

THE TRAOSTALOS PEAK SANCTUARY: ASPECTS OF SPATIAL ORGANISATION*

The topography of the site

Traostalos is not one of the highest mountains near the coast of south-east Crete.¹ Despite its only moderate height (515.4 m), however, the solid, isolated massif of Traostalos dominates the surrounding area, and its summit can be distinguished from afar, both from the sea and from inland (Pl. XIIa). The highest point of the sanctuary commands an uninterrupted view over the entire east end of Crete, Kasos, Karpathos and the Dionysades islets to the north, and Kouphonisi to the south. It thus overlooks the sea route from the north Aegean to the east Mediterranean.

From its summit, the sanctuary enjoys visual contact with almost all the other peaks in the area on which have been found cult deposits, or buildings that served cult purposes.² These are, from south to north, the sanctuaries at Ambelos, Korakomouri, Mare, Ziros (Playia), Viglos, Modi, Kalamaki, and Petsophas (Pl. XIb-XIII).³

In Minoan times, the historical landscape was bounded by the palace and town of Zakros to the south and the town of Palaikastro to the north.

Habitation in the immediate environment of the sanctuary takes the form of a scattering of isolated buildings, of which the following are the most important:

In 1964, Kostis Davaras partially excavated a Minoan villa at the modern village of Azokeramos on the lower north-western slopes of Traostalos.⁴

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1 The complete bibliography of the site is appended in B. RUTKOWSKI, "Minoan Peak Sanctuaries: the Topography and Architecture," *Aegaeum* 2 (1988) 89-90, and D.W. JONES, *Peak Sanctuaries and Sacred Caves in Minoan Crete. A Comparison of Artifacts* 101. To these should be added the following: Στ. ΑΛΕΞΙΟΥ, *ΑΔ* 19 (1964) Χρ. Β'3, 442. Κ. ΔΑΒΑΡΑΣ, *ΑΔ* 31 (1976) Χρ. Β'2, 375. *ΙΔ.* *ΑΔ* 33 (1978) Χρ. Β'2, 392-393. G. HENRIKSSON and M. BLOMBERG, "Evidence for Minoan Astronomical Observations from the Peak Sanctuaries on Petsophas and Traostalos," *OpAth* XXI (1996) 99-114. Στ. ΧΡΥΣΟΥΛΑΚΗ, "Ιερό Κορυφής Τραοστάλου," *Κρητική Εστία* 7, *Αρχαιολογικές Ειδήσεις* 1995-1997 (1999) 310-317. *ΙΔ.*, "Ιερό Κορυφής Τραοστάλου," *ΑΔ* 50 (1995) Χρ. (forthcoming).

2 For the importance of visual contact between peak sanctuaries, see A.A.D. PEATFIELD, "The Topography of Minoan Peak Sanctuaries," *BSA* 78 (1983) 276.

3 A brief presentation of these sites, together with the relevant bibliography, is given in RUTKOWSKI (*supra* n. 1) 78ff. To this should be added the following: B. RUTKOWSKI, *Petsophas: A Cretan Peak Sanctuary* (1991), on Petsophas. N. SCHLAGER, "Zum mittelminoischen 'Höhenheiligtum von Ampelos'," *ÖJh* 61 (1991/92) 2-15, on Ambelos. For Korakomouri: Στ. ΧΡΥΣΟΥΛΑΚΗ and Λ. ΒΟΚΟΤΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, "Το αρχαιολογικό τοπίο ενός ανακτόρου. Η έρευνα επιφανείας στην περιοχή του μινωικού ανακτόρου Ζάκρου Σητείας," *Αρχαιολογία* 49 (1993) 71 no. 76 and 74-75, fig. 7. Γ. ΤΖΕΔΑΚΙΣ, Στ. ΧΡΥΣΟΥΛΑΚΗ, Λ. ΒΟΚΟΤΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ and Α. ΣΦΥΡΟΕΡΑ, "Ερευνητικό Πρόγραμμα 'Μινωικοί Δρόμοι'," *Κρητική Εστία* 7, *Αρχαιολογικές Ειδήσεις* 1995-1997 (1999) 322-324. N. SCHLAGER, "Korakomouri," *ÖJh* 64 (1995) 1-24. To these sites should be added a probable peak sanctuary on the summit of Kastri, near the village of Sitanos, which was identified in 2000 during the surface survey carried out by the 'Minoan Roads' programme.

4 ΑΛΕΞΙΟΥ (*supra* n. 1).

In the western to south-western foothills stands the megalithic building at Skaphi⁵ and what is probably a guard-house at Polla Kladia.⁶ The densely occupied Chochlakies valley, with a guard-house, probable villa, and settlement, is in the north-western foothills.⁷

Mount Traostalos has a distinctive articulation with a series of bare plateaux. This reflects the stepped morphology of the east and south-east coasts of Crete.⁸ The bay of Karoumes, the only anchorage on the steep coast, is formed by the north to north-east face of Traostalos, which is known characteristically as ‘Adiavatos,’ or ‘Impassable.’ Habitation in the bay of Karoumes covers a long interval from the Neolithic period to Roman times.⁹ The Minoan period is represented by three megalithic buildings and an extensive series of walls and enclosures that change and organise the natural form of the hills.

Finally, the coastline between the bay of Karoumes and that of Zakros is of great interest, not only for the important Neolithic occupation of the cave of Pelekita,¹⁰ but also for the systematic quarrying of limestone and poros in Minoan times. There were large quarries at Pelekita and Papa i Limnes, and provision was made for transporting the blocks to the palace at Zakros.¹¹

Approaches

The summit can be approached by two routes. The first is a built road, now called ‘Skala tou Ayiou Antoniou’¹² by the locals. This road, which runs roughly south-north, crosses the western foothills of Traostalos and links Kato Zakros with Palaikastro. The second route is a path starting from the village of Azokeramos.

The ascent to the plateau on the summit is easiest from the north and north-west, where the contours of the rocky terrain create a series of natural stretches of road, reinforced in places by steps and makeshift walls.

Although the line of this ascent has been established, no stretch of road has been discovered that has the quality of construction of the road that led from Anemospilia to the sanctuary on Juktas.¹³

- 5 D.G. HOGARTH, “Excavations at Zakro, Crete,” *BSA* 7 (1900-1901) 149. Y. TZEDAKIS, S. CHRYSOULAKI, S. VOUTSAKI and Y. VENIERI, “Les routes minoennes: rapport préliminaire. Défense de la circulation ou circulation de la défense?,” *BCH* 113 (1989) 47 and 53.
- 6 ΧΡΥΣΟΥΛΑΚΗ and ΒΟΚΟΤΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ (*supra* n. 3) 71 no. 21 and 74-75 fig. 5. S. CHRYSOULAKI, “Minoan Roads and Guard Houses: War Regained,” in *POLEMOS* I, Pl. VIII.a no. 15.
- 7 Κ. ΔΑΒΑΡΑΣ, “Αρχαιότητες και μνημεία Ανατολικής Κρήτης,” *ΑΔ* 27 (1972) Χρ. Β’2, 653. ΧΡΥΣΟΥΛΑΚΗ and ΒΟΚΟΤΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ (*supra* n. 3) 73.
- 8 This unusual formation is the product of a series of parallel regular faults or successive changes in seal level. See Ν.Δ. ΜΟΥΡΤΖΑΣ, “Τεκτονικές κινήσεις κατά το Τεταρτογενές στις ακτές της Ανατολικής Κρήτης,” Diss. *Ethniko Metsoveio Polytechnio*, Αθήνα (1990) 217, 220, 225 and 246.
- 9 TZEDAKIS, CHRYSOULAKI *et al.* (*supra* n. 5) 53 and 61. Γ. ΤΖΕΔΑΚΙΣ, Στ. ΧΡΥΣΟΥΛΑΚΗ, Μ. ΑΥΓΟΥΛΗ and Γ. ΒΕΝΙΕΡΗ, “Ερευνητικό Πρόγραμμα Μινωικοί Δρόμοι,” *Κρητική Εστία* 4, *Αρχαιολογικές Ειδήσεις 1989-1991* (1992-1993) 306-317. Γ. ΤΖΕΔΑΚΙΣ, Στ. ΧΡΥΣΟΥΛΑΚΗ and Λ. ΒΟΚΟΤΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, “Ερευνητικό Πρόγραμμα ‘Μινωικοί Δρόμοι,’” *Κρητική Εστία* 5, *Αρχαιολογικές Ειδήσεις 1992-1994* (1994-1996) 359-361. CHRYSOULAKI (*supra* n. 6) 78-79 and Pl. VII β.
- 10 Κ. ΔΑΒΑΡΑΣ, “Αρχαιότητες και Μνημεία Ανατολικής Κρήτης,” *ΑΔ* 34 (1979) Χρ. Β’2, 402-404. Γ.Α. ΠΑΠΑΘΑΝΑΣΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ (ed.), *Νεολιθικός Πολιτισμός στην Ελλάδα* (1996) 93 and 208.
- 11 Pelekita: Ν. ΠΛΑΤΩΝ, “Ανασκαφή Ζάκρου,” *ΠΑΕ* 1968, 181-183. J.W. SHAW, *Minoan Architecture: Materials and Techniques* (*AnnScAtene* XXXIII, 1971) 30-34. Ι. ΠΑΠΑΓΕΩΡΓΑΚΗΣ, Ν.Π. ΠΑΠΑΔΑΚΗΣ and Ν. ΜΟΥΡΤΖΑΣ, “Αρχαία λατομεία στη Σητεία της Κρήτης,” *Αμάθεια* 25 (1994) 155-156. Papa i Limnes: TZEDAKIS, ΧΡΥΣΟΥΛΑΚΗ and ΒΟΚΟΤΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ (*supra* n. 8) 362.
- 12 TZEDAKIS, CHRYSOULAKI *et al.* (*supra* n. 5) 52-53. Γ. ΤΖΕΔΑΚΙΣ, Στ. ΧΡΥΣΟΥΛΑΚΗ and Λ. ΚΥΡΙΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ, “Ο δρόμος στη Μινωική Κρήτη,” *Πεπραγμένα του ΣΤ’ Διεθνούς Κρητολογικού Συνεδρίου, Χανιά, 24-30 Αυγούστου 1986* (1990) 406-408 and πίν. 81.
- 13 TZEDAKIS, CHRYSOULAKI *et al.* (*supra* n. 5) 51-52 and 55. TZEDAKIS, ΧΡΥΣΟΥΛΑΚΗ and ΚΥΡΙΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ (*supra* n. 12) 409-410. The surface of this road, which is 2.50 m. wide, was paved with rubble. Below the retaining wall, built of large boulders, a second wall was erected as a further reinforcement.

The erosion suffered by the mountainside, though considerable, is not great enough to have obliterated the strong buttress and gutter of a built road, or the wide, rubble-strewn surface of the road itself. The apparent lack of any carefully constructed approach road that could be used by carriages rules out the possibility that large loads were taken up to the summit. One wonders, too, whether the sick would have been able to endure so steep an ascent.¹⁴

History of the excavation

The investigation of the site is under the auspices of the Archaeological Service. The first excavation took place during the years 1963-64, under Kostis Davaras,¹⁵ who opened two trenches at the west end of the plateau and explored the building on the summit. In 1978 the excavator returned to make measured drawings of this structure and resume his investigation of 'the main area of deposits at the edge of the plateau'.

A rescue excavation in 1995 was the occasion of the start of a second investigation, by the present author, with a total duration of three months during the period April to October.¹⁶

It should be noted that the sanctuary has suffered repeatedly from digging by antiquities thieves. This undoubtedly continued during the interval between the two excavation periods, (1963-1995), and led to severe disturbance of the deposits at various points of the plateau on the summit.¹⁷

The second excavation was preceded by a surface survey which covered the sides of the summit. This survey yielded some evidence to localise the sherd-concentrations in the surrounding area, but did not identify any structure contemporary with the sanctuary.

Observations were nonetheless made of the use of the mountain in modern times, which involves intensive stock-breeding and lime kilns.

The complete absence of water supplies was confirmed. This has obliged stock-breeders to build cisterns to collect rainwater. The arid landscape of Traostalos, today dramatically eroded by the winds, is a reminder that the presence of water was not an essential prerequisite for the foundation of a sanctuary in the Minoan period.

Before the start of the excavation, a grid was laid out over the entire plateau on the summit, covering an area of about 8 hectares. This grid of interconnected squares was used to make it possible to pinpoint the positions of the small finds with great accuracy on the plan, so as to provide secure data relating to the organisation and use of the sanctuary site.

This method will, at the end of the excavation, reveal concentrations or scatterings of deposits, and accordingly identify the cult practices associated with the organisation of the site.¹⁸

There were three areas of excavation: the summit and building A on the upper terrace, and two areas on the lower terrace, one on a south-west to north-east axis and one on a north-west to south-east axis.

Although the soil was very fine and the trenches nowhere reached a depth greater than 0.50 m, a total of 300 m³ of earth deposits was removed from cracks, recesses and cavities in the rock.

14 PEATFIELD (*supra* n. 2) 275, on the problem of the difficulty of access to peak sanctuaries and their distance from residential sites.

15 Στ. ΑΛΕΞΙΟΥ, *ΑΔ* 18 (1963) Χρ. Β'2, 313. ID. (*supra* n. 1) 442. ΔΑΒΑΡΑΣ (*supra* n. 1) 392-393.

16 ΧΡΥΣΟΥΛΑΚΗ (*supra* n. 1).

17 These illegal excavations seem to have been of a systematic nature, since three car batteries were found, which had been used to light the thieves' nocturnal onslaughts. In order to prevent further disturbance of the site, a lecture was given at the end of the 1995 season in the coffee house at Pano Zakros, with the dual aim of informing and sensitising the local population.

18 A similar rationale governed the method of excavation of the peak sanctuary of Atsipades Korakias, and it is to be hoped that this will facilitate comparison of the data from these two sites. See A. PEATFIELD, "Rural Ritual in Bronze Age Crete: The Peak Sanctuary at Atsipades" *CAJ* 2 (1992) 64-65. C.E. MORRIS and A.A.D. PEATFIELD, "Pottery from the peak sanctuary of Atsipadhes Korakias, Ay. Vasiliou, Rethymnon," *Πεπραγμένα του Ζ' Διεθνούς Κρητολογικού Συνεδρίου, Ρέθυμνο* (1995) 643-647.

Spatial organisation

The plateau on the summit

The highest part of the summit of Traostalos is occupied by a rectangular plateau measuring 20 x 12 m. At the west the surface drops abruptly, forming a sheer cliff.

The centre of the cult in the sanctuary is located at the south-west edge of the plateau. A triangulation point installed by the Greek army now stands here. The rock at the triangulation point is carved in the form of a niche that contained the central bonfire of the sanctuary (Pl. XIVa).¹⁹ Beneath a thick layer of ash and earth of a greasy texture, dozens of stone discs were found in successive layers (Pl. XIVb). These discs are made of violet-coloured schist and hard limestone, have a diameter of 12-15 cm and are 3-5 mm thick. They were apparently offering tables, a distinctive feature of Traostalos, and were often set on the surface of the rock. Many of them have distinct traces of burning, as do parts of the rock that were covered by them. The bonfire was probably lit very frequently at this point of the summit, and would have been very fierce. The cracks in the rock yielded figurines and sherds, many of which bear traces of fire.

The deposits associated with the bonfire also contained a large quantity of the small pebbles that are a characteristic feature of peak sanctuaries,²⁰ as well as scattered finds of quartz, flint, charcoal, and burnt bones and seashells.

Hearths for fires and deposits of burnt materials were discovered over the whole of the plateau on the summit. These were smaller in extent than the central bonfire, and it may be concluded that, unlike this main fire, they were not in continual use. The largest of them was excavated at the north edge of the plateau, to the south of building A.

The East Plateau

A second nucleus devoted to cult was revealed in the small slope between the plateau on the summit and a depression to its east. At this point there is a low rock face, broken in places by lateral fissures, which create a series of recesses sheltered from the strong winds. Inside these were found remains of bonfires, with the full range of associated material, and stone discs (Pl. XIVc). In the depression itself, the density of finds diminishes steadily towards the east.

Building A

The area of the building excavated in 1964 was cleaned.²¹ It measures about 5 x 3 m and consists of five walls, which defined two irregular rooms. The south-east corner is preserved to a height of two masonry courses.

The building, like all the other structures found in the area of the sanctuary, is a makeshift structure,²² with walls built of large unworked blocks of stone, used to supplement elevations in the rock. Buildings A and B were almost certainly founded on earlier cult deposits. The north room of Building A, indeed, was probably built above an earlier bonfire.

Building B

A building of about 25 m² was excavated on the south terrace, 1.5 m below the level of the plateau on the summit and 20 m to the east of the triangulation point (Pl. XVa). Its construction is makeshift. At no point does the rock seem to have been dressed or levelled for the foundation walls, which are preserved to a greatest height of 1 m. Although the excavation of this building is not complete – it extends to the south – it, too, seems to have occupied a site previously devoted to cult.

19 For ritual bonfires at peak sanctuaries, see N. ΠΛΑΤΩΝ, “Το ιερόν Μαζά (Καλού Χωριού Πεδιάδος) και τα μινωικά ιερά κορυφής,” *Κρητικά Χρονικά* Ε’ (1951) 151-152. PEATFIELD (*supra* n. 2) 277. ID. (*supra* n. 18) 66.

20 For pebbles in peak sanctuaries, see PEATFIELD (*supra* n. 18) 68 and 76. K. NOWICKI, “Some Remarks on the Pre- and Protopalatial Peak Sanctuaries in Crete,” *AEA* 1 (1994) 35-39.

21 ΑΛΕΞΙΟΥ (*supra* n. 1) 442. ΔΑΒΑΡΑΣ (*supra* n. 1) 393, where the building is dated to LM I. HENRIKSSON and BLOMBERG (*supra* n. 1) 110-111.

22 For a description of the buildings found in peak sanctuaries, see B. RUTKOWSKI, *The Cult Places of the Aegean* (1986) 76-83. ID. (*supra* n. 1) 79ff.

Both the architecture of the buildings and the construction of a number of scattered walls, such as the Z-shaped wall near building A, have suggested that these were bases to support light structures of wood and mud. They may, however, have been enclosure walls defining and separating the specific cult areas.²³

The context of the finds inside the buildings, which are similar to those from the plateau, offers no clue as to the use of these structures. In addition to stone discs, building B also yielded animal figurines, while the pottery consists of the usual range of shapes: drinking vessels, cooking pots, and probables grille and brazier. Many fragments of stone vases and offering tables were found. The material from the surface layers could have slipped down from higher levels of the site.

Building C

A third structure was located on the steep slope 60 m south-east of the triangulation point (Pl. XVb). This building is similar to the ones described already, and has not yet been excavated. It consists of a wall built of undressed stone blocks that supplements the low, vertical face of the rock. This wall is probably contemporary with the sanctuary, as is clear from the style of its construction and the surface find of a small animal figurine. A sheepfold has been erected on the terrace occupied by it.

The small finds

Figurines

To the finds from the first excavation may be added a large number of new human and animal figurines, many of which have a black slip. The animal figurines, the overwhelming majority of which are clearly bovines, may be divided into large, hollow figurines and small solid ones. Many of them were burnt. The sex is sometimes indicated. Animals other than bovines include sheep and goats, birds, fish,²⁴ and the *oryctes nasicornis* beetle.²⁵

The human figurines are usually small, originally not exceeding 20 cm in height.²⁶ Female figurines have elaborate coiffures, tall hats, and bell-shaped skirts. It should be remarked that a tiny naked figurine has the pubic triangle incised on it.

Most of the male figurines have the hair style associated with youths, with a braid in the middle of the head and the rest of the skull shaved,²⁷ like the Palaikastro kouros. Some of the heads seem to have had beards, and may have depicted mature men.²⁸ The majority are shown standing, some of them on a base, though some are seated or enthroned. The facial features are stylised.

The figurines may be assigned to groups on the basis of the treatment of the facial features, which can be interpreted in various ways. They possibly represent the 'hands' of different figurine-makers – that is, the figurines can be divided into categories based on their technique. It is conceivable, however, that they reflect efforts to render specific models and were perhaps 'portraits' of the pilgrims who visited the sanctuary. A combination of both factors may, of course, be involved. Some of the figurines had painted details.

23 A.A.D. PEATFIELD, "Minoan Peak Sanctuaries: History and Society," *OpAth* XVIII (1990) 122 and 124, where the buildings found in peak sanctuaries are treated rather as open structures or enclosures, than as roofed buildings.

24 ΧΡΥΣΟΥΛΑΚΗ (*supra* n. 1) 315 fig. 15. A very naturalistically rendered model of a fish was also found in the earlier excavations; see C. DAVARAS, *Guide to Cretan Antiquities* (1976) 97 fig. 55.

25 For the habits and probable symbolic meaning of the function of this species, see RUTKOWSKI (*supra* n. 22) 89-91 and PEATFIELD (*supra* n. 23) 121.

26 In contrast, large numbers of larger figurines were found at Kophinas and Piskokephalo. See A. ΚΑΡΕΤΣΟΥ and Γ. ΠΕΘΕΜΙΩΤΑΚΗΣ, "Κόφινας. Ιερό Κορωφής," *ΑΔ* 45 (1990) Χρ. Β'2, 429 (Kophinas). ΠΛΑΤΩΝ (*supra* n. 19) 128 (Piskokephalo).

27 C. DAVARAS, "Zur Herkunft des Diskos von Phaistos," *Kadmos* 6 (1967) 103-105 and Taf. I, for examples from the early excavations.

28 A similar find was yielded by the 1978 excavation, see ΔΑΒΑΡΑΣ (*supra* n. 1) 392.

The finds that point to the healing function of the sanctuary fall into two categories: *ex votos* (ancient Greek *iamata*, which are comparable with the *tamata* of modern Greece), which were models of human limbs,²⁹ and figurines in which some illness or physical deformity is indicated. To the figurines indicating illness found during the first excavation³⁰ may be added a male head with a protruding thyroid gland.

Rod-shaped amulets are found that perhaps have the significance of small phalluses-amulets, as known from the Classical and Hellenistic periods.³¹ In these later periods, boys dedicated their amulets in the temple when they reached maturity.

A number of tiny shoes was also found, possibly signifying that the pilgrim had 'set foot in' the sanctuary.

A small ball of unfired clay should be linked conceptually with the beetles.³² Finally, a model of a boat was found.³³ The clay finds include sherds from handmade vessels of indeterminate shape and function, and offering tables with relief decoration presumably imitating small loaves or other food offerings.

An important group is composed of miniature vases. In terms of the shapes represented, most of them can be identified as pithoi, apart from one cooking pot. One of them contained a seed.³⁴

With regard to metal artefacts, the 1995 excavation produced only a partially preserved bronze figure, of fine art, and two pins (Pl. XVc).³⁵ There was a large number of fragments of stone vessels:³⁶ lamps, offering tables and emblem bases. The majority were made of soft white local limestone, though some were of green-grey local serpentine.

The figurines were found broken and thrust along with the earth deposits into the cracks in the rocks, as material removed after the bonfire was extinguished. In some cases, intact figurines were found placed on the rock - two of them, a ram and ewe, in a matching pair.

Offerings, sacrifices and invocations

Generally speaking, the following provisional observations relating to cult practice may be derived from the material in the deposits.

Invocations were made for the protection of flocks, as attested by the symbolical depositing of a single model to represent the group, and also for the fertility of the flock, as is clear from the indication of the sex of the model, or the depositing of a pair of male and female figurines.

The stone discs were possibly improvised offering tables on which were placed the *aparchai*, or first fruits. On analogy with the cult practices of the Classical period, these will have been offerings of cereals or other fruit essential to the survival of the community. The numbers of stone discs are consistent with the view that symbolic offerings of first fruits could be made by all the members of the community, irrespective of their social status.

The symbolic offering of the seed in the miniature pithos is part of the same conceptual register of part for whole, though possibly associated with a different occasion, such as the storing of the crops.

29 For the interpretation of these dedications, see PEATFIELD (*supra* n. 23) 122. JONES (*supra* n. 1) 13 and 17. E. ΓΕΩΡΓΟΥΛΑΚΗ, "Votives in the Shape of Human Body Parts: Shaping a Framework," *Πλάτων* 49 (1997) 188-206. For the relationship between peak sanctuaries and healing cults and practices in general, see R. ARNOTT, "Healing Cult in Minoan Crete," in *MELETEMATA* I 2-6.

30 DAVARAS (*supra* n. 27) 102. PEATFIELD (*supra* n. 23) 122 fig 10.

31 For *ex votos* in the form of a phallus from the peak sanctuary at Atsipades, see PEATFIELD (*supra* n. 18) 74-75.

32 RUTKOWSKI (*supra* n. 22) 90.

33 The association of dedicators with the sea, which is attested by models of fish and the boat, is obviously connected with the location of Traostalos between two sheltered bays set on a generally inhospitable coastline that was nevertheless of importance to shipping in the surrounding area. The general topography of Kophinas is similar - a site that has also produced similar finds: see KAPETΣΟΥ and ΠΕΘΕΜΙΩΤΑΚΗΣ (*supra* n. 26) 429.

34 ΧΡΥΣΟΥΛΑΚΗ (*supra* n. 1) 315 fig. 16.

35 For the metal finds of the early excavations see ΑΛΕΞΙΟΥ (*supra* n. 1) 442 and DAVARAS (*supra* n. 27) 102.

36 ΧΡΥΣΟΥΛΑΚΗ (*supra* n. 1) 316 fig. 17.

There is no clear evidence for libations and sacrifices at the present stage of the study of the material. It is possible that animal figurines with a hole in the muzzle were used for libations, though it is not certain that they were used as rhyta.

Very few bones were found amongst the material from the bonfire. Their numbers, while conceivably representing blood sacrifices, do not reach the quantity one would expect as the remains of meals.³⁷

Certain categories of finds suggest invocations associated with maritime activities or beliefs related to the sea. Invocations for fishing and navigation are attested by models of boats and fish, which have been yielded by both the first and the second excavations. Deposits of seashells and pebbles (the latter commonly found at peak sanctuaries) certainly have a ritual function. Pebbles are associated with water, though not necessarily with the sea, since they also come from rivers. These finds associated with the sea may function on both the real and the symbolic level. Similarly, beliefs relating to the earth at both these levels are possibly represented by the beetles.

Models of shoes, and human figurines in general, were probably to commemorate the pilgrimage.³⁸

The figurines of youths and rod-shaped amulets may point to rites of passage, while the ex-votos of human limbs are evidence for invocations for healing and health.

Meals were consumed locally by pilgrims, as is clear from the cooking pots, bridge-spouted vessels and storage jars, and the large number of drinking vessels, some of which were naturally also used for offerings.

There were also offerings involving handmade vases with relief appliqués, incense-burners for perfumes, altars. The lamps perhaps suggest that pilgrims stayed overnight in the sanctuary, or that some of the rituals took place at night.

The study of the small finds and pottery from the 1995 excavation is still at the preliminary stage. Assessment of the stratigraphy in undisturbed areas suggests the following conclusions. Human presence on the site goes back to the Neolithic period. Beneath the burnt level with the heaps of discs from the central bonfire at the triangulation point was found a sealed group of Neolithic sherds from bowls and a few flint flakes, also in a burnt layer.³⁹

Old Palace pottery was discovered scattered near the fires. It is represented by tumblers found in burnt layers beneath the buildings, which, as at other peak sanctuaries, date from the New Palace period. In the undisturbed areas of the plateau on the summit, LM I pottery is found down to the lowest levels.

Amongst the finds, a small number of sherds belongs to periods postdating the abandonment of the sanctuary.⁴⁰

Finally, Traostalos is known to have formed part of the system of beacons which, in the late Venetian period, entirely encircled the coast of Crete.⁴¹ The reference in the relevant Venetian report, *'Tragostaulo sopra Carumnes'*, does not make it clear whether the lookout post was near the sanctuary or in the foothills of the mountain near the bay of Karoumes.

37 For the frequency of animal bones in peak sanctuaries, see JONES (*supra* n. 1) 13.

38 This was possibly also the function of the incised footprint on a terracotta plaque from Traostalos; see C. DAVARAS, "A Minoan Graffito from Traostalos," *Kadmos* 19 (1980) 87-92.

39 Final Neolithic or EM I pottery has also been found at the peak sanctuary of Atsipades Korakias; see MORRIS and PEATFIELD (*supra* n. 18) 644-645. C. MORRIS and V. BATTEN, "Early Pottery from the Atsipades Peak Sanctuary," paper presented at the 8th International Cretological Conference (Herakleion 9-14th September 1996).

40 With regard to the other peak sanctuaries in the vicinity of Traostalos, post-Minoan remains have been found at Ambelos, Kalamaki and Modi; see RUTKOWSKI (*supra* n. 1) 78, 82 and 85 respectively.

41 M. ΑΡΑΚΑΔΑΚΗ, "Διάγραμμα του δικτύου ακτοφρουρών της Κρήτης από την έκθεση του Nicola Gualdo de Priorati (1633)," *Κρητολογικά Γράμματα* 13 (1997) 67.

Provisional conclusions

Traostalos is one of the most important sanctuaries in a region bristling with them and with other types of sanctuary, such as rock-shelter shrines like that at Anthropolithoi near Zakros,⁴² and roadside shrines, such as Kynigakia near the 'Skala tou Ayiou Antoniou.'⁴³

The position occupied by Traostalos made it a landmark visible from both from the sea and the land, and it was a reference point for at least two of the most important towns in east Crete, including the Palace, which were sited almost equidistantly from its summit.

The reasons for the long life of Traostalos may be sought in the proximity of the sanctuary to the major centres and its location in the middle of a rich, densely occupied hinterland. This may account for the long period of use of the sanctuary, which covers at least the Old Palace and New Palace periods.

The architecture of the structures found on the summit is unimpressive. The dedications, however, particularly those found during the first excavation, demonstrate that the sanctuary was an important focus for the socially strong groups, although still always maintained ties with ordinary people. This character of a *pandemon* sanctuary – that is, a sanctuary belonging to all the people – may be another of the reasons that it continued to function as a cult site into the New Palace period, when other sanctuaries in the area were being abandoned.⁴⁴

Despite the problems of stratigraphy resulting from the disturbance of the levels by antiquities thieves, the 1995 excavation helped us to form a provisional picture relating to issues such as the formation of a body of beliefs about the nature of the deity, and the organisation and use of the cult area and the cult/ritual practices.

For this last, important evidence suggests that there was not merely a single bonfire on which cult practice was concentrated. The main fire was, of course, important, and the greatest concentration of offerings was found both in its immediate area and on the slopes of the summit, but this was not the only cult area in the sanctuary.

The excavations at Traostalos have not confirmed the view that offerings were placed only in fissures in the rock. On the contrary, offerings were found in depressions and niches as well as fissures; it is not clear whether or not they were deliberately broken before being deposited.

The spatial organisation serves the needs not only of the cult ceremonial, but also of the movement of priests and pilgrims around the area of the sanctuary. It will have been necessary for the latter to be able to assemble in a large enough area from which they could see the ritual. These conditions are met by the East Plateau, to the east of the bonfire on the summit.

In this context, we may note that the central bonfire faces east, towards the sea over which the sun and moon rise. Beliefs related to the rising sun may also be reflected in the east-facing orientation of the doors in the west wings of the palaces, which open onto the Central Courts.

It seem likely, on the basis of the finds, that the sanctuary cult was associated with farming and stock-breeding; if so, we should turn to the calendar that defined the key dates in the cycle of farming and stock-breeding activities in order to determine the time of year at which the great festivals were celebrated.

42 A. BROWN and A.A.D. PEATFIELD, "Stous Anthropolithous: a Minoan Site near Epano Zakro, Sitias," *BSA* 82 (1987) 23-33.

43 Ερευνητικό Πρόγραμμα "Μινωικοί Δρόμοι," *Το έργο του Υπουργείου Πολιτισμού στον τομέα της πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς* 3 (1999) 179-180. This site may be included in the category of 'sanctuaries on peaks'; see L.V. WATROUS, "Some Observations on Minoan Peak Sanctuaries," in *POLITEIA* 393-394. A seemingly similar site was found at Lamnoni, in the hinterland to the south-east of Zakros; see K. BRANIGAN, "Prehistoric and Early Historic Settlement in the Ziros Region, Eastern Crete," *BSA* 93 (1998) 66-68.

44 For the problem of the break in use of most of the peak sanctuaries during the transition between the Old and New Palace periods, and for the palatial character of the sites that survived, see A. PEATFIELD, "Palace and Peak: the Political and Religious Relationship between Palaces and Peak Sanctuaries," in *Function Palaces* 92-93; ID. (*supra* n. 23) 126-131.

The time of year of the pilgrimage was probably determined by astral dates of significance in the farming and stock-breeding calendar.⁴⁵ Perhaps the epiphanies of the deity coincided with these dates, or with the autumn blossoming of symbolic flowers such as the crocus,⁴⁶ which, during our October excavation, sprang in profusion from the fissures on the summit, in a final harvest festival before the silence of winter (Pl. XVd).

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45 HENRIKSSON and BLOMBERG (*supra* n. 1) 113-114.

46 P. WARREN, *Minoan Religion as Ritual Action* (1988) 24-27.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

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