predominant category representing the symbol. At Anemospilia, an independent shrine with evidence for highly specialised ceremonial activity, double axe symbolism was found on ceremonial pottery, while a stand possibly served as the base of a ceremonial bronze double axe. The double axes at Arkalochori, a liminal strategic area of the region, probably

represented the military elite of Knossos. Those at Jouktas emphasised the connection to the centre through their use as a foundation deposit of the newly built altar. At Tylissos, they were mostly connected to ritual contexts of animal sacrifices. At Nirou Chani, where ritual performance appears to have been the main purpose of use of the site, they were used as standing foci of cult performances. This form of control by the Knossian elite would emphasise its authority but still give a certain identity to the outlying places.

The larger degree of political autonomy of the East Cretan communities is also detected in the greater degree of differentiation in the reception of the sample symbols. Good examples for this are the storage vessels, which were decorated with double axes. They were symbols of palatial storage in North Central Crete and had been adopted simultaneously by Knossos and Anemospilia. In East Crete, they appeared at the end of the Protopalatial period and were separately imported (Christakis 2003: 156) or reproduced by the East Cretan communities at different times until LMIB (Table 3.26). Differentiation could also be expressed as the selective emphasis of the elites on certain features of elite symbolism. For example, Palaikastro emphasised ‘architecturality’ perhaps more than palatial centres in its creation of Building 6 and the model of Petsophas. The confidence of the Palaikastro elite in its management of ‘architecturality’ is further reflected in the adaptation of the imported ‘Minoan Hall’ into the local architectural feature of the ‘Palaikastro Hall’ (Driessen 1999). By contrast, the Zakros elite relied much more on performance through the elaborate and structured networking of the ‘Zakros assemblages’, which actively engaged the local population through ceremonial transfers and depositions or through conspicuous consumption.

Differentiation could also mean that certain symbols were exclusively used by the ‘high elites’ of the communities, while others were claimed by the ‘lesser elites’. For example, while in North Central Crete, double axe stands were found exclusively in highly palatial contexts (only at Knossos and its villas and House A at Tylissos), at Zakros, they were not associated with the East Building, but with the ‘lesser elite’ buildings (House A, and House Da). They were found in contexts which did not suggest libation practices, like in the Knossian contexts, but rather feasting. This is exceptionally interesting, because it may suggest that these elites used innovative symbolism of the large Minoan palaces but still recruited the locally recognized symbolic idiom, which gave priority to performance and especially feasting, in order to differentiate themselves from the higher elite, but at the same time within the local socio-political perception of elite symbolism.

All of the above shows that in East Crete there was a strong correlation between the use of sample symbols as elite symbols, palatial symbolism and the relevant hierarchical regional site ranking. However, local preferences and inherent cultural features, supported by the continuous presence of the same elite groups, played a decisive role in the selection and the use of these symbols by each elite in communities of both high and modest social differentiation.

Late Neopalatial period

The most important result of the comparison between LMIB North Central Crete and East Crete is that, while East Cretan sites reached their peak of use of sample symbols during this period, Central Crete was going through serious political turbulence and a dramatic decline in the use of symbols. Most of the thriving North Central Cretan communities, which prospered during the early Neopalatial period, were destroyed and abandoned. On the other hand Archanes and Poros seem to have continued growing, while the situation at Knossos is unclear. In East Crete, elite symbolism expanded with all the five East Cretan sites acquiring new buildings bedecked with palatial features, and, in the case of Zakros and Gournia, actual palatial buildings.

Although the Archanes ‘Palace’ had been refurbished, like the East Crete palatial buildings, and the prosperity of Poros is reflected in the depositions of the chamber tomb, it is not clear how this is related to the developments at Knossos. It was suggested that this prosperity may have been the result: a) of a growth of the Knossian elite after the destruction of the majority of the North Central Cretan communities and the parallel growth of the two main surviving towns in the area, Poros and Archanes, where the Knossian elite exercised lesser or greater control; or b) of a decline of the Knossian elite and its displacement to Poros and Archanes, which, however, retained their local features and were not controlled by the Knossian elite.

The first possibility is related to one of the most debated issues in Minoan archaeology: the claims for Knossian imperialism over Crete (Wiener 1987: 265; L. Platon 2002: 145; 2004; Watrous 2004; Betancourt 2004: 25, 27; Wiener 2007). The second possibility is related to the view that the Palace of Knossos was not even operational during this period, as it was still recovering from the LMIA destructions and Archanes may have functioned as the main political centre of the area (MacDonald 1990, 2002; Popham 1994; Rehak & Younger 1998: 149-166).

Because the present evidence in North Central Crete does not allow any further conclusions on the role of Knossos, here I will concentrate on whether the use and character of the sample

symbols in East Crete may justify the scenario of Knossian ‘imperialism’ in the area. It will be shown that such scenario is not likely despite the evident Knossian influence. The growth of East Cretan communities forms the culmination of an increasing and continuous growth of its elites since the Protopalatial period with intense local peculiarities.

Imperialism is understood as an aggressive policy of extending the authority of a power source over other areas. It is understood that the most direct and efficient way to impose such political authority would be military or administrative. It was shown that the emblem of the Neopalatial Knossian military elite was the figure-of-eight shield. It was the only sample symbol that was not part of the shared elite symbolism in North Central Crete and was strictly nucleated in the Palace. The very few examples found outside Knossos at MMIII-LMIA Tylissos and LMIB Poros were interpreted as the isolated presence of Knossian officials. It appears that this military elite, however, was not the main means of the supremacy of the Knossian elite in the area. This can be argued for on the basis of two factors: first, the significant political autonomy which North Central Cretan communities were shown to have enjoyed during the emergence and consolidation of the Knossian elite; and, secondly, the long-lasting reliance of the Knossian elite on strategies of ritual demarcation of its areas of control.

That there was no military or administrative imperialism of Knossos in East Crete is shown by the striking absence of figure-of-eight shield symbolism in the area and by the lack of evidence for Knossian administrative control. Figure-of-eight shield examples are entirely absent in the early Neopalatial period, when the East Cretan elites had started to import systematically Knossian and other palatial symbolism. It appears that the symbol was not considered appropriate for the construction of elite identity outside its own context. In the late Neopalatial period, from the rich and diverse amount of sample symbols found in the East Cretan towns, there was only a prestigious bead at Mochlos (House A), a bronze ornament from Gournia and three sealings from Zakros. The first two, unlike the examples of MMIII-LMIA Tylissos and LMIB Poros, were not found in the main elite areas of their communities, which would be the houses where bronze hoards were deposited and the palatial building respectively. They belonged to families of ‘lesser elite’ and may have been exceptional and rare acquisitions of the local elite who used them to claim higher social status in their communities. This means that, in East Crete, the meaning of the figure-of-eight shield was less political than it was in the Palace of Knossos, in Poros and in Tylissos, suggesting that Knossian officials were either not physically present or were subordinate to the higher local elite.

Similarly, the sealings from Zakros depict figure-of-eight shields in narratives but not military ones like those from Knossos. The Zakros sealings show the symbol as part of some kind of ritual or symbolic scene. Conversely, this sort of depiction of the symbol is not found on the Knossos sealings. An administrative control of East Crete by Knossos has been further challenged by Schoep (1999: 204-215, n. 79), who has argued that the administrative role of Knossos was weakened in LMIB and that the sites across the island were not dependent on the sealing system of the Knossian Palace.

The above evidence seriously undermines the scenario of Knossian military imperialism. However, it was shown that the traditional strategies of expansion of the Knossian elite in its area were based on ritual material culture and performance. This less aggressive scenario is also given credence by the 'high degree of ritualisation' attested throughout the island during this period (Driessen & MacGillivray 1989: 108). If valid, it would signify an intentional cultural assimilation of these areas, as part of an organised strategy of political control by the Knossian elite. In this research it was established that ritualisation and display were strategies used by the Knossian elite not in LMIB but from its emergence. The Prepalatial and Protopalatial periods it was actual spaces or buildings of ritual nature (Phourni cemetery, Jouktas peak sanctuary, Anemospilia shrine, Arkalochori cave), which were used as symbolic outposts of the Knossian elite outside Knossos. In the Neopalatial period, these strategies were refined and ritualisation was employed on whole communities instead of just ritual spaces and in ways which were less drastic and more sophisticated. It was shown that the North Central Cretan communities were relatively free to emulate Knossian elite symbolism without attracting a large number of combined symbols. At the same time, diversity in their symbolic identities and ritual roles may have signified that the Knossian elite was powerful enough to allocate certain ceremonial duties to these communities. This means that, in its own area, the Knossian elite did employ strategies of ritualisation and in a way, intentionally altered local culture. On the other hand, it is better to describe the relationship between the Knossian elite and the local communities as dialectical, since evidence showed that the latter retained a significant amount of political autonomy.

It remains to be discussed whether such a strategy or any other strategy of ritualisation from the side of Knossos can be traced in East Crete. The evidence from the use and distribution of the sample symbols in East Crete suggests that, if such a strategy was intended from the side of the Knossian elite in the Neopalatial period, it did not assume the features that it had in North Central Crete and does not reflect a systematic and planned cultural assimilation of the East Cretan communities. The main arguments supporting this view are: firstly, that the

importation of elite palatial symbolism in East Crete was a long process that had started already in the Protopalatial period and was not something new in LMIB, and therefore could not have been the result of a LMIB strategy of expansion. Secondly, that the process of importation of palatial symbolism from the Protopalatial period and until LMIB was the result of the initiatives of the local elites, who thus claimed social power in their communities, and therefore could not have been the result of a systematic plan deriving from an external centralised authority. Thirdly, that the area maintained throughout these periods a strong sentiment of regional hierarchy in the use of elite palatial symbolism which is evident in the differential reception of the symbols, and therefore one cannot talk of a cultural alteration but rather of Knossian influence.

The first two arguments have already been discussed and developed above (see Section 3.6 – *Neopalatial period*). Here, I will refer to these arguments mainly focussing on the intense regional and local features which argue against the imposition of ritualisation from the side of the Knossian elite.

It was shown that Knossian and other palatial elite symbolism was imported to East Cretan communities already from the Protopalatial period as part of the social strategies of local elites which attempted and succeeded in constructing their political identities. These strategies were compared for the early Neopalatial period with those of the local elites of North Central Cretan communities and it was found that in both areas these elites used palatial symbolism to promote their interests and enjoyed political autonomy from the large palaces. In LMIB, the Knossian palatial symbolism was still imported by the leading elites of each community to a large extent according to the hierarchical position of each town.

However, what is most characteristically local in East Crete and different from North Central Crete and Knossian practices of elite symbolism is the existence of a stratified elite in East Cretan communities and the dynamic role it played in the performative activities of their towns. It was shown that ‘lesser elites’ of East Crete were invited to participate in the feasting events of their communities with the establishment of complex ceremonial routes and the transfer of symbols from domestic storage spaces of the elite houses to special open-air spaces which belonged to the higher local elite. Such were the joined double axes in private contexts or the transferred pots decorated with double axes, figure-of-eight shields and tritons, or natural tritons and shells used as libation vessels. Even the seemingly static large horns or the double axe marks in reality were signs which invited people to follow sacral routes in public processions or exclusive ceremonies. For this reason, symbolic topography was in each case determined not only by the natural and urban landscape (edges, centre,

port/town entrances), but by those spaces which would create a visual network of routes in which these symbols would have been displayed in motion. This activity determined the type of relationship between higher and lower elite, creating and maintaining social dynamics within each community. Thus, the sample symbols were perceived as symbols in action which engaged essentially the local population and created a strong communal sentiment while at the same time they redefined in each instant the social dynamics and the relationship between the social groups.

In North Central Crete, there is no complete evidence of the urban surroundings of the discussed communities in order to really assess the existence of 'lesser elites'. It is possible, however, that the action of Knossos did not allow the development of very complex and stratified elites in each community. This is suggested by the random use of sample symbols in these towns. However, it was shown that perhaps each community played a specific role in the symbolic and ritual feasts which probably took place at Knossos and attracted representatives of each town with their own symbols. If this were the case, then North Central Cretan towns would have played the role of the 'lesser elites' of East Crete and the palace at Knossos the role of the higher East Cretan elites. All of these features stress the importance of the simultaneous use of regional and local elements together with what was generally established as fashionable or of palatial prestige by the palaces of Central Crete and especially Knossos integrated into the East Cretan LMIB tradition of feasting assemblages with Knossian features, tritons and bull vessels.

Moreover, it was proven that East Cretan communities enjoyed a greater freedom in the ways they imported and used elite symbolism (see Section 3.6 – *Late Neopalatial period*). As has been discussed, this was evidenced by the differentiation of reception of the elite symbolism in terms of time and space. However, it is also evidenced by the adaptations to the traditional regional and local symbolic idioms.

Characteristically, although the use of elite sample symbols in each East Cretan town was a matter of individual initiative of the elites and allowance for more or less Knossian influence, there was a perception of regional hierarchical ranking in the accessibility of certain symbols which were regarded as 'more elite' than others. For example, large stone horns of consecration and double axe mason's marks were only used in sites such as Zakros, Palaikastro and Gournia. These sites were the ones which had achieved the highest degree of social differentiation in the Neopalatial period, a social development which was materialised in the possession of large and complex buildings. These two symbol categories were only

related to high elite architecture (Palace of Zakros, Building 5 at Palaikastro, palatial building at Gournia) which was possessed only by the elites of towns with high social differentiation. Even in Pseira, which presents the greatest degree of Knossian influence proportionately to its size, those symbols which were established by the elites of Zakros, Palaikastro and Gournia as highly elite symbols were not accessible to the local elite. The distribution of Knossian symbols was still determined by the regional East Cretan standards of site hierarchy, which dictated that the use of these symbols was strictly correlated to the presence of highly elite architecture. This means that the importation of Knossian elite culture was still determined by the regional hierarchical order which had been established in East Crete already from the previous period and there are no signs that this order had been forcibly altered by an external influence. Similarly, the elite of Mochlos which possessed a ceremonial centre with elite architecture (including the only pillar crypt in East Crete) did not have access to large stone horns of consecration or double axe mason's marks, possibly as a result of its comparatively lower degree of social differentiation.

It was shown that this was not the case in North Central Crete where double axe mason's marks, on the one hand, were extremely rare outside Knossos and were not necessarily related to the highest elite architecture (for example mason's marks were not found at the villa with the frescoes of Amnisos but at a different building). On the other hand, the horns of consecration in North Central Crete were the most homogeneously distributed symbol irrespectively of the size and the role played by the specific community and were uniformly related to elite architecture.

This difference is indicative of different power relationships between the local communities and Knossos. It suggests that East Cretan communities were much more flexible to self-determine the social meaning of the symbols and create their own social ranking at a regional level. The competition between sites was more intense, as palatial symbolism was not inherent but adopted and could freely serve as the means to change location on the scale of hierarchical site ranking.

They were free to adopt important Knossian symbols and entirely discard others. The distribution of the symbols in the East Cretan communities was not uniform and did not take place to the same extent in all the East Cretan towns. For example, Mochlos and Palaikastro were much less 'Knossian' than Pseira, Gournia and Zakros (Warren 2002: 204). It is surprising, in this respect, that in the least 'Knossian' town, that of Mochlos, where no

conical cups, bull rhyta (Seager 1909: 285; Barnard et al. 2011⁶³), horns of consecration or double axe mason's marks were found, the local elite was entitled to use a pillar crypt. This was even more surprising, considering that pillar crypts were notoriously absent in East Crete, even at the Palace of Zakros (Gesell 1985: 26-9). Together with ashlar masonry, the pillar crypt was restricted to the ceremonial Building 2 (Soles 2008a: 154-155). In view of the absence of essential Knossian symbols at Mochlos, this nucleation of Knossian palatial elements exclusively in the main authority building of the town, together with the most powerful local symbols, shows a deliberately controlled import of Knossian elements. In this way, the elite of Mochlos indicated its ability to compete with the current Cretan power symbols and to keep up with the regional elite strategies of East Crete, which mandated the import of Knossian symbolism. However, its priority was to retain the deeply rooted local traditions of the community.

In Knossos and generally in Central Crete, the double axe stand and mason's marks were especially connected to the pillar crypts (Gesell 1985: 38, Palace of Knossos, SEH, Temple Tomb, Malia, Phaistos) and appear to have served specific symbolic purposes in this context. It appears that in East Crete these symbolic purposes were not reproduced. By contrast, the double axe stands were mainly used by the 'lesser elite' at Zakros, Palaikastro and Gournia and in private domestic spaces. Only at LMIB Zakros were they exclusively used in the Palace, possibly as a result of the wider strategy of the local palatial elite to exclude symbolism from the town and restrict it within the confines of the new building. It is also possible that, because the symbol was removed from its original symbolic context, which was the Palace of Knossos, it was freely interpreted, either as exclusive to the palatial environment (Zakros), proper for isolated domestic contexts (Palaikastro) or perhaps occasionally brought to public use (Gournia).

The double axe mason's marks were also disassociated from their Knossian contexts in East Crete. Ashlar masonry appeared already in the Protopalatial period, but was only associated with double axe mason's marks in LMIB. The context of these mason's marks also differed. While in the Palace of Knossos, the concentrations of double axe mason's marks were associated mostly with closed spaces, such as the Queen's Megaron and the pillar crypts or the magazines, in East Crete they were incised on the most conspicuous walls of the most important public buildings.

⁶³ From the imported marine style which is very fragmentary no shapes can be recognised (no tritons or shells recorded in Barnard et al. 2011).

Even when compared with the elite symbolism of LMIB Archanes and partially Knossos, the only sites which actually provide evidence for the use of sample symbols in North Central Crete, the differences are visible. Horns of consecration were used as ground-level cultic objects in the palatial building at Archanes and the shrine in the North Road of Knossos, while in LMIB East Crete they were mainly crowning elements of highly elite buildings. Similarly, although the double axe stand contexts at LMIB Archanes appear more similar to those of East Crete, than the MMIII-LMIA Knossian ones, they were still found in the Palace and not in domestic contexts like those of East Crete.

Overall, East Crete displayed in the Neopalatial period an intensely diversified reception of Knossian symbolism and a strong local interpretation, which cannot be explained by the scenario of an imposition. Moreover, this diversification and localism are features which characterised East Crete already from the Protopalatial and did not change during this period. This indicates a sense of regionalism and continuity, revealing that local elites were free to select certain palatial symbols and use them according to their own cultural strategies.

The regionality in the use of sample symbols in East Crete is also very evident in the feasting assemblages and the acts of ritual performance of this period. It was shown that feasting (with the exception of Mochlos) was a major factor of negotiation of social dynamics in Neopalatial Crete. In East Crete, the feasting assemblages were composed of large groups of pottery, including prestigious ritual vessels decorated with sample symbols, such as double axes, sacred knots and tritons. Some of these vessels were imported from Knossos.

Most characteristic of the Knossian influence in pottery is the example of Pseira. The sudden appearance at Pseira of conical cups, Knossian rhyta and bull symbolism, which formed part of the local 'Pseiran assemblages', is interpreted as an example of radical Knossian influence (Betancourt 2004). This is much more so because of the wider radical changes in the town. In LMIB, Pseira was rebuilt with a new town plan (Pseira X: 156: IV), dams, peer-and-door partition system (Watrous 2004: 164) and frescoes, all of which were unprecedented features and characteristic of Knossian elite symbolism. However, this influence may not have been as radical as it appears. Although it has been stated that bull symbolism appeared for the first time in this period (Betancourt 2004: 22, 25; Warren 2002: 204-205), it was shown that bull symbolism was already known from elite House AB of the previous period and formed part of the wider strategy of the rising East Cretan elites to imitate or import palatial storage vessels decorated with double axes. Moreover, ceramic analysis has shown that the LMIB bull-shaped vessels, the ritual emblems of Pseira, were actually East Cretan products and not Knossian imports (Pseira III: 185; Betancourt 2004: 24; Miller 1984: 387).

In fact, the Knossian pottery at Pseira represents only 0.01% of the total pottery used in the town. These vessels, including 25 marine and floral style examples, were concentrated in the elite performative ritual contexts of the town, either as components of the 'Pseiran assemblages' or other feasting deposits (Betancourt 2011b: 408). These relative numbers and the prominent ritual use of these vessels forms a pattern in most of the East Cretan communities. As a rule, Knossian vessels were highly appreciated as prestigious artefacts in the East Cretan feasting assemblages, which, however, were mainly unique local compositions. This localism in the production of feasting assemblages is not only detected in their ceramic components but other categories as well. At Pseira, for example, the local features are also reflected in the locally produced and highly prestigious stone vessels and lamps, which formed the principal components of the 'Pseiran assemblages'.

Thus, despite these strong arguments there is evidence which shows that the Knossian effect may not have been that catalytic on the local culture of Pseira and that the town was culturally integrated into the wider LMIB East Crete tradition. The radical changes which took place in the plan, the architecture and the material culture of the town during this period can only be explained as part of a wider set of innovations which affected the settlement as a whole. The survival of important local architectural elements, the strong East Cretan cultural traits and the absence of the principal Knossian symbols suggest that these changes may have derived from a dramatic increase in competitive relationships between local elites. This may have been the result of a long stagnation of the Pseira community and the sudden urge of the local elites to rise to the level of the wider political and cultural developments. This possibility would also explain the already described strict ritualisation of the local symbolism which represents perhaps the most structured use of symbolism in East Crete.

A similar explanation may be provided for the example of Zakros which constitutes the most convincing argument in favour of a direct Knossian control in East Crete. In similar ways to Pseira, the argument of a strong Knossian influence in the town is based, first, on the LMIB appearance of the Zakros Palace, a building which surpassed any previous construction at the site in monumentality, and secondly on the sharp dichotomy between Palace and town evidenced by the nucleation of elite architecture and artefacts, as well as sealing documentation between the town and the Palace (Wiener 1987: 265; Chryssoulaki & L. Platon 1987; Warren 1999: 902; 2002: 205; Cunningham 2001: 74, 79; L. Platon 2004).

It has been shown in this research, however, that the Palace at Zakros derived from an elite which had started to build its activity at the site already from the Protopalatial period (L. Platon 2009: 675). The continuity of social strategies introduced by the East Building elite in

the LMIB Palace is a primary argument against the imposition of a foreign elite. The strict nucleation of the sample symbols, elite material culture and its association with elite architecture was common to both the East Building and the LMIB Palace elite. The stratified elite of Houses A and Da remained the same, as well as the hierarchical use of symbols which defined higher from 'lesser elite'. The early ceremonial routes connecting the higher elite architecture with 'lesser elite' buildings were still active in LMIB and there was similar strategy of control of the sample symbols and public performance. This continuity was not a local characteristic but part of a wider regional trend. In Palaikastro, the local high elite also maintained similar strategies from the Protopalatial period, using 'architecturality' as the main component of elite symbolism and with the stratified elite retaining its position (Block D). Similarly, symbols which allegedly argue in favour of a Knossian influence, such as the double axe and the horns of consecration, were already used by the Zakros elites before the construction of the Palace. Ritual performance also remained the same from the previous periods.

Thus, the argument that the poverty of the area facilitated or caused the imposition of Knossian power which was materialised in a dramatic economic improvement (Reid 2007) disregards the history and previous survival strategies of the local people. Zakros was not a traditionally conservative local harbour which suddenly transformed into a prestigious palatial harbour. In reality, the local townspeople of Zakros never participated in the elite symbolism and they remained an insignificant factor in the economic and political changes of the area (Driessen 2001a). The wealth which derived from maritime trade increasingly accumulated from the Protopalatial period in the elite families of the town. These families also monopolised the use of sample symbols and the feasting equipment, neither of which were spread evenly throughout the town (L. Platon 1999b: 40, 48; 2004: 389). It appears, then, that the construction of a monumental building such as the Zakros Palace in LMI was not entirely sudden and by contrast to the previous situation, but can be explained as the result of the local social dynamics and the gradual increase of social complexity starting in the Protopalatial period.

In LMIB there were developments which emphasised this long-lasting dichotomy. The palatial elite increased in power, acquired contacts with the Palace at Knossos and accumulated Knossian material culture which is unique and only second to the Palace at Knossos. As a consequence, the Zakros elite decided to sharply distinguish itself from the local population. The blocking of the western facade (Nixon 1987: 99) in LMIB, as well as the blocking of the Northern border of the Palace by the construction of the Northern wing

(Chryssoulaki & L. Platon 1987: 80) made the divide between the townsfolk and the palatial elite architecturally visible and put a palatial barrier between the harbour and the town. The discarding of the 'Zakros assemblages' as non-palatial and their exclusion from the contexts of the Palace is characteristic of the marked and intended divide between the palatial elite and the townspeople of LMIB Zakros. These are strategies which intended to mark out intensified social differentiation by using the two main criteria of social distinction: elite architecture and performance.

The choice of strategies can be explained as the decision of the local elite to increase social tension rather than the result of an external imposition on the town. Significant divergence in the local elite architecture and symbolic performance from the Knossian prototypes attest to that. In architecture, the orientation which is determined by the local harbour escapes the general rule of Minoan palaces, the lack of pillar crypts, and the absence of the characteristic high-quality frescoes indicate minor Knossian influence. Local architectural peculiarities, such as the cistern and the fountain, show independence and initiative in the development of local elite architecture. Moreover, it has to be noted that similar, albeit more discreet, modifications aiming at topographically separating the higher from the lower elite and the town took place at Palaikastro, with the shift from building 6, which was closer to the Main Street and the elite houses, to buildings 1, 3, 4 and 5. Thus, it appears that the elites of the two communities with the highest social differentiation aimed at a clear physical separation from both the local population and the 'lesser elite' families in order to create a larger social gap between their high authority and the rest of the community's social groups.

Moreover, the small size of the Palace, the lack of substantial storage space and its dependence on 'lesser elite' storage areas outside the Palace indicates a decreased control of its economic supremacy. At Zakros, there was mutual dependence between the palatial elite and the elites of House A, House Da and House Z. House A contained the second largest sealing archive on Crete (e.g., Hogarth 1900-1901; Weingarten 1983a-b; Wiener 1987: 265; 2007: 234-235; Schoep 1999: 204-205), suggesting a crucial administrative role in the economic activities conducted at the site. Only 5% of the Palace's capacity was dedicated to storage, as opposed to 20% at Knossos and 30% at Malia (Halstead 1981: 203). It appears that the Palace may have also relied on the rural production of the main town. Characteristically, the town of Zakros contained 81% of the total oil- and grape-presses of the site (Reid 2007: 33). Perhaps the limited space of an already existing site preconditioned the operational spaces, which equipped the new Palace. Thus, the latter depended on the rest of the town for its subsistence. A similar economic interdependence was evidenced at Gournia,

which also lacked substantial storage space and shared a significant amount of industrial production with the Hill House and the households of the main town. Thus, the overall flexibility in the use of domestic and public economic space suggests an alignment with the wider strategies of East Crete, rather than an effort to imitate Knossian practices. It is clear that, if the Zakros Palace served as a harbour of Knossos for the importation of valuable materials and prestigious artefacts (L. Platon 2002: 151), the Knossian elite would not have allowed for a dispersal of sources of economic control.

All this is evidence for the fact that the new Palace at Zakros was the result of the dramatic rise of an already existing local elite, which increasingly adopted Knossian traits to further strengthen its position in the area. The strategies it used to do so show its full integration in the regional culture of East Crete, rather than being under the direct control of Knossos.

Going back to the initial questions and models, it is hard to think that the Knossian elite was entirely absent during this period, as its cultural impact was markedly visible in East Crete. However, the scenario of Knossian imperialism is not supported by the study of the sample symbols in the area. Rather, the conclusions of this comparison would favour the model of peer polities, which acknowledges a larger or smaller extent of independence of the East Cretan communities as integral parts of their immediate surroundings (Renfrew & Cherry 1986; Driessen & MacGillivray 1989: 107-8; Bennet 1990: 207-9; Tsipopoulou-Papapostolou 1997; Driessen 2001a: 62-3; Tsipopoulou 2002: 142-3). Supporters of this model in LMIB East Crete have identified independence in the area as attested in differences in town plans, settlement patterns and spatial organisation (Cunningham 2001) or the character and use of sealings between Knossos and East Crete (Driessen & Schoep 1995: 661-2). This study has contributed to a more nuanced understanding of this relationship and the way regional and local identities could play a crucial role in the ways of reception of strong external influence.

Final Palatial period

After the destructions at the end of LMIB, the communities of North Central Crete which could still play a significant socio-political role in the area were Knossos, Poros and Archanes. The Knossian elite once more dominated in North Central Crete but the strategies it assumed had an entirely new character. Despite the citation of symbolic contexts and the appropriation of the figure-of-eight shield as the major elite emblem, the new symbolic strategies revealed a much more centralised and rigid ruling power with new criteria of social distinction, such as an emphasis on military symbolism, clear demarcation of the stratification

of the elite, display of power in funerary contexts and a standardisation and centralisation of the administrative system.

These dramatic and unprecedented changes in the use of the sample symbols and elite symbolism in general are related to one of the major problems in Minoan archaeology: whether Crete was invaded by Mycenaean occupants, when and in which ways it may have happened. It is usually suggested (Hood 1973; Niemeier 1984; Driessen & MacDonald 1997) that Mycenaeans invaded the island causing the severe destructions in LMIB and that they spared the Palace of Knossos in order to use it as their administrative centre and that at some point the Linear A script was adapted to express their new language and became Linear B. Those who support a later dating of Linear B suggest that the LMIB destructions were caused by the local populations which revolted against the Knossian power (Palmer & Boardman 1963).

Here, I will argue in favour of a Mycenaean invasion after the LMIB destructions on the basis of the evidence from the distribution and use of the sample symbols. From this research it has been concluded that the dominance of Knossos never really suppressed the local communities and their population, which, even in its immediate surrounding territories in North Central Crete, enjoyed a significant degree of political autonomy. For example, evidence for the relationship between Knossos and Poros, which covers a long period from the Prepalatial period until LMIB, shows that Poros was the main harbour of Knossos, where possibly Knossian officials were stationed, as is evidenced in the cemeteries of Poros and Katsambas. Despite this close connection, Poros was the site with fewer Knossian sample symbols suggesting that there was a stable and, as it appears, harmonious interdependence with each community accepting the different role of the other. Moreover, it was shown that throughout its history the Knossian elite employed strategies of ritualisation in its areas of control rather than military or political aggression. In this sense, there would not appear to have existed any obvious reason for a sudden revolt of the local populations against the LMIB Knossian elite within its own state.

The changes which took place after LMIB in the use of elite symbolism and the sample symbols at Knossos indicate important cultural changes and may support the scenario of an ethnic alteration (see Section 2.6 – *Late Neopalatial period*). I will here attempt to examine to what extent these changes are detectable in East Crete and examine the extent of cultural influence of these new occupants. In East Crete, the two surviving communities, those of Mochlos and Palaikastro appeared to have exercised important practices of the new Knossian elite: the appearance of elite symbolism in funerary contexts (Knossos, Phourni, Mochlos);

the citation of Neopalatial elite symbolism for the legitimisation of the new elites even with the removal of actual Neopalatial symbols, such as the Knossian shaft grave furnished with a double axe stand which was probably removed from the Temple Tomb, and the double axe stand and LMIA bowl which were used in House A at Mochlos; the rigid centralisation of power and the sharp nucleation of elite symbols in the elite structures of the community (Palace of Knossos, elite graves of Knossos, House A at Mochlos, Building 7 at Palaikastro). It is interesting, in this sense, that in East Crete, where more evidence is available on the behaviour of non-elite people, the mutually exclusive use of different sample symbols by different social groups was a common strategy: at Mochlos, for example, citation of Neopalatial official ritual contexts was regarded by the established elite ('old money') as a traditional means of symbolism, while innovation (e.g. the pyxides with horns of consecration) was discarded as by them as a low-class product. At Palaikastro, citation of Neopalatial domestic ritual contexts was considered proper only for the local families attached to Building 7 (shrine) and innovation (tritons and shells) was regarded as elite ritual symbolism. At Zakros there was also a juxtaposition between tradition (possibly reminiscent of the 'Zakros assemblages') and innovation (funerary symbolism), but its socio-political context is not yet understood due to scarce and unpublished evidence. Here, there was a shift from performances in open-air spaces engaging large numbers of participants in transfers of symbols to small confined spaces for small groups where structured deposition was the main ritual practice. In both North Central Crete and East Crete, symbols were no longer a mobile and active means of display through the towns, and cultic space was no longer fluid and interactive between the competitive sections of the population. At Knossos, there was a structured deposition in the exclusive space of the Throne Room with alabastra decorated with figure-of-eight shield handles possibly destined for the anointment of participants in some sort of initiation (Hägg 1988), and careful reproductions of pillar crypt contexts in the elite graves surrounding the town. At Phourni, there was a structured deposition in Tholos A and in the confined ritual space of Tholos B shrine, both related to animal sacrifices. Similarly at Palaikastro in East Crete, in the new shrine of the town, Building 7, there were repeated and structured depositions involving shells and tritons. The houses on the Main Street were no longer spaces of storage of symbolic and ritual equipment used in public performances. Other houses took their place and used symbols in small ritual contexts limited to the household. At Mochlos, the most important context so far known in the LMII-III A town was the double axe context which was confined to a small room in House A and did not possess arrangements for the gatherings of large groups of people.

It is generally accepted in Minoan scholarship that the power of the Mycenaean elite was principally exerted at the palace of Knossos. The prosperity of Knossos during this period is evidenced by the Knossian pottery found in various Cretan sites (Hallager 2010: 156), the rich Tholos Tombs A and D at Archanes and the recording of fifty place-names in Linear B tablets found at Knossos (Popham 1994). Despite the dramatic recovery during this period of sites which had been abandoned or destroyed in LMIB (Bennet 1985: 244), the complete absence of symbols in North Central Crete and their massive nucleation in the Palace of Knossos is characteristic. Furthermore it stands in accordance with the nucleated distribution of sealing documents in the area around Knossos.

The study of the sample symbols showed similar results, as the Knossian elite had accumulated those sample symbols which were made of high quality and exotic materials and the largest diversity of artefact categories, standing in contrast with the East Cretan sample symbols, which were significantly more modest. Characteristically, in Knossos shell symbols were manufactured in prestigious materials, while in East Crete they appeared only as natural objects. Moreover, the elite at Knossos was stratified in more complex ways than the 'periphery' of East Crete, indicating a much higher degree of social differentiation. Characteristic is the example of the golden figure-of-eight shields from the graves at Phourni and those of less precious materials from the graves of Knossos. By contrast, Mochlos had only one ruler, whose house appears to have served as the main administrative centre. Also his grave and the grave of a female related to him (Tombs 15 and 16, Soles 2008: 201) were in the cemetery of the community, not in some separate distinct space. Perhaps this is also indicated by the fact that the Mochlos ruler chose to insert a citation in his house rather than his grave, as happened at Knossos. As representative of the Knossian elite he had to reinforce his position in the visible political part of the town, as he was not reinforced by the presence of a palace and a stratified elite but he alone represented centralised authority. In any case, this ruler belonged to a different elite than the LMIB one, as is indicated by the transfer of the main centre of power from the LMIB Ceremonial Building 2 to House A. Similar changes took place at Palaikastro, where, however, no administration centre has been identified and the change is reflected in the shift of the ceremonial centre from Buildings 1, 3, 4 and 5 to Building 7. These changes signify that, whether local or Mycenaean, the new ruling elite desired to distinguish themselves from the previous elites in their communities. The supremacy of Knossos is also indicated by the exclusive nucleation of the figure-of-eight shield symbolism in the palatial contexts of Knossos (graves, Palace). On the other hand, two isolated examples of figure-of-eight shield symbolism found at Mochlos and Palaikastro

probably mean that the rulers of Mochlos and Palaikastro may have acted as political representatives of the Knossian Mycenaean elite but did not belong to the high elite of Knossos which was entitled to bear the emblem of the Knossian elite.

If the Knossian elite had managed to change cultural traditions in the communities of East Crete through its elite representatives, it is important to examine to what degree this had an effect on the local population. It appears that the new rulers did not have the power or, more likely, the desire to entirely change local traditions. At Mochlos, the new elite continued to invest largely in its traditional exotic/industrial symbolism and the elite sample symbol par excellence was the double axe (stand, on the LMIA 'cited' bowl and the seal in Tomb 16). At Palaikastro, the use of small pairs of horns of consecration in small domestic contexts and associated with libation practices survived from the Neopalatial period in the LMII-IIIa ordinary houses. This shows that, despite the changes that took place in East Crete, the locals continued to exercise important symbolic strategies as before. In reality, this was the case even in contexts at Archanes, where there was a tendency to adjust imported Mycenaean elements to the local types of vessels and decorative motifs. This pattern was interpreted as an indication of a low degree of the Mycenaean cultural influence on the local population.

These results agree with the conclusions deriving from the Linear B tablets (Popham 1994), which show that the impact of these rulers in reality extended mainly in the area around Knossos and certain strategic ritual locations outside it. For example, in the cave of Psychro, there were offerings of Knossian origin continuously from LMIB to LMIIIA1 (Watrous 2004: 147), indicating that the Mycenaeanised rulers adopted the Neopalatial strategies of expansion of control through the use of symbols and in ritual contexts outside their immediate territorial confines. In East Crete, the preference of locally produced pottery over the Knossian types (MacGillivray 1997: 279), the absence of 'Warrior graves' and the political geography reflected in the Linear B tablets argue in favour of the independence of this area from a direct or expansive or military Knossian influence (Bennet 1985: 231-49; 1987). Pottery studies (Kanta 1980: 288-9, Khania and 320; Andrikou 1997) showed that LMIIIA-B pottery generally remained within the limits of Minoan tradition, although Mycenaean influence was present and became stronger from the LMIIIA-B transition. Ceremonial and funerary pottery remained Minoan, while Mycenaean pottery was confined to commercial use (Karantzali 2011: 640). In terms of sample symbols, isolated Knossian symbols, such as a seal with a figure-of-eight shield from Mochlos and another one from Palaikastro, are too scarce to reflect any substantial Knossian presence and may indicate ties of certain local families with the Knossian ruling class.

Generally, it appears that when it comes to ritual and symbolic matters, Mycenaean occupants showed a remarkable degree of religious tolerance. Although they imported their own deities and controlled the existing sanctuaries, perhaps by using mostly Mainland priests, these were limited to the area around Knossos, as suggested by Hiller (1997: 208-10). Even new cultic features, such as the reduced ritual space of the bench shrine, the goddesses with upraised arms, the snake tubes and the replacement of the Neopalatial rhyta and offering tables by head vases, plaques and 'hut-urns' (Gesell 1985: 41-56, 61-67), were unknown in the Mainland and they cannot have a Mycenaean origin (Hägg 1997: 167). This means that the standardisation and confinement to small ritual spaces during this period may not have been an imported Mycenaean feature of ritual practice but a response to the impact of the LMIB disasters which led to more introverted ceremonial expression and more controlling strategies by the high priesthood.

Generally most Minoan scholars agree that the presence of a Mycenaean ruling class and aristocracy did not alter the local culture and, during the early years, the impact on the Minoan population was of limited scope (MacDonald 1997; Andrikou 1997; Kallitsaki 1997; Haskell 1997; Hägg 1997: 168). Characteristically, the typical Phi and Psi figurines of Mycenaean cult were prolific on Mainland sites but extremely scarce on Crete during this period and this may reflect the presence of only small Mycenaean populations on Crete (French 1971; Hägg 1997). All the above evidence shows that the Minoan culture was moderately adapting to the political changes brought on by the Mycenaean occupation but was still the predominant element on the island.

Postpalatial period

In LMIIIB and after the final fall of the Palace, Knossos lost whatever previous control it had over the island (Watrous 2004: 147). There was no centralised authority of any sort and no evidence for social stratification. Moderate wealth was more uniformly distributed and ritual practices were widespread in public and domestic shrines during this period (Kanta 1980: 321-3). In North Central Crete, this period meant the definite end of the Knossian elite. While the remaining population partially re-inhabited areas of Knossos in the Palace, the villas and the town, as well as in the settlements of Archanes and Tyliossos, the hinterland to the north of Knossos was intensely revived with the emergence of a significant number of dispersed communities. It was shown that these two areas presented two different patterns: the first favoured the modest revival of the main palatial symbols of the Neopalatial period within the

communities which once generated them; and the second favoured the introduction of new popular symbols in recently founded small settlements of the hinterland.

A similar dichotomy was detected at Palaikastro in East Crete. However, the pattern was here developed within the town itself, where certain areas were dedicated to the revival of Neopalatial symbols and others to the ones introduced in the previous period characterised by shells arranged in elaborate and repetitive structured depositions. It was perhaps the case that the innovative social group was in a more favourable social position, as it mostly occupied the main town of Palaikastro, while the 'traditional' one was pushed outside the confines of the town. However, a clear downgrading to a lower-class level is not detected for the traditional group at Palaikastro as was the case in the hinterland of North Central Crete. Moreover, the innovative group appears to have already settled in the major elite ritual centre of the town from the previous period, in Building 7.

Generally, the innovative groups made their appearance in both areas from the previous period. However, in North Central Crete, the evidence for sample symbols is clearer for the LMIIIB, while in East Crete it is unstable and fragmentary. In LMII-III A there is evidence for the new clay pyxides with horns of consecration adopted by the lower class of Mochlos as opposed to the traditional exotic material wealth and Neopalatial citation of the elite. A similar strategy was followed by Gournia in LMIIIB, when the elite 'cited' Neopalatial symbolism. The lower class excluded from this symbolism acquired the emerging new sets of symbolic motifs (papyri, octopi, etc.). At LMIIIB Zakros the distinction between traditional and innovative groups is not clear because of the partially published evidence which, for the moment, presents the two groups topographically adjacent and coexisting.

Overall, the period is characterised by a dichotomy between tradition and innovation which, however, took different shapes in the different areas both within North Central Crete and within East Crete. In some cases it had social character, in others it appears to have been related to historical causes with people adhering to areas and practices because of their close association with spaces of long-lasting historical importance, while in others it did not seem to matter much and they mixed traditions.

Ethnically, it is hard at this moment to identify these groups because of the partially published evidence. It would be tempting to identify the innovative groups with Mycenaean populations that had settled on the island, although imitation of Mycenaean cultural elements by the local elites may be more likely. At Archanes, where pottery for this period was more abundant, there was increased Mycenaean influence, with more vessels decorated with tritons of the Mycenaean type compared to the previous period. This correlates with the rising

presence of Mycenaean figurines (Ψ and Φ types) probably locally made, many of which were found in the town indicating strong Mycenaean presence (Sakellarakis & Sakellarakis 1997: 521-5). The construction of *megara* of Mycenaean type in buildings associated with administrative power, at Archanes and Gournia may suggest that local Mycenaean elites ruled at least some of the communities. If the presence of the *megaron* at Gournia reflects the presence of a Mycenaean ruler and is not a local imitation of this type of building (Haskell 1997: 191-2), then it may be suggested that the LMIIIB Mycenaean elites had appropriated the horns of consecration and the double axe as elite symbols to distinguish themselves from the rest of the local population.

Chapter 5: Final conclusions

The main aim of this thesis was to offer a better understanding of the social role of symbols through the systematic comparison of the contextual patterns of six Minoan symbols ('sample symbols') in selected sites of North Central Crete and East Crete. In this final chapter I will assess to what extent this aim has been fulfilled. More specifically, I will assess: a) to what extent this research succeeded in examining the diachronic and intra-spatial associations and changes in the use of the sample symbols; b) how the study of the sample symbols has contributed to current scholarly discussions on Minoan society; c) how the theoretical and methodological tools developed in the thesis have contributed to a more effective interpretation of the symbols.

5.1 Diachronic and intra-spatial associations and changes in the use of the sample symbols

As was stated in the introduction, a main objective of this study was the examination of the diachronic and intra-spatial associations and the changes in the use of the sample symbols on the basis of a wide body of comparative material of selected Minoan symbols in a range of contexts. A main contribution to Minoan symbolism, in this respect, has been the creation of a comprehensive and systematic collection of data which includes archaeological and iconographical representatives of the selected symbols in the selected sites classified in

association with their contexts and relevant assemblages. The construction of data tables summarizing all this information for each one of the sample symbols-artefacts or iconographical motifs, forms an extremely useful database for the contextual and associative investigation and analysis of these objects. Further tables were constructed for the representation of the relationships between these artefacts by comparing or contrasting different parameters and employing numerical and statistical configurations. A number of figures intended to make understanding of the relationships clearer by visualizing distribution patterns and changes in the nucleation of sample symbols in space and in time. This large corpus of data and all of the tables and figures regarding associative analyses of this data may be used by other scholars who wish to re-assess the data or proceed to further investigation on Minoan symbolism.

This data-evidence has been subjected to careful analysis within a theoretical and socio-historical framework in order to provide an explanation and understanding of the nature of Minoan social relations. The focus of this research has been to emphasise the importance of a study of symbolism within its social context, using Minoan societies as case studies. The study of the sample symbols was also used to see how they might illuminate some major questions in Minoan scholarship. As was discussed in the introduction (see Section 1.3.1), the analysis of the social role of the sample symbols in this research moved away from traditional methods of interpretation in Minoan archaeology, which generally tend to view symbols as separate units of meaning. Throughout this study, analysis has consistently considered patterns of symbols as factors of social changes and, has assessed, revised and challenged already established narratives. The important results on the relationship between the role of sample symbols and the changes in Minoan social dynamics have proved the efficiency of this method. Moreover, they have shown that symbols are situated at the core of a meaningful interpretation of societies and they form an essential feature of reconstructing the past.

The main socio-political patterns emerging from this study areas follows:

Prepalatial period:

- In North Central Crete elite symbolism was created by the emerging Knossian elite and used in expansionist strategies, while in East Crete it was developed individually in each town within a general regional cultural frame.
- Tritons (East Crete) and shells (mostly North Central Crete) were widely used as elite symbols in elite funerary contexts.

- Shells were viewed as ornamental and symbolic of a remote landscape context in North Central Crete, while tritons in East Crete were appreciated for their sensory and natural properties experienced in everyday life.
- Structured depositions of shells and tritons were used in strategies of territorial control or social manipulation. They were introduced early on by the emerging Knossian elite, which desired to expand its power in the area around Knossos and in the Late Prepalatial period by lower-class groups of East Crete, which desired to claim more power against the established merchant elites.

Protopalatial period:

- Sample symbols were redefined by the Knossian elite which transformed symbols formerly known from funerary contexts, such as the double axe and the horns of consecration, into palatial symbols and established an intrinsic association between them and the architecture of the Palace of Knossos.
- The figure-of-eight shield was used as the exclusive emblem of the military elite of Knossos.
- East Cretan towns responded to the emergence of the new elite symbols differentially and according to their degree of social differentiation: in those with low degree of social differentiation the symbols were introduced by the emerging local elites which used them as innovative imported emblems of a widely recognized and undisputable authority; in those of high social differentiation, where elites had already developed a local idiom of social distinction, they were introduced by the lower-class which attempted to claim a higher social position. A palace was built at Petras under the strong influence of Protopalatial Knossos, which, however, did not alter the local character of the site.

Early Neopalatial period:

- The Knossian elite rose to its highest peak with a fully developed and structured equipment of sample symbols whose use was strictly confined within the Palace area. Outside Knossos, North Central Cretan elites were allowed to emulate Knossian symbolism to a certain extent as a means of widespread recognition of its authority in the area.
- In East Crete, the two communities with the highest degree of social differentiation, Zakros and Palaikastro, imitated the elite architecture and the performative activities of the large palaces of Crete. At the same time, they kept a strong local character.

Late Neopalatial period:

- North Central Crete declined, but possibly Knossos was still the dominant power in the area.
- In East Crete, the degree of imitation of palatial elite symbolism depended on the degree of social differentiation mainly expressed in the concentration of elite architectural features.
- The absence of a large Palace led to a self-determination of hierarchical site ranking on the basis of concentration of elite palatial symbolism and established objective and uniform perception in the degree of accessibility of every community.
- Elite architecture, performance and the display of sample symbols were the main means of elite symbolism.
- East Cretan communities possessed well-defined and stratified 'lesser elites' which were spatially separated during this period by the 'high elites' but were, at the same time, invited to participate in the preparation and the performance of communal feasting events.

Final Palatial period:

- The establishment during this period of a new elite at Knossos was reflected in the unprecedented use of funerary contexts, the rigidly stratified and demarcated social relationships and the increased importance of sealing documentation.
- The new Knossian elite used extensively citations of Neopalatial symbols, contexts and materials in order to legitimise its power. Most importantly, it adopted the figure-of-eight shield symbolism as its main symbol.
- East Cretan sites imitated the revival of Neopalatial symbolism and the use of symbols in the cemeteries, but in ways which betray strong local community traditions.
- The Knossian elite and its new power were mainly restricted in the area around Knossos and did not have any direct control on East Cretan towns.

Postpalatial period:

- Palatial symbolism collapsed with the fall of the Knossian elite and the figure-of-eight shield vanished completely.
- Symbolism became static and very structured, enclosed in small interior contexts and represented on low quality materials.

- New symbols appeared which became popular especially in the newly emerged dispersed small sites which characterise this period.
- From the old palatial symbols the horns of consecration was especially prominent, while the double axe appeared as subordinate to it.
- Differences between old surviving palatial symbols and the new symbolism appear to have been used to signal group identities and changes in social structures.

5.2 Contribution to current scholarly discussions on Minoan society

Regarding the social process which led to the emergence of the palatial system, the patterns of symbols showed that:

- The emergence of the Knossian elite which was associated with the construction of the First Palace at Knossos can be dated to the Prepalatial period and was topographically associated with the area of the later West Court (West Court EMII House, area of the Kouloures Houses) and Tholos E at Archanes.
- The Knossian elite can be identified by stable strategies of expansion of its power within the Knossos site and further in the surrounding areas, which are characterised by a strong reliance on the use of symbols and ritual practice. These strategies were used for the early consolidation of its power in its surrounding territories during the Prepalatial and Protopalatial periods and culminated in the Neopalatial period, when they were used as the ultimate means of signalling supremacy and authority over North Central Crete.
- This supremacy was reflected in the restriction of access to these symbols by the townspeople of Knossos and the regulated access by the communities of North Central Crete.
- The Minoan palatial system relied mainly on symbolism as its means of imposing or inspiring authority. Architecture was the focal element of this symbolism and the major sample symbols were found to be related with it, either physically (horns of consecration, double axe mason's marks) or by intrinsic association with certain architectural spaces of it (double axe stands in pillar crypts, mason's marks in magazines, feasting vessels with symbols or tritons-libation vessels in palatial storage spaces in Knossos and in private elite houses in East Crete).
- Performance was central to the display of symbols. It could take the form of large feasting events, libations and offerings, engaging the local townsfolk and possibly the populations of North Central Crete which may have been assigned ceremonial duties and

the use of certain sample symbols. These feasts aimed at the consolidation of power of the Knossian elite through conspicuous consumption. On the other hand, it could take the form of ritual practices in closed and remote spaces confined to the members of the Knossian elite. These performances were part of the exclusive use of elite symbolism which aimed at displaying power through making part of the material culture and performance inaccessible to those who did not form part of the high authority in the area that is the Knossian elite. Thus, inviting to participation and prohibiting access were the main strategies of the Knossian elite for the display of power in its immediate and its wider surrounding territories. These strategies reflected the ability of the Knossian elite to control entirely the production, possession and active use of elite symbolism.

- The enhancement of visual effect was an essential element of manipulated use of symbols, with their conspicuous placement at strategic or liminal locations or their use as markers of routes, the separate storage of parts of symbols and their ceremonial matching or their structured deposition, which created topographical patterns of symbols within the site.

All of the above is in accordance with the latest finds of Minoan scholarship on the gradual and dialectical forms which characterised the rise of the palatial system in Crete (see Section 1.3.4). Emulation between Prepalatial and Protopalatial households for social status (Tomkins 2004; Isaakidou 2008; Schoep 2006; 2010) was detected in the use of feasting assemblages at Knossos (MacDonald & Knappett 2007: 535). It was shown that the EMII West Court House and the succeeding Protopalatial households of the same area managed to control the most prestigious feasting assemblages.

The contribution of this study in this direction is, first, that ritualisation (Driessen 1999) and public ritual (Hamilakis 1998) was a systematic and intentional strategy that the Knossian elite used to spread and consolidate its power in the area from its inception. It was shown that the Knossian elite employed expansive strategies in its surrounding areas which relied on the use of symbols and performance in ritual spaces; secondly, that the Knossian elite was in a position to redefine as emblems of its own emerging authority in the area symbols which had already been used by the local populations in different contexts and with different meaning. Moreover, it was shown that, while the traditional importance given by Minoan scholars to elite architecture is indeed justified, this must be examined in combination with the use of symbols and performance for a better understanding of social differentiation.

Regarding East Crete, the interpretation of use of elite palatial symbolism may be understood as a combination of the models of elite emulation and the peer-polity interaction (see Section

1.3.4). For example, the interpretation of the appearance of the ‘Minoan Hall’ at Palaikastro (PK 1998: 265) or its dismantling at the end of LMIA (Driessen 1999) as the results of direct political control of Knossos at the town disregards the important role of local elites and their significant potential to imitate the symbolism of authority for their own interest. It was shown that it was the initiative of individuals and households of East Cretan communities which gradually introduced elite palatial symbolism to their towns in order to distinguish themselves. The way this occurred and the way it was received by the local populations differed from one community to the other, depending on the degree of social differentiation and the already established symbolic currency in which social differentiation was traditionally expressed. It also depended on the potential of the local elites to attach themselves to nearby palaces like the Palace at Malia or Petras the large palaces of Central Crete. Maliote palatial symbolism was still influential in East Crete during the Neopalatial period, as is evidenced by the type of lustral basins preferred at Palaikastro (Gesell 1985: 24). Furthermore, it appears most probable that the unique concentration of horns of consecration in Building 6 at Palaikastro may have drawn from the Protopalatial Shrine of the horns of consecration at Malia, the only other example in Crete, where more than one such pairs decorated a palatial structure. The same is evidenced by the fact that both Building 6 and the Maliote shrine were independent buildings and not parts of a large complex according to the Protopalatial trend for sacral structures (Gesell 1985: 9-18). This model also supports the idea that the Protopalatial palaces of Crete exerted regional influence (Cadogan 1984: 72).

Local differentiation was maintained and, in parallel, a regional pattern of hierarchical site ranking was developed on the basis of the amounts and the quality of elite symbolism used in each community. This means that local communities were confident to keep their local idiosyncrasies and traditional perceptions while importing innovative social symbols and at the same time there was an understanding of regional uniformity and self-determination of socio-political identity at the level of region. Given the spatial and temporal diversity in the increase of social complexity and the adoption of palatial features by each community, ‘a mosaic of independent and often tiny polities, operated at different scales and controlled by small-time, local elites’ (Driessen 2001a: 56; Schoep 2004; 2010: 115). Overall, the model of elite emulation and bottom-up up (Tomkins & Schoep 2010: 68, 76; Blanton 1998; Vansteenhuyse 2001) examination of these societies has made it possible to detect the emergence of elite palatial symbolism in East Crete, while the peer-polity model has made it possible to detect local and regional features which moved interpretation away from seeing

changes as the result of one centralised source and of strategies of imposition by external factors (Day & Relaki 2002; Driessen 2002: 11; Schoep 2010).

Regarding the debate of an ‘imperialistic’ Knossos, the results of this study showed that:

- Despite the significant degree of control over North Central Crete, the Knossian elite continued to employ strategies which were basically oriented towards ritualisation. There was no evidence for a military or any other sort of imposing control which would seriously affect the political autonomy of the communities in the area.
- Similarly, despite the intense Knossian influence, East Crete appeared to have preserved throughout its Bronze Age history a strong local tradition with regional features which was characterised here as the ‘East Cretan culture of symbolism’. East Cretan elites used extensively Knossian symbolism to claim social status, but they did so according to the local needs. It was shown that differentiation in the reception of Knossian features was the rule rather than the exception. Certain sites were ‘more Knossian’ than others and the distribution of Knossian elements showed a differentiated patterning, which was rather determined by the local population than by the Knossian elite.
- It was shown that differences in the development of the use of symbols between LMIB Archanes and LMIB East Crete suggest a significant divergence in the social strategies of the elites, which reflects a gap between North Central Crete and East Crete. In reality, North Central Crete was undergoing serious and deep socio-political turbulence, which eventually led to the establishment of the new Mycenaean elite, whereas East Crete was maturing already established Knossian strategies in the use of symbols, which were now taking on an independent local character.
- One of the main differences between East Crete and North Central Crete was the degree of interaction between the elite and the local population and the allowance for the development of ‘lesser elites’. In East Crete, the elite groups were stratified and ‘lesser elites’ were invited to participate in symbolism as part of a scheme of economic interdependence.
- By contrast, the Knossian elite was largely a self-sustaining power and employed a strictly centralised use of palatial symbols with notably more controlled ways of interaction with the local or the regional populations.

These results created a substantial set of data in order to dismiss the scenario of an ‘imperialistic’ Knossos. Rather, socio-political developments in this period reflect a

dialectical relationship and a balancing of power between the expanding trends of Knossos and the local populations which maintained their political autonomy. It was shown that the Knossian elite probably could not afford a military expansion or, which is more likely because of its inherent and traditional strategies of control, was more interested in symbolic means of influence. These results are in line with the ‘Versailles effect’ model, proposed by Wiener (1990: 140-2; see introduction) and elite emulation by smaller sites (Driessen 1989; 1999: 122).

Regarding the effect of the LMIA destructions in Minoan Crete, it was shown that: the results from this study have not made it possible to clarify the role of Knossos during this period because of the lack of stratified evidence from the Palace of Knossos. However, and despite the destruction of the majority of the North Central Cretan sites, the stable growth of Poros and Archanes and the surviving East Cretan communities with similar features as in the previous periods may reflect a continuous growth of the surviving communities after the LMIA destructions. Given the selective use of figure-of-eight shield symbols and the significant continuity in the use of its major symbols of the previous periods, it is possible to assume that the Knossian elite was still the dominant power in the area, although the spatial basis and strategies of its authority are unclear.

Regarding the transition from the Minoan palatial system to the Mycenaean occupation, the use of sample symbols showed that:

- A new Knossian elite was established in the Palace of Knossos and brought a new emphasis on funerary contexts and the representation of symbols on sealing documentation. However, it used the same symbols as its Neopalatial counterparts in order to legitimise their power in the area and adopted the figure-of-eight shield as its principal and exclusive symbol in order to ‘cite’ direct power emblems from the MMIII-LMIA Knossian elite.
- The new Knossian elite exercised much more centralised control in the use of symbols and in neither North Central Crete nor East Crete is there any more evidence for large public gatherings and interactive performative events. Ceremonial contexts tend to be found in closed spaces and in structured depositions. Characteristic in this respect is the trend to use the horns of consecration more as a ground-level object for small ceremonies than as a marker of large open-air ceremonial spaces.
- East Crete remained untouched by a direct impact from the changes taking place in Knossos. Strong local traditions continuously revived past uses of symbolism and

strengthened the peculiar regional features of East Crete. However, general trends, such as the extensive use of funerary symbolic contexts and the citation of Neopalatial symbolism, were adopted and used in the new strategies of social negotiations in the area. Perhaps these strategies reflect an increased anxiety of certain social groups at either preserving or legitimising new authority.

Thus, the results of this study argue for a LMII occupation of Crete by Mycenaeans and the identification of the new elite of the Palace of Knossos with invaders from the Mainland. The main symptoms of the cultural changes were that the emphasis on funerary contexts and administrative control were confirmed by the use of sample symbols. Elite sample symbols were shared between palatial and elite funerary spaces, while a large groups of seals and sealings at Knossos represented the figure-of-eight shield, reflecting a shift of display of power to administration. The investigation of the degree of alteration of the local population by the settling of foreigners and the cultural impact of such an alteration also agrees with results of Minoan scholarship (Andrikou 1997; Hägg 1997; Hiller1997; Kallitsaki 1997; MacDonald 1997). It was shown that during the Final Palatial period this alteration was restricted to the ruling class but became stronger in the Postpalatial period with the decrease in the use of traditional Minoan symbols and the introduction of new ones. The identification of different social groups with the new symbolism possibly reflects the settling in Crete of foreign populations or new dramatic social changes which led part of the population to identify themselves with new symbols in order to demarcate new identities, which may have not been of palatial character.

5.3 The theoretical and methodological contribution to a better understanding of symbols

As shown in the previous section, throughout this study, the emerging patterns of the sample symbols confirmed new trends in Minoan scholarship, challenged old views or shed further light on important issues concerning Minoan societies.

The above results have been achieved through the use of a number of theoretical and methodological tools which made possible a socially oriented interpretation. This was mainly the contextual analysis of the data and the study of this data in association with their relevant assemblages or other artefacts and contexts which showed similar patternings. The contextual analysis was largely facilitated by the systematic recording of the sample symbols in a large

range of artefact categories and different contexts, as structured in the Data Tables. Furthermore, it was established that an effective analysis of the symbols requires the recognition of an object 'under every disguise' and the identification of its indexical associations. This method formed the most essential tool of analysis of the patterns of symbols and the one which produced the most significant results regarding the meaning and the function of the symbols.

The example of one of the most recognizable Minoan symbols, the bronze double axe with its stand, is characteristic. This is established in Minoan bibliography as the focus of the most typical Minoan performances. Employing a systematic contextual and associative study throughout the sites of North Central and East Crete, it was possible to challenge this unsubstantiated view. The interpretation of the function of the double axe resulted from the thorough examination of all its contexts in the chosen sites and aimed at the understanding of its social role. Thus, it was possible to classify it as one of those symbols which were part of the strategy of confined and inaccessible elite symbolism of the Knossian elite and imitated in the 'Knossian' Tyliossos. At Zakros it was imitated as such by the Zakros elite, who was the most successful elite of the six East Cretan communities in emulating Knossian palatial symbolism. In the rest of the East Cretan communities, it was rather used as a tool of 'lesser elites' which used the symbol in order to claim higher social status. However, the ceremonial function of the bronze double and its stand was understood as a ritual object whose performative function should be confined to close spaces, even if that was at a domestic level. The above example shows that the contextual analysis in this research took into account local peculiarities and examined each context of the same artefact category of each symbol separately. On each occasion, the interpretation of the meaning of the symbol in its context was integrated in the socio-political context at a level of community, region and the relationship between North Central Crete and East Crete.

Throughout this study, the role of the people (Peircian interpretant) and the active use of symbols were treated as mutually dynamic factors and were given a special emphasis in the analysis and interpretation. It was possible to detect the relationship between people and action in the making of symbolic meaning and the continuous and fluid interaction between symbolic artefacts and people. Elites played a crucial role in the emergence, use and decline of symbols. The Knossian elite in North Central Crete redefined the symbolism of the double axe and used it as an emblem of its rising power, while North Central Cretan and East Cretan elites introduced and gradually adopted elite palatial symbolism as a sign of successfully established authority. It was shown that the use of symbols was associated with the ways

elites and townspeople interacted within each site and in complex ways which agree with sociological and historical models of interacting social networks (Wiener 1990: 140-2; Tomkins & Schoep 2006; 2010: 68). Furthermore, it was possible to detect different mechanisms of elite developments between North Central Crete and East Crete. In the former, the dominant position of the Knossian elite did not allow the development of a 'lesser elite' with a dynamic and interactive role, as was the case with the stratified elites of East Crete. The dialectical relationship between 'higher' and 'lesser elites' within each East Cretan community was rather reproduced at a regional level in North Central Crete, with the communities of the hinterland playing the role of the 'lesser elites' and interacting with the Knossian elite through the use of symbols and their performance.

It was possible to identify mechanisms of semiosis in the course of use of the sample symbols. Symbols which started as funerary symbols, such as the horns of consecration, were redefined as palatial symbols attached to the monumental architecture of the Palace of Knossos and later became ground-level foci of confined ritual action when the centralised administrative system of the Mainlanders prevailed. It is important, however, to note that in this process the human factor is the major source of change and that there is an interaction between the intentions of humans, in this case the successive elites of Knossos, and the socio-political contexts which developed in the area. The new definitions of the symbol are adopted and received by the local populations and, according to the degree of socio-political autonomy, they may interpret it differently. This is the case of Palaikastro in East Crete, where the 'architecturality' of the horns of consecration was appraised more than in any other Cretan community and this local preference lasted throughout the periods with survivals of use of the symbol in domestic contexts until the end of the Bronze Age.

This process further shows that, firstly, semiosis and synechism could not take place without the action and reaction of human agents, and, secondly, that it is not detectable without a contextual analysis of the data with special attention paid to the socio-political circumstances constituting the historical context. Therefore, archaeological and historical context are both required for the reconstruction of the semiotic development of a symbol.

In this sense, citation of symbols may be seen as a retrospection in this process of semiosis. It is the recognition that past forms of symbolism had a considerable impact: they created a permanent source of remembrance of symbolic undisputable power, which could be used to revive sentiments of acceptance of authority. This was the case of Final Palatial citations of Neopalatial Knossian symbolism by the invaders from the Mainland, who reproduced contexts, symbols and their materials. However, there was a significant change in the

performative use of these symbols, as will be explained below, which revealed a different human agent. The added layer of meaning, characteristic of the mechanism of citation, was the new rigid and centralised concept of ruling by the new Knossian elite.

Citation could be spatial and this was frequently the case with the reproduction of palatial contexts outside the Palace of Knossos either as part of the strategy of ritualisation from the side of the Knossian elite or as strategies of the local elites of the North Central Cretan or East Cretan communities in order to emulate power symbolism.

Given the importance of ritualisation in the formation of elite symbolism in Crete, it was shown that strategies such as structured depositions, citation and performance of recognized power symbols in different spaces and different periods were general strategies used widely in Minoan society.

Structured depositions were largely used to demarcate cultural or social differences by restricting the accessibility and the ways of putting symbols in action. The owners of Tholos Gamma at Archanes differentiated themselves culturally from those of Tholos E by attaching very specific meanings to their structured depositions. The Knossian elites used structured depositions at Protopalatial Anemospilia and Neopalatial Jouktas and Tyliossos in order to mark their presence in areas of direct influence. Within the town of Knossos, the Palace used strategies of exclusion of the local townspeople from its symbols. Within the Palace, horns of consecration and double axe-pillar crypt contexts were placed in structured patterns within the building. The reproduction of exclusively double axe-pillar crypt contexts in the Villas is another form of structured use of palatial symbolism which reflects the control of ritualisation in the immediate surroundings of the Palace, the symbolic focal space of the Knossian elite. When other communities desired to emulate elite symbolism, they imitated uses of structured depositions. This was the case of the strategies of exclusion and the elaborate structured depositions of Neopalatial Archanes. Similar strategies at Palaikastro and Zakros took the form of spatial separation in LMIB and the structuring in the use of high elite symbols, such as the horns of consecration and the double axe mason's marks, which was even reflected in the size of the horns and the number of concentrated mason's marks at site level. Generally, identifying structured depositions of the symbols has helped to describe ritual action and the importance of the symbols in performance. Juxtaposed placement of symbols in the west and east wing of the Knossos and the Zakros Palace, depositions in liminal places and on processional routes and elaborate depositions with specific arrangements revealed intentional acts of symbolism, differentiations or similarities in the use of similar symbols in different towns, the emphasis of symbolic expression on urban or funerary context, and associations

with other symbolic artefacts which revealed aspects of the symbols' meaning. Thus, symbols in Crete were not emblems of the supremacy of individual rulers, as was the case in the neighbouring East Mediterranean civilisations, but instruments of ritual action which appears to have been the main constituent component of political ideology (Driessen 2001b: 361-9).

However, structured deposition expressed entirely different socio-political mechanisms after the Mycenaean invasion. In the Neopalatial period, structured deposition was used to indicate a very high degree of sophistication of the ritual and possessed a large degree of mobility and interaction both in terms of space and in terms of engagement of the people. After the Final Palatial period, structured deposition reflected static, rigid and centralised trends in Crete. It was confined in small spaces and destined to be used and seen by the few members of the high elite. Structured depositions were then characterised by repetition, regularity, concentration in one space and exclusion of open spaces and large groups of people. It follows then that structured deposition is determined by its socio-political and historical contexts and cannot be interpreted similarly across space and time.

The most important tool of the strategies of ritualisation was performance. Elites used symbols in action and in public spaces in order to enhance their performative capacities and most of the symbols' uses were found to have been an inseparable component of ritual action. There were different ways to enhance emotion through performance, the most sophisticated ways of which were developed within the palatial system of Crete. Static symbols, such as the horns of consecration and the double axe mason's marks, were closely associated with the concept of 'architecturality', monumentality and permanent, solid presence in the urban landscape. They played a significant role in directing the populations towards the spaces of performance and indicating the highest ceremonial spaces and spaces of storage of the most prestigious ceremonial equipment. Visibility was achieved by the physical transfer of symbols through the towns and the social emotional impact was increased by the interaction of domestic and public space and the alternation of higher and lower elites in the assumption of stages of the performance. Generally, mobility and visibility were the main factors which stimulated emotion and achieved the maximum effect on the participants. The performative use of symbols involved action, mobility, sacral routes and sacred spaces, large gathering areas, feasting, libations, rich and elaborate ritual assemblages, structured use of symbols and of sacral space. Feasting was a central ritual practice with enormous social power. Exclusive, confined performance was more rigid and characterised by repetition and structured deposition, enhancing the hierarchical superiority of the few initiated members of the high elite. Both of these strategies with their respective emotional effect were responsible for the

maintenance and the consolidation of the existing social dynamics in Minoan society and were enforced by those in power.

The sensory values of symbols were also accentuated in the Neopalatial period, the period when symbolism developed to the full means of enhancement. Symbols became larger in size, were placed in the most visible positions, and reproductions of natural objects, such as shells, occurred on shiny and expensive, attention-calling materials such as marble, alabaster and other semiprecious stones and metals. Most importantly, it was in this period when symbols acquired their most powerful performative values as part of elaborate public or exclusive ceremonies (feasting, libations, offering of depositions) with emphasis on movement between interior-exterior spaces, private-public spaces. So, size, position, space and material were used to the maximum to achieve sensory and especially visual attention. On the other hand, these accentuated values were embodied by the individuals who participated in the performances. The impact of symbols on their sensorial perception was multiple. Priests and priestesses would perform with their bodies as they would sound tritons to invoke the goddess or pour libations to the ground or on altars, producing effects that could be seen and heard. Participants would drink in the feastings and eat shells or other offerings, thus ritually internalising the symbols and sharing the spiritual and social experience within the community. Participants were not passive receptacles of the sensory experience but participated with their own depositions and their bodily attire and their movement within the sacral space would have been determined by or further enhance their social position and role. This coincides with the moment of climax of social complexity of Minoan culture in the Neopalatial period, proving that, indeed, performance and the sensory experience of symbols played a crucial role in the conveyance of meaning. Thus, means of calling sensory attention were used by the Minoans. That they created effects of memory and remembrance was proven in this study by the repeated citations of Neopalatial symbolism in later times, mostly in the Final palatial period. The reproduction of past contexts was achieved either through the physical removal of older objects from their original contexts and their integration into new contexts or through the imitation of those components which highlighted the original contexts. In the first case the intention was to carry the initial symbolic power and integrate it into a new context, while, in the second, it to make reference to the original architectural elements, materials and shapes of the symbols.

Overall, the deep political changes which affected basic characteristics of the Minoan palatial system and led to the earlier described cultic changes were responsible for further changes in the performative aspects of the symbols. At Palaikastro, symbols became static and rigidly

structured within specific cultic spaces or domestic contexts. Their visibility and performative impact was minimised, with action taking place inside small spaces which possessed no arrangements for public gatherings. Their size was smaller, their material modest (usually clay), the diversity of symbols and artefact categories was much reduced, while visibility and monumentality no longer played a crucial role. These changes were prolonged until the end of the Bronze Age.

Regarding Peircian semiotics, it was shown in the relevant discussion of each area that it was basically indexical association that can be identified between the sample symbols and their referents. Double axes were subordinate to architecture both in the actual building of the Palace and in iconography. Their confinement to interior and inaccessible spaces of the Palace is in accordance with their depiction as small objects decorating columns or architectural facades in iconography. Horns of consecration project the monumental architecture of the Palace as objects crowning the building. The degree of association of the object with its referent may lead to an iconic relationship as was the case of the horns of consecration when they were consistently imitated by the North Central Cretan communities as the only elite symbol which objectively referred to authority. There was also an iconic relationship between models of tritons and their natural prototypes. However, this type of association is based more on the physical properties of the object rather than its social properties. Similarly, it was hard to identify 'Peircian symbols' in the sense of objects with an arbitrary relationship to their referents precisely because the analysis was based on the socio-political contexts of the symbolic artefacts which tends to identify indexical relationships and to shed certain light into their meaning. Overall, it may be concluded that it is the degree and the nature of indexical relationships between an object and its referent which may determine whether it is an icon, an index or a symbol. It becomes, therefore, apparent that there is scope for a more complex and elaborate employment of the full Peircian theory than was possible in this thesis.

5.4 Future research, aims and objectives

Although the specific selection of symbol-types and site-types has aimed at an optimal range of data for the study of Minoan symbolism, inevitably important sites and important symbols were left out. Thus, future research could include significant sites, such as Phaistos and Malia, which could offer important comparative material to the recorded symbols of the Palace of Knossos. This comparison would shed further light on the strategies of symbol

manipulation used by the elites in each palatial centre of Central Crete and would clarify the precise role of the Knossian elite in this process. Moreover, a comparison of the role of the respective hinterlands of these palaces would offer valuable parallels to the important results of this thesis about the relationship between the Palace of Knossos and its surrounding area of North Central Crete. I also consider crucial the expansion of this research to other important Minoan symbols, such as the bull, the snake and the bird.

Finally, it is essential to continue the discussion on the theoretical and methodological aspects of symbolism. As mentioned above, there is scope for a more sophisticated employment of Peircian semiotics in Minoan symbolism. A next step would be to test the validity and efficiency of the methodology of analysis and interpretation of the social role of symbols employed here by extending it to other cultural environments. A comparison between Minoan and Egyptian or Mycenaean symbolism, for example, would offer further insights into the ways symbols are constructed and imitated by affiliated, but, at the same time, 'foreign' cultures and the mechanisms that people develop to safeguard or to allow alterations in the shaping and demarcation of their social identity.

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Abbreviations:

AJA		American Journal of Archaeology
AR		Archaeological Reports
BAR		British Archaeological Reports
BCH		Bulletin de Correspondence Hellenique
BICS		Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies
BSA		Annual of the British School of Athens
CCD		Collins Concise Dictionary of the English language
CMS		Corpus der Minoischen und Mykenischen Siegel. Berlin 1964-Mainz 2007
C&S		Cunningham T. F. & Sackett, L. H. 2009
ER		Encyclopaedia of Religion
JHS		Journal of Hellenic Studies
JMA		Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology
Mochlos	IIA	Mochlos IIA: Period IV. Soles 2008
Mochlos	IA	Mochlos IA: Period III. Soles & Davaras 2003
Mochlos	1B	Mochlos IB: Period III. Barnard & Brogan 2003
Mochlos	IIC	Mochlos IIC: Period IV. Soles & Davaras 2011
NED		A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles
OALD		Oxford Advanced Learner's Encyclopaedic Dictionary
OED		Oxford English Dictionary
OJA		Oxford Journal of Archaeology
OpAth		Opuscula Atheniensia
PAE		Πρακτικά της εν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας
PK I		Excavations at Palaikastro I. Bosanquet 1901-2
PK II		Excavations at Palaikastro II. Bosanquet et al. 1902-3
PK III		Excavations at Palaikastro III. Dawkins & Currelly 1903-4
PK IV		Excavations at Palaikastro IV. Dawkins et al. 1904-5
PK V		Excavations at Palaikastro V. Dawkins 1905-6
PK VI		Excavations at Palaikastro VI. Sackett et al. 1965

PK VII	Excavations at Palaikastro VII. Sackett & Popham 1970.
PKU I	The Unpublished Objects from the Palaikastro Excavations 1902-6 Bosanquet & Dawkins 1923
PKU II	Unpublished objects from Palaikastro and Praisos. Hutchinson et al. 1939-40
PK 1984	An Archaeological Survey of the Roussolakkos Area at Palaikastro. Peatfield 1984
PK 1987	Excavations at Palaikastro. MacGillivray et al. 1986
PK 1988	Excavations at Palaikastro. MacGillivray et al. 1988
PK 1989	Excavations at Palaikastro. MacGillivray et al. 1989
PK 1991	Excavations at Palaikastro. MacGillivray et al. 1991
PK 1992	Excavations at Palaikastro. MacGillivray et al. 1992
PK 1998	Excavations at Palaikastro, 1994 and 1996. MacGillivray et al. 1998
PMI	The Palace of Minos at Knossos I-IV. Evans 1921
PMII	The Palace of Minos at Knossos I-IV. Evans 1928
PMIII	The Palace of Minos at Knossos I-IV. Evans 1930
PMIV	The Palace of Minos at Knossos I-IV. Evans 1935
Pseira I	Pseira I: the Minoan buildings on the west side of Area A. Betancourt & Davaras 1995
Pseira II	Pseira II: Building AC (the Shrine) and Other Buildings in Area Betancourt & Davaras 1998
Pseira III	Pseira III: The Plateia Building. Floyd 1998
Pseira IV	Pseira IV: Minoan Buildings in Areas B, C, D, and F. Betancourt & Davaras 1999
Pseira VI & Davaras 2002	Pseira VI. The Pseira Cemetery 1: The Surface Survey. Betancourt & Davaras 2002
Pseira VII	Pseira VII. The Pseira Cemetery 2: Excavation of the Tombs. Betancourt & Davaras 2003
Pseira X	Pseira X: The Excavation of Block AF. Betancourt 2009
S&S	Sakellarakis Y. & Sapouna-Sakellarakis E. 1997
SIMA	Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology
TUAS	Temple University Aegean Symposium

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