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Editorial: Volume 2

This issue maintains our mission to publish across the whole time range of Greek Archaeology, with articles from the Palaeolithic to the Early Modern era, as well as reaching out from the Aegean to the wider Greek world. Lithics and Ceramics are accompanied by innovative Art History and Industrial Archaeology. Our book reviews are equally wide-ranging. Our authors are international, and include young researchers as well as long-established senior scholars. I am sure you readers will find a feast of stimulating studies and thoughtful reviews.

John Bintliff
General Editor

Preserving memory in Minoan Crete Filled-in bench and platform deposits from the First Palace of Phaistos

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In memory of Vincenzo La Rosa

Introduction

Recent studies in Aegean prehistory have started to deal more intensively with the practice of accumulated artefacts in structured depositions and to see these as mnemonic records, reflecting people's desire to preserve the memory of some specific events.¹

In their seminal paper on Neolithic Wessex (Britain), Richards and Thomas were the first to define structured depositions as a type of *patterning* of the archaeological material, whereby the artefacts are deliberately and intentionally deposited in a specific 'structured' manner, which can be interpreted as indicative of complex social practices and, especially, as evidence for ritual practices.² Only recently some scholars have challenged the concept of structured deposition, calling into question the use of this term that has been applied to a broad range of contexts, without considering whether the depositions were intentionally produced as a mundane process, or as the result of ritual action.³ But in his 2012 response paper Julian Thomas reaffirms both the ritual and commemorative character of structured depositions, defining them as 'a means of consigning the activities that had taken place in the monument to memory as much it was as a part of those activities'.⁴

In the Aegean the best-known examples of structured deposits are the foundation deposits, which abound in Minoan Crete.⁵ These usually consist of objects that were intentionally deposited in a 'structured' manner on the ground or in a shallow pit beneath a new wall/floor in order to inaugurate the new feature. Besides these, the Bronze Age site of Phaistos, overlooking the Mesara plain in south-central Crete (Figure 1), provides a fair number of a new type of structured deposit that occurs especially in the so-called First Palace, dating from the 19th to 17th centuries BC, i.e. the Protopalatial period. The architecture of this palace excavated by Italian archaeologists Luigi Pernier (1900-1909), Doro Levi (1950-1966) and Vincenzo La Rosa (2000-2004), is remarkably well-preserved in comparison with other Minoan palaces and yielded plentiful deposits.⁶ This paper focuses on some unusual and not well-known structured deposits from this building, that largely consist of complete or fragmentary vases as well as occasionally other objects that are placed in a 'structured' way, with which I mean that they have either been positioned vertically and/

¹ Hamilakis 2008, 2010, 2014; Hamilakis and Sherratt 2012; Chapman and Gaydarska 2007.

² Richards and Thomas 1984, 191. On the definition of structured deposition see: Hill 1995; Darvill 2008, 440; Garrow 2012. See also Mills and Walker 2008, 12; Pollard 2008.

³ See the discussion paper in Garrow 2012.

⁴ Thomas 2012, 126-127.

⁵ For the Middle Minoan period on Crete the following abbreviations are used: MM IB = Middle Minoan IB; MM IIA = Middle Minoan IIA; MM IIB = Middle Minoan IIB. On foundation deposits in Minoan Crete, see Boulotis 1985; Pelon 1986; MacGillivray *et al.* 1999; La Rosa 2002, 2004, 640-647; Privitera 2004; Herva 2005. On foundation deposits in general, see also Ellis 1968 and Hunt 2006.

⁶ On the excavation of the First Palace at Phaistos see Pernier 1935; Pernier and Banti 1951; Levi 1976; La Rosa 2000-2002, 2004.



Figure 1. Plan of Crete showing Phaistos and other Minoan Protopalatial sites mentioned in the text (Plan author).

or horizontally, and sometimes comprise stacked cups, before being sealed. They are here called ‘filled-in bench and platform deposits’. They differ from other cases identified at Minoan sites, such as Knossos,⁷ Malia,⁸ Thronos/Kephala⁹ and Nopeigia-Drapanias,¹⁰ but also from practices attested in Bronze and Iron Age sites in Northern and Eastern Europe (e.g. Britain and Bulgaria).¹¹

In the following pages, I first present an overview of structured depositions in Minoan Crete and then I tackle the Phaistos case.

An overview of structured depositions from Minoan Crete

In 1985 Christos Boulotis published the foundation deposits attested on Minoan Crete.¹² Although he never used the term ‘structured deposits’, in fact the foundation deposits discussed in his paper meet the criteria proposed by Richards and Thomas. In his work, he underlined the wide variety of foundation deposits in Minoan Crete, pointing out that their location (on the ground, pit, cist, coffin), number (from few to hundreds) and types of vessels (only bowls; spouted jar and cup; only cups), as well as structured manner of deposition (e.g. one inverted on the other; all inverted on the ground, etc.) are variable.

In 1997, Anna Lucia D’Agata¹³ was the first to apply the notion of structured deposition to Aegean archaeology in a paper dealing with the Dark Age ceremonial pits found at Thronos/Kephala, which were intentionally filled with deliberately broken vases. In the Aegean field, she first focused her attention on the ‘ritual’ character of this practice, which was ‘not a frequent or normal event’ at Thronos/Kephala.¹⁴

Following the aforementioned work by Boulotis, in 2002 La Rosa dealt with the foundation deposits dating to the Protopalatial and Neopalatial periods identified at Phaistos and Ayia Triada.¹⁵ In his paper, La Rosa highlighted that it was a common practice to inaugurate new architectural features

⁷ Hatzaki 2009, 2011.

⁸ Driessen *et al.* 2008.

⁹ D’Agata 1997-2000.

¹⁰ Hamilakis and Harris 2011.

¹¹ For Britain, see Richards and Thomas 1984; Hill 1995; Pitts 2005; Garrow 2006, 2012. For Bulgaria, see Chapman 2000, Chapman and Gaydarska 2007.

¹² Boulotis 1985.

¹³ D’Agata 1997-2000.

¹⁴ D’Agata 1997-2000, 56.

¹⁵ La Rosa 2002.

through a deliberate deposition of objects arranged in a structured manner under the future feature. In his opinion, these foundation deposits, which he called '*dedicatio* deposits', reflected social practices, possibly ritual, of a domestic nature.¹⁶

In 2005, Vesa-Pekka Herva dealt with hidden and sealed deposits incorporated into Minoan architecture, which he defined as 'building deposits'.¹⁷ In this category he included deposits both found in buildings' foundations (i.e. foundation deposits) and sealed up in architectural structures. Herva denied the association of structured depositions with religion and ritual. Instead, he attempted to explain why 'building deposits' were made so frequently in Minoan Crete. Employing an ecological approach, he explored the possibility that the artefacts found in these deposits continued to be active even after their burial beneath or within buildings, in order to maintain the life of buildings.¹⁸ Herva's approach is quite interesting since he connects the deposits not only with the building they were found in, but also with the people living there. He presents examples from a variety of Minoan sites, including deposits found both beneath walls and inside architectural features in buildings, without, however, considering the implications of their different locations.

In 2008, the excavators of Quartier Nu at Malia identified some Late Minoan (LM) III ceremonial pits containing broken vases whose intentional breakage and deposition were interpreted as integral parts of a ceremony where the vases were used for communal consumption.¹⁹

In two papers, Eleni Hatzaki discussed the structured deposits found under floors, in cists or pits, at the palace of Knossos.²⁰ She focused on one of the most interesting Knossian deposits, the well-known Temple Repositories, as well on the Vat Room deposit and the pit in Room 46a, behind the Throne Room. In particular she hypothesised that the Temple Repositories could be both a structured and a foundation deposit, adding that '...scale and exceptionalism of the assemblage is in accordance with the monumentality of the building...'.²¹ She also argued that 'The elaborate ritual performed could have been linked to the inauguration, or the completion, of building work, thus marking the beginning or the end of a cycle in the building's long use'.²²

From 2008 to 2011, Yannis Hamilakis²³ produced a number of papers devoted to the significance of structured depositions on Minoan Crete. He published a structured deposit found at Late Bronze Age Nopigeia-Drapanias in West Crete, which was revisited and renewed with successive depositions of food remnants.²⁴ He interpreted it as a 'material production of a mnemonic record on the ground', pointing out that the dug pits for the burying, concealment and preservation of eating and drinking remnants are a deliberate re-collection of fragments of communal events, which brought a collectivity together.²⁵ Following the seminal work edited by Mills and Walker on 'Memory Work',²⁶ Hamilakis also underlined that 'repetition and citation of past events and interactions, whether it is rebuilding a house on the very same spot, or re-opening and reusing a ditch, are key features of mnemonic practices',²⁷ which have the aim of producing mnemonic effects.

¹⁶ La Rosa 2002, 48.

¹⁷ Herva 2005.

¹⁸ Herva 2005, 215-227.

¹⁹ Driessen *et al.* 2008.

²⁰ Hatzaki 2009, 2011.

²¹ Hatzaki 2009, 28. Challenging the widely accepted interpretation of the Neopalatial Temple Repositories, Hatzaki suggested that: '... rather than being the leavings of accidental damage during a destruction event, followed by ceremonial disposal, this assemblage constitutes the remains of a carefully planned ritual in which specific objects were chosen for disposal and were in effect removed from circulation.' (Hatzaki 2009, 20).

²² Hatzaki 2009, 28.

²³ Hamilakis 2008, 2010; Hamilakis and Harris 2011; Hamilakis and Sherratt 2012.

²⁴ Hamilakis and Harris 2011.

²⁵ Hamilakis 2010, 195.

²⁶ Mills and Walker 2008.

²⁷ Hamilakis 2010, 195; see also Todaro 2013 and Hamilakis 2014.

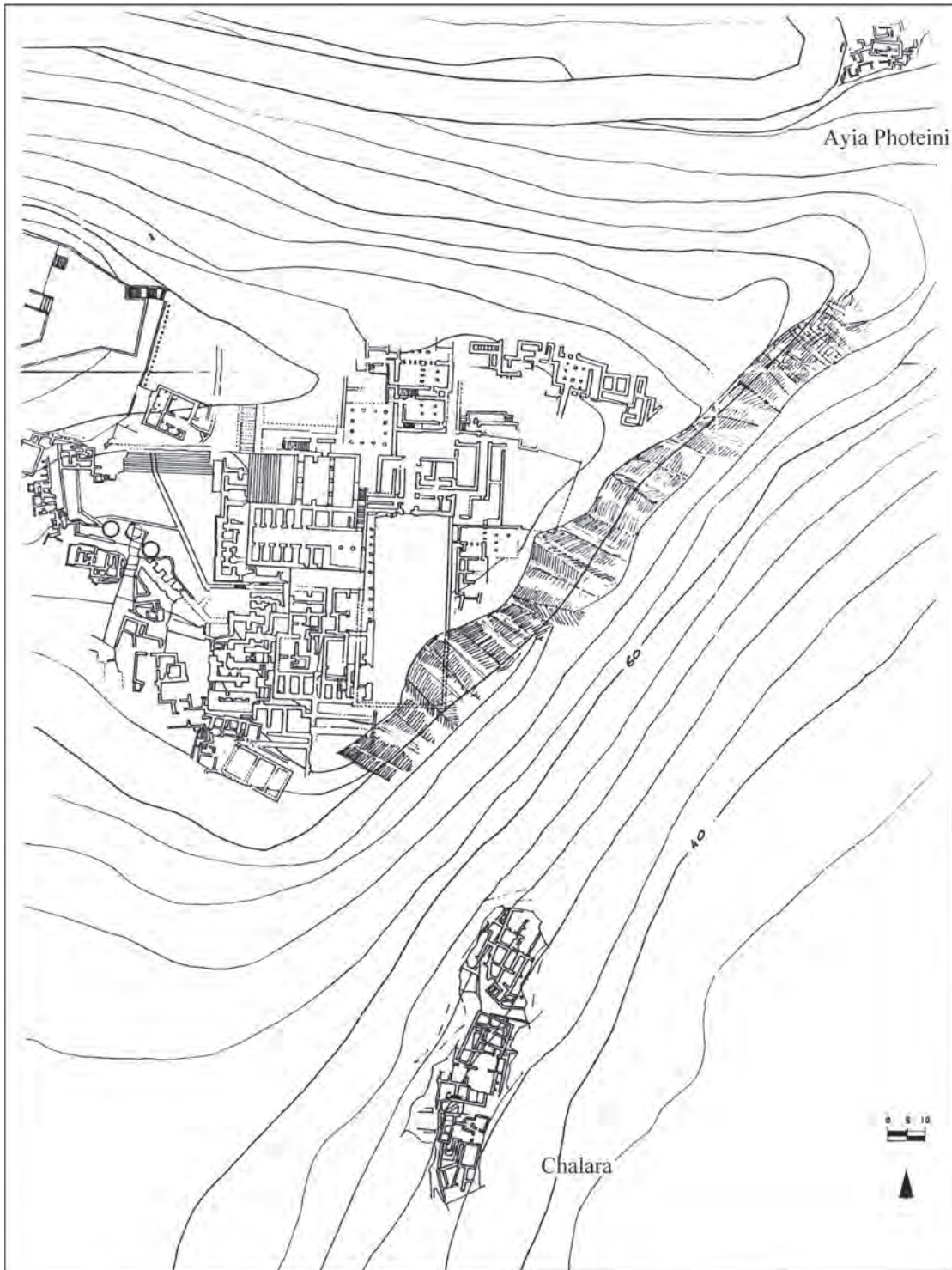


Figure 2. Plan of the First Palace of Phaistos and of the quarters mentioned in the text (after Levi 1976, pl. A, with additions by the author).

The site of Phaistos has provided some peculiar deposits, which have attracted the attention of the first excavators of Phaistos and of other scholars because they are similar to foundation deposits, but actually they are not buried under the new architectural features. They are instead closed into benches or platforms that remain visible afterwards. From 1900 to 1909 Pernier undertook the first excavations of the Minoan site at Phaistos, where he brought to light the Second, or Neopalatial palace, as well as the northern wing of the First Palace, known as the North-West Building (Figures

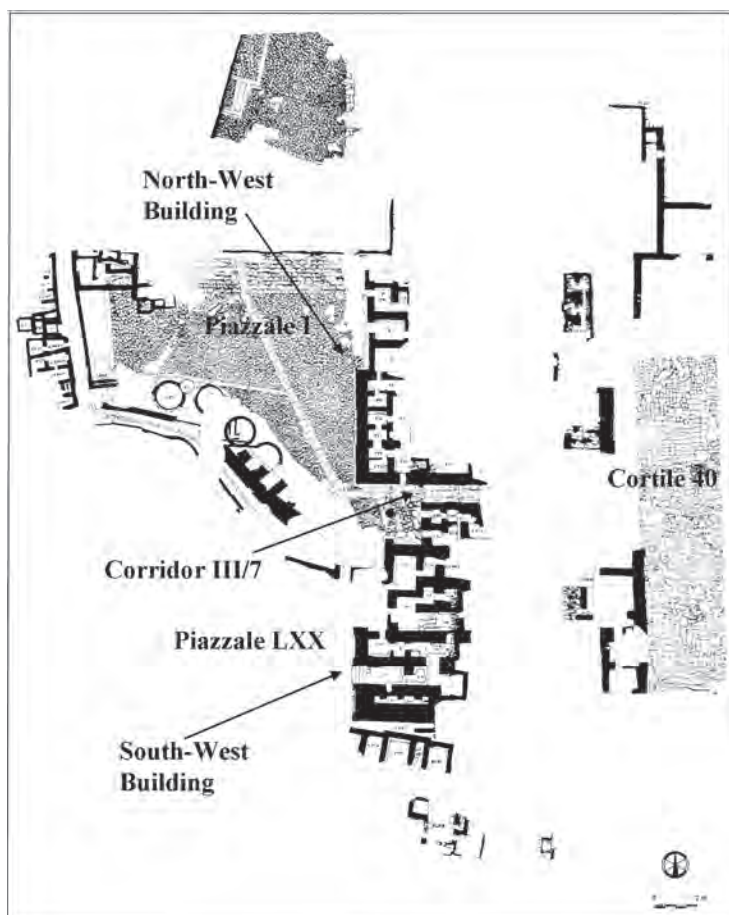


Figure 3. Plan of the First Palace of Phaistos with indication of the main palatial buildings, courts and areas (after Fiandra 1961-1962, fig. 2, with additions by the author).

2, 3).²⁸ Levi conducted a new cycle of excavations at Phaistos from 1950 to 1966, with two additional campaigns in 1969 and 1971.²⁹ He discovered a new wing of the First Palace, the well-known South-West Building with its monumental orthostatic façade and excavated the following areas: the Lower West Court (Piazzale LXX) in front of the South-West Building, the ramp from the Lower West Court to the Middle West Court (Piazzale I) of the palace, and the adjacent areas, such as the quarters to the south of the palace, and to the south and west of the Middle West Court (Figure 3). In addition, he carried out tests beneath Corridor III/7, connecting the Middle West Court with the Central Court (Cortile 40), and beneath the floors of Neopalatial rooms of the North-West Building and of the Second palace's South-West Façade. During these campaigns he also excavated the peripheral quarters at Ayia Photeini and Chalara on the slopes of the palace hill (Figure 2).

During his excavations, Levi dubbed as 'benches filled-in with vases' (*banchine riempite con vasi*) a number of architectural features filled-in or made-up mainly with ceramic material and occasionally with other objects.³⁰ He identified eight such features within the Phaistos settlement: five in the South-West Building, one in Corridor III/7, one in the Ayia Photeini quarter and one in the Chalara quarter (Figures 2, 3; see also the Figure 4 table). The latter, found in Room δ - ϵ at Chalara, has never been excavated.³¹

In 2005, a paper was dedicated to the filled-in platform deposit found in Room β at Ayia Photeini, focusing mostly on the different chronology to be attributed to the closed deposit found inside the platform (Middle Minoan IB) and to the room's floor deposit (Middle Minoan IIA).³²

In 2011, Giorgia Baldacci³³ published a paper on the filled-in bench structures of Phaistos, where she re-evaluated the typology, chronology and distribution of these filled-in structures, interpreting them as examples of the ritual preservation of ceramic material and connecting some of them with

²⁸ Pernier 1935.

²⁹ Levi 1976.

³⁰ Levi 1976.

³¹ Levi 1976, 666-669.

³² Caloi 2005.

³³ Baldacci 2011.

specific building activities.³⁴ In her list, she added one bench found in the North-West Building of Phaistos, which had been excavated by Pernier (see Figure 4).³⁵

In recent publications,³⁶ some pages were dedicated to the remarkable bench deposit found in the paved room (so called *aula lastricata*) in Corridor III/7, which has been interpreted as the results of a feasting event (see *infra*).

The nine filled-in architectural features identified by Pernier (1935) and Levi (1976), reviewed by Baldacci (2011) and discussed by other scholars, are listed in the table below (Figure 4), which also indicates the deposits, that after review, can be considered as structured deposits, as explained in detail below.

Item	Phaistos building/ quarter/ area	Room/ space	Brief description of the architectural feature	Brief description of the content	Bibliographic references	Structured and non-structured deposit
1	South-West Building	Room LXI, ground floor	Box-like structure (150 x 35, h. 15 cm). Non-sealed structure, likely left open.	Ceramic material: 7 whole and fragmentary vases (2 bowls, 1 jug, 2 jars, 1 <i>amphora</i> , 1 small vase).	Levi 1976, 138-140, fig. 200; Baldacci 2011, 323.	Non-structured deposit: box-like structure deposit (pottery cupboard?)
2		Room LXIII, ground floor	Box-like structure (ca. 170 x 47, h. 35 cm). Non-sealed structure, likely left open.	Ceramic material: 49 whole and mendable vases (30 drinking pots, 9 pouring vessels, 6 bowls, 1 <i>amphora</i> , 1 <i>pithos</i> , 1 small vase, 1 tray). Levi mentions some remains of bones, ash and charcoal.	Levi 1976, 141-145, figs. 211-213; Levi and Carinci 1988, 301; Baldacci 2011, 323.	Non-structured deposit: box-like structure deposit (pottery cupboard?)
3		Room IL, ground floor	Platform (dim. 250 x 155, h. 60 cm). Sealed with stone slabs.	Ceramic material: 710 whole and mendable vases (525 drinking pots, 71 pouring vessels, 60 shallow bowls, 5 containers, 17 platters, 13 cooking pots, 19 peculiar vases) and fragments. Clay material: 3 loomweights. Stone material: 3 vases. Animal remains: bones (cattle, sheep, pigs) and one <i>agrimi</i> skull with horns. Vases deposited within the platform, both in a vertical and in a horizontal position.	Levi 1976, 44, 49-53, fig. 35; Levi and Carinci 1988, 301; Baldacci 2011, 322; Caloi 2012.	Structured deposit: filled-in platform deposit
4		Room LI, first floor	Platform (180 x 80, h. 40 cm). Sealed with white stucco.	Ceramic material: 13 whole and fragmentary vases (1 drinking pot, 9 pouring vessels, 2 containers, 1 offering table). Vases deposited within the platform in a horizontal position.	Levi 1976, 209-216, figs. 317, 319-320; Levi and Carinci 1988, 303; Baldacci 2011, 321-322.	Structured deposit: filled-in platform deposit
5		Room XXVII/XXVIII, first floor	The excavator mentions a possible small bench or stool (h. 40 cm) found destroyed at the time of the excavation, and used as support for a <i>pithos</i> .	Ceramic material: 5 whole vases (1 cup, 2 bowls, 1 <i>hydria</i> , 1 lid) and many fragments. Fragmentary ceramic material found heaped.	Levi 1976, 201-203, fig. 307; Baldacci 2011, 320-321; Carinci 2011, 56.	Non-structured deposit: heap of artefacts
6	North-West Building	Room XIV, northern wall	Bench (185 x 50, h. ca. 15 cm). Half is made up with stones, half is open and was likely covered with wooden boards (?).	The number and type of vessels are unknown.	Pernier 1935, 255-262, fig. 216; Baldacci 2011, 320.	Non-structured deposit: box-like structure deposit (pottery cupboard?)

³⁴ Baldacci 2011.

³⁵ Pernier 1935, 255-262.

³⁶ Carinci and La Rosa 2007, 96-98; Todaro 2009, 128-130; Todaro 2013, 93-96.

PRESERVING MEMORY IN MINOAN CRETE

Item	Phaistos building/quarter/area	Room/space	Brief description of the architectural feature	Brief description of the content	Bibliographic references	Structured and non-structured deposit
7	Corridor III/7	<i>aula lastricata</i>	Bench (205 x 65; h. 15 cm). Sealed with stone slabs.	Ceramic material: 105 whole and fragmentary vases (102 handleless cups and 3 pouring vessels), and some fragments. Animal bones (cattle, sheep, pigs).	Levi 1976, 250-252, fig. 392; Carinci and La Rosa 2007, 96-97; Baldacci 2011, 320; Todaro 2013, 96.	Structured deposit: filled-in bench deposit
8	Ayia Photeini quarter	Room β	Platform (160 x 40, h. 50 cm). Upper surface is made of stones and earth.	Ceramic material: 20 whole vases (2 drinking pots, 11 jugs, 4 jars, 1 <i>pithos</i> , 2 <i>pithoid</i> vases). Stone material: 2 whole vases. Vases deposited within the platform in a vertical and in a horizontal position.	Levi 1976, 636-642, figs. 1032, 1038-1039; Levi and Carinci 1988, 301-302; Caloi 2005, 24-31; Baldacci 2011, 321.	Structured deposit: filled-in platform deposit
9	Chalara quarter	Room δ-ε	Platform (170 x 40, h. ca. 60 cm). Sealed with stone slabs.	Unknown (non-excavated platform).	Levi 1976, 666-669; Baldacci 2011, 322.	Non-excavated platform.

Figure 4. Table of the filled-in architectural features of Protopalatial Phaistos, showing the structured and non-structured deposits, according to the criteria used in this paper.

In all these works no attention was devoted to the distinctiveness of these Phaistian filled-in structures in the context of Minoan Crete and to their potential mnemonic value.

In 2012, the re-examination of the platform deposit found in Room IL of the South-West Building,³⁷ whose significance will be explored in this paper as well (see *infra*), has allowed for its interpretation as being the result of a feasting event, likely connected to the MM IIA renovation of the building in which it was found. This study has convinced the author that some of these peculiar filled-in structures are connected with the biography of the palace, marking some events whose mnemonic record is materialised in the expressly constructed benches or platforms.

After a detailed review of the filled-in bench and platform deposits at Phaistos, the author realised that not all the nine assumed filled-in architectural features listed by Levi and others (see Figure 4) can be considered proper structured deposits, because they do not meet the three following criteria: 1) deliberate and intentional deposition of material in a structured manner; 2) the sealing up of the deposit, which implies the choice of removing the selected objects from circulation; 3) the intentional deposition of objects that reflect a not normal event, whatever feasting or non-ordinary (i.e. ritual) action. Of the nine examples listed in the table of Figure 4, four cannot be considered proper structured deposits. The first is the one found in Room XXVII/XXVIII/first floor of the South-West Building (Figure 4, n. 5), which was interpreted by Levi as a bench deposit supporting a *pithos*.³⁸ In his 2011 functional analysis of Room XXVII/XXVIII, Carinci for the first time recognised that beneath the *pithos* there was only a heap of sherds, which he properly defined as a prop (*'pilastrō'*) in order to underline its function as a support for the *pithos* found in situ.³⁹

The other three filled-in architectural features I chose to exclude from this group are the examples located respectively in Room LXI and Room LXIII of the South-West Building (Figure 4, nos. 1-2),⁴⁰

³⁷ Caloi 2012.

³⁸ Levi 1976, 201-203, fig. 307.

³⁹ Carinci 2011, 56. A similar example was found in one of the storage rooms, Room LVIIIb, of the same building (see Levi 1976, 114, fig. 154).

⁴⁰ Levi 1976, 137-141, fig. 200. In Room LXI two low benches, just 15 cm high, were found along the northern and western wall. The northern one, which is as long as the northern wall and 35 cm wide, was found filled-in with ceramic material, mixed with stones and earth. According to Levi, the bench was covered with plaster, but actually it is not certain that it was sealed. In Room LXIII, the box-like structure, as long as the northern wall, 35 cm high and 47 cm wide, is located in a recess along the northern wall. It consists of a low-rise alignment of upright stones, filled-in with whole and fragmentary vases. During the excavation, Levi did not find traces of a covering for this structure and therefore it is likely that it was not closed on top.

and in Room XIV of the North-West Building (Figure 4, n. 6).⁴¹ The main reason is due to the fact that it is not certain whether these structures had a fixed covering. In fact, it appears that they were left open or covered with perishable material (e.g. wooden boards) and thus their assemblages, although deliberate in character, were not sealed up. It seems therefore that these structures were likely used as pottery cupboards.⁴²

Among the examples identified by Levi, there are actually only four certain cases of architectural features that have been deliberately filled-in with artefacts and other finds, and then sealed up. These are the following: the filled-in bench deposit from Corridor III/7 (Figure 4, n. 7), the filled-in platform deposits respectively from Room IL (Figure 4, n. 3) and from Room LI/first floor (Figure 4, n. 4) in the South-West Building, as well as the filled-in platform deposit from Room β in the Protopalatial quarter at Ayia Photeini (Figure 4, n. 8).

Filled-in bench and platform deposits from the First Palace of Phaistos

In this section I will focus on the three filled-in structured bench and platform deposits retrieved from the First Palace (Figure 4, nos. 3, 4, 7). Before discussing them, it is noteworthy to present the recent review, undertaken by La Rosa and Carinci,⁴³ of Levi's excavations there, which has permitted the clarification of its chronology and function/s. Without dwelling on all the changes that occurred in the main palatial building (i.e. South-West Building) from its foundation in MM IB to its destruction at the end of MM IIB, I present here the building's general layout in order to show the location, context and chronology of the filled-in bench and platform deposits recovered within. Before considering that, it is important to note that the layout of the building's three floors is somewhat the same, which is why Levi designated the rooms of each floor with the same label. In order to avoid any misunderstanding, in this paper I refer to rooms of the first and second floor of the building adding the relevant floor (e.g. Room IL/first floor or Room IL/second floor).

Carinci, in his 2011 study, subdivided the South-West Building into three blocks: A, B, and C.⁴⁴ To the north, Block A, which is connected to the palace's northern wing, is composed of Rooms L, IL, XXVII/XXVIII. Block B, that is the central part of the building, consists of Rooms LI-LIII, LIV, LV and LXII. Block C, to the south, is composed of Rooms LVIIIa-d, LIX, LX, LXI, LXIII, LXIV and LXV (Figure 5).

According to Carinci,⁴⁵ when the South-West Building was founded in MM IB, there were only two entrances from the Lower West Court, one conducting to the ground floor and one to the first floor. The first was a small opening in the middle of the building's façade (i.e. Block B) leading to storerooms LVIIIa-d and then to the building's other ground floor storerooms, i.e. Rooms LXI, LXIII, and LXV (Figure 5). The second access was through Ramp LII, which is an L-shaped ramp located to the north of the Lower West Court that leads to the building's first floor, more precisely to Room IL/first floor, and then to the adjacent rooms, namely XXVII/XXVIII/first floor and LIV, LV, LIII and LI/first floor (Figure 5). According to Carinci,⁴⁶ the ground floor of Block A and Block B in MM IB was not accessible from the Lower West Court, but only from Ramp LII (Figure 5). In its southern

⁴¹ Pernier 1935, 239-256. Pernier found it during the excavation of Room XIV, the northernmost of the Protopalatial storerooms, which contained MM IIB destruction levels, facing the Middle West Court. Along the northern wall of the room is a 50 cm wide structure. Filled-in with vases, its western part is made of stones and eastern part comprises an alignment of upright stones. Since no fixed covering was found, Pernier suggested that the structure had been covered with wooden boards and thus used as a pottery cupboard. He also compared it with similar cases discovered in the nearby Room X to the north, where some ceramic assemblages were found between two props likely used as support for wooden boards (Pernier 1935, 240, fig. 116).

⁴² Carinci had already suggested that these box-like structures from storerooms LXI and LXIII were used as repositories during the last phase of use of the rooms, i.e. MM IIB (Levi and Carinci 1988, 301).

⁴³ Carinci and La Rosa 2007, 2009; Carinci 2011.

⁴⁴ Carinci 2011, 21, fig. 1.

⁴⁵ Carinci 2011, 111-112.

⁴⁶ Carinci 2011. Francesco Tomasello (1999, 82-83 fig. 4), however, on the basis of his work on the building's architectural changes from MM IB to MM IIB, suggests that originally there was also a large open space located in the area successively occupied by the construction of Rooms L, LVI-LVII and conceived of as a sort of *propylaeum*, where three small passages led to the building's ground floor.

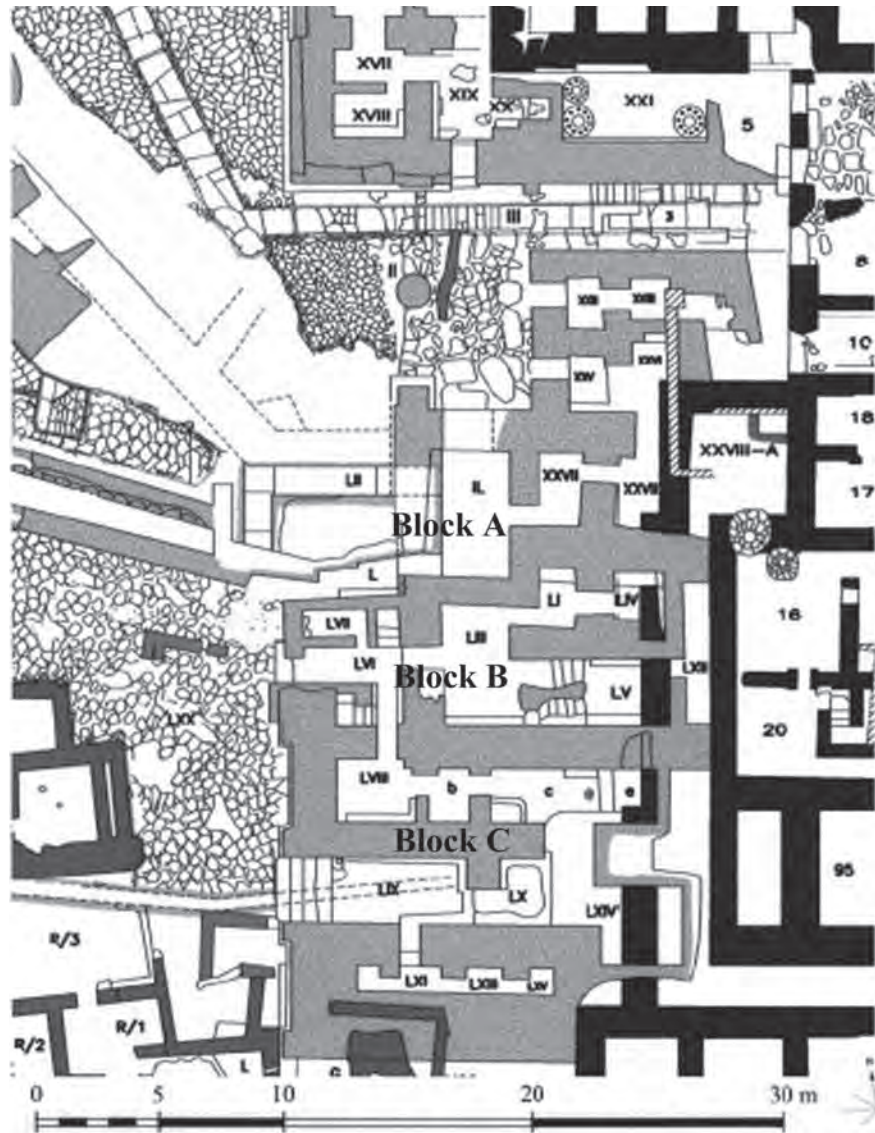


Figure 5. Schematic plan of Blocks A, B and C of the South-West Building at the time of its destruction at the end of MM IIB (after Carinci 2011, fig. 1).

part, Block C, the original MM IB orthostatic façade was instead completely closed off, without entrances.

The first change in the arrangement of the South-West Building occurred at the beginning of MM II, most likely in MM IIA, with some alterations to the means of access and the internal circulation patterns, involving operations to open and close passages. First of all, a new access was opened in the northern part of the façade where a new room, LVII, was added and two different accesses were opened on both sides of the room (i.e. Corridor L and Room LVI, Figure 5). To the north of Room LVII, the new entrance, known as Corridor L, leads through a short and narrow passage to Room IL and to the adjacent XXVII/XXVIII. To the south of Room LVII, the second entrance (i.e. Room LVI) leads to Room LIII, and then to Rooms LI and LV (Figure 5). During this renovation programme, the new passage connecting Corridor L and Room IL was provided with a threshold incised with *keranoi* (i.e. cup-holes)⁴⁷ and equipped with elaborated architectural features and special arrangements.⁴⁸ All these elements indicate that Corridor L was important, especially as an exclusive passage to

⁴⁷ Tomasello 1999, 88 fig. 8B. The *keranoi* are well attested at Phaistos in connection with entrances and passages, and likely associated with ritual offerings (see Ferrari and Cucuzza 2004, 74, 91-95, ns. 86-87, pl. Vb; Tomasello 1999, 89).

⁴⁸ According to Carinci (2011, 78-82), Corridor L was paved with gypsum slabs, provided with a low bench on the southern wall and with a niche found full of vessels on the northern wall.

Room IL, which from MM II appears to have been transformed from a basement into a preparation room for ceremonial events. Indeed, the MM IIB destruction levels found in the floor deposits of Room IL include ceramic material that can be easily interpreted as ritual paraphernalia.⁴⁹

The second change is that the connection between the Lower West Court and Room IL/first floor through the aforementioned L-shaped Ramp LII was closed.⁵⁰

During MM IIB the South-West Building went through several architectural alterations, which are the subject of Carinci's on-going revision. These coincide with the MM IIB monumentalisation of the First Palace at Phaistos before its final destruction.⁵¹ Among them, it is noteworthy to mention the construction of the building's monumental access, i.e. Room LIX (Figure 5).⁵²

The filled-in bench structured deposit from Corridor III/7 (Figure 4, n. 7)

During the 1959 Levi excavation of the Protopalatial levels of Corridor III/7,⁵³ a low bench was found. This was filled-in with ceramic vases and animal bones, sealed up and then used as a bench.

Corridor III/7 is located in a central position between the southern and the northern wing of the palace and connects the Middle West Court (*Piazzale I*) with the Central Court (*Cortile 40*; see Figure 3). Among the Protopalatial remains Levi found in Corridor III/7, the most important is the huge, 18 m long, wall α (Figure 6). It is the northern limit of three pavings going from the Middle West Court to the Central Court, as well as the southern limit of a paved room, dubbed *aula lastricata*. The filled-in bench, which is 65 cm wide and 15 cm high, was set against the southern side of the long wall α (Figures 6, 7). Levi excavated it, but never published its contents.

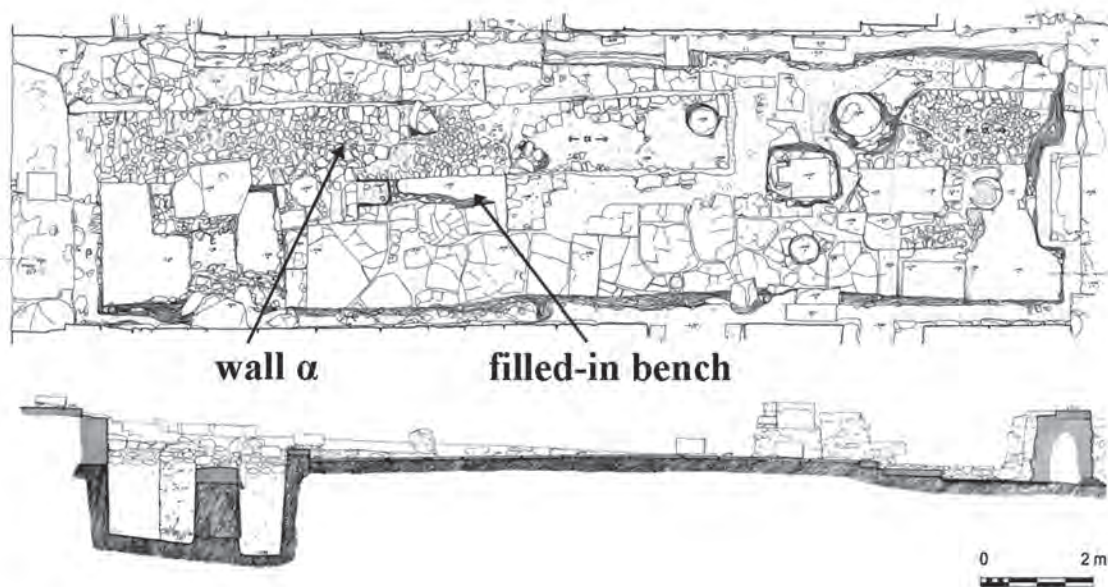


Figure 6. Plan and section of the paved room (*aula lastricata*) in Corridor III/7 (after Carinci and La Rosa 2007, fig. 92, with additions by the author).

⁴⁹ Carinci 2011, 69-71.

⁵⁰ Carinci 2011, 45.

⁵¹ Carinci 2011, Caloi 2015a.

⁵² According to Tomasello and Carinci, the monumental entrance known as Room LIX was opened in the orthostatic façade only late in MM IIB, before the final destruction of the building: Tomasello 2001, 414; Carinci 2011, 21-22.

⁵³ Levi 1976, 250-252.

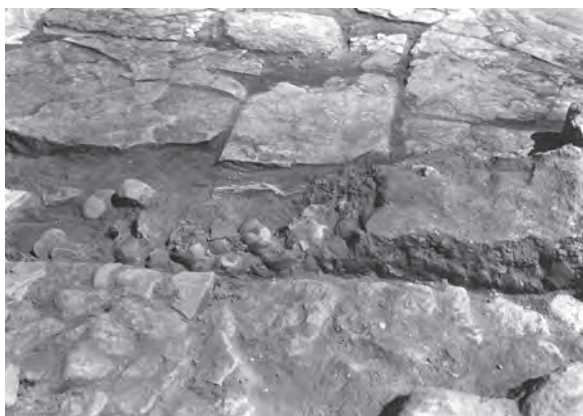


Figure 7. The filled-in bench leant against wall α during its excavation, from the north (Photo *Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene Archive*).



Figure 8. Some of the handleless cups retrieved from the filled-in bench leant against wall α in Corridor III/7 (after Carinci and La Rosa 2007, fig. 104).

A recent re-examination by Carinci and La Rosa⁵⁴ suggests a MM IB date for wall α based on its association with MM IB pottery. On the basis of stylistic comparisons, the two scholars attributed the ceramic material from inside the bench to Early MM IB, corresponding to the construction phase of the First Palace. The bench deposit comprises 102 handleless cups (Figure 8), of which only one is decorated. Together with the cups, there are three small pouring vessels and fragments of both drinking and pouring vases.⁵⁵

Some faunal remains – bones attributed to cattle, sheep and pigs – were also found together with the pottery, and interpreted as debris from a consumption event. The presence of numerous handleless cups and animal bones associated with the structured manner of the deposition (a number of cups were found in stacks), have led Carinci and La Rosa to interpret the bench deposit as the result of a communal feast.⁵⁶ Moreover, Simona Todaro has proposed that the feasting had to be linked to the construction of the northern wing of the First Palace in Early MM IB. Indeed, she connected the make-up of the bench with the construction of the paved room and of wall α , which are both parts of the northern wing of the palace.⁵⁷

Looking at the biography of the deposited objects (i.e. more than one hundred vases and large amounts of meat), they have been consumed in a special ceremonial event that occurred in Early MM IB, then collected and deposited all together in the same ‘container’, that is a new bench. This seems to have remained visible and functional at least during the first phases of the First Palace life. The position of the bench is strategic, as it is located at the key point between the two main courts, as well as between the two wings of the palace. Its central position and its high visibility should have played an important role for the Phaistian community who invested in the construction of the new palatial building. Indeed, the community could easily recognise the symbolic value of the bench, which contained the mnemonic record of the communal feast held to commemorate the construction event.

A similar example of filled-in bench deposit was found in the Neopalatial court-centred building that has been recently discovered on the southeast slope of the Bouffo Hill at Sissi, only 4 km East of Malia.⁵⁸ In 2011, along the eastern wing’s southeast angle of the court-centred building, removal of the topsoil brought to light a conspicuous Neopalatial pottery deposit; this was deliberately

⁵⁴ Carinci and La Rosa 2007, 88–98.

⁵⁵ Carinci and La Rosa 2007, 97, figs. 104–108.

⁵⁶ Carinci and La Rosa 2007, 98.

⁵⁷ Todaro 2013, 96.

⁵⁸ Driessen 2012, 22; Jusseret *et al.* 2016

placed in a box-like structure constructed against the southwest façade of the building.⁵⁹ Plaster fragments were found together with whole and mendable vases, suggesting that the deposit was originally kept within a bench. The study of this closed deposit, which dates to MM IIIB, has allowed for its interpretation as the result of a feasting event, perhaps to be connected with the inauguration of the MM IIIB construction of the court-centred building.⁶⁰ The feasting hoard is composed of a high concentration of whole and mendable plain, handleless conical cups (more than 140), some of which were deposited in stacks, of several tripod cooking pots and of special ritual implements, such as one globular *rhyton*⁶¹ and one red-painted figurine in the shape of a snake head, likely a cobra. No animal bones have been retrieved from the deposit. We can therefore suggest either that food remains of the feasting event were placed or thrown away in another area, or that cooking pots were not used to prepare meat, but other kinds of foods (legumes?).⁶²

The filled-in platform structured deposit from Room IL in the South-West Building (Figure 4, n. 3)

As stated above, during the MM II remodelling of the South-West Building, Room IL went through many architectural and functional transformations.⁶³ First of all, a new door was opened in the western wall of Room IL connecting the latter with the Lower West Court through Corridor L. Then, the room's ceiling was raised and a new large and paved platform was constructed at the room's northern wall. The platform is exceptionally large with a height of 60 cm, a width of 155 cm and a span the entire length of the room's northern wall, c. 250 cm (Figure 9). It was built of stones, filled with hundreds of vessels and objects, both ceramic and lithic, and with animal remains, and sealed with stone slabs (Figures 10, 11).

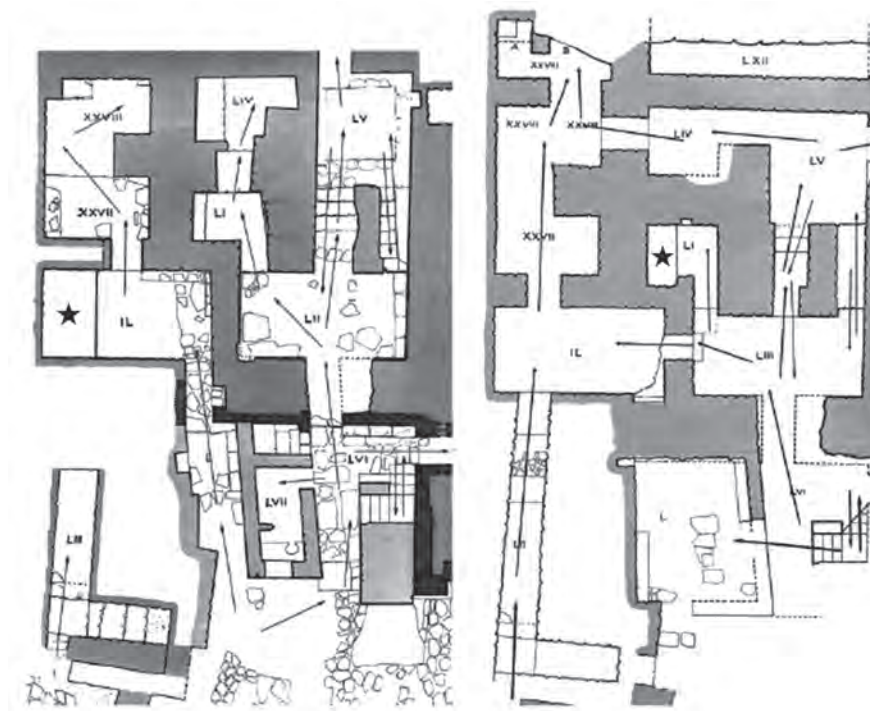


Figure 9. Schematic plan of Blocks A and B of the South-West Building: ground floor (left) and first floor (right), with indication of the filled-in platforms in Room IL and Room LI/first floor (after Carinci 2001, fig. 93, with additions by the author).

⁵⁹ Jusseret 2012, 137-138, figs. 6.2-6.3

⁶⁰ Caloi 2015b. A paper entitled 'Inaugurating the Neopalatial court-centred building at Sissi. A MM IIIB feasting hoard' is in preparation to illustrate the material retrieved from the filled-in bench deposit.

⁶¹ Jusseret 2012, 138, fig. 6.4.

⁶² It is interesting to note that another Neopalatial deposit (whose study is still ongoing), found in the open area of Zone 5 at Sissi (Devolder 2011, 158-159, figs. 6.25-6.26) and resulting from a single (feasting?) event, has equally produced only few animal bones, associated with more than one hundred plain handleless cups (some found in stacks), as well as with several one-handled cups and tripod cooking pots.

⁶³ Carinci 2011, 41-43.



Figure 10. The paved platform in Room IL during its excavation (Photo *Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene* Archive).

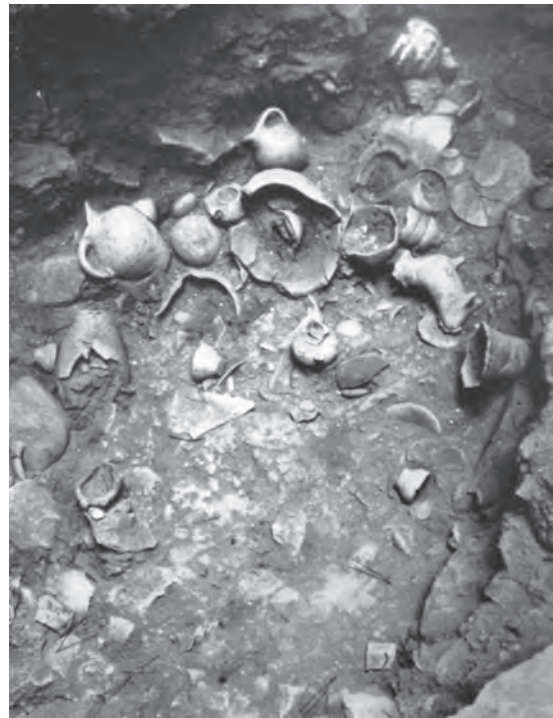


Figure 11. The material retrieved from inside the filled-in platform deposit in Room IL (after Levi 1976, fig. 44)

The filled-in platform was excavated by Levi during his 1951-1952 excavation campaign and only partially published in his 1976 work.⁶⁴ My 2011-2012 study focused on the reinvestigation of all the material from inside the platform, including both the complete vessels published by Levi and the unpublished material preserved in 40 boxes in the Stratigraphical Museum at Phaistos.⁶⁵ The eating and drinking paraphernalia sealed in this filled-in platform deposit have been re-examined as indicators of a 'feasting context'.⁶⁶ Together with 710 ceramic vases, the platform contained also three clay loomweights, three stone vessels and faunal remains.⁶⁷ The considerable quantity of vessels, especially handleless conical cups, together with the presence of cooking pots and bone fragments, suggest some kind of communal drinking and eating. Moreover, the ceramic material from inside the platform comprises mostly complete and freshly broken vases, which were deposited in a 'structured' manner (i.e. vertical and horizontal position, with some handleless cups in stacks) and within a uniform fill, suggesting that the material was deposited at one time.

Of a total of 710 complete and restorable ceramic vases, there are 525 drinking pots, 71 pouring vases (mainly jugs, bridge-spouted jars and side-spouted jars), 60 shallow bowls, 17 platters (mostly basins), 13 cooking vessels, 5 containers and 19 peculiar vessels, including ritual implements (see *infra*).⁶⁸ The platform deposit's most surprising feature is the exaggerated number of handleless conical cups: of a total of 500 complete and restorable examples, 430 are plain (Figure 12), while only 70 are decorated.

It is noteworthy to mention that a number of ritual implements were found inside the platform, namely three bull *rhyta*, two fire-boxes, two horned pots, one fruitstand and one grater.⁶⁹ Special

⁶⁴ Levi 1952, 322-329; Levi 1953, 252-260; Levi 1976.

⁶⁵ The 40 boxes of the Stratigraphical Museum of Phaistos are the following: nos. 2/19-27, 3/1-25, 4/1-4.

⁶⁶ Caloi 2012.

⁶⁷ On the loomweights from the filled-in platform of Room IL see Militello 2012, 209.

⁶⁸ See table A in Caloi 2012, 54 to appreciate the frequency and typology of ceramic vessels attested in Room IL's filled-in platform deposit.

⁶⁹ Levi 1976, 49-57. For a list of almost all the vessels found - but not always published - by Levi in his 1951-1952 excavation of the platform deposit of Room IL, see Levi and Carinci 1988, 354-355.



Figure 12. Some of the numerous undecorated handleless cups from the filled-in platform deposit in Room IL (Photo author).



Figure 13. The three bull *rhyta* found in the filled-in platform deposit in Room IL (Photo *Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene* Archive).

attention must be given to the three bull *rhyta* which are all decorated in polychromy (Figure 13). As Robert Koehl points out,⁷⁰ bull *rhyta* are frequently found in clusters and are ‘used chiefly in ritual-related activities’. The occurrence of bull *rhyta* in association with pouring vessels may indicate that libation formed a part of the rituals that occurred during the feasting.

As previously stated, multiple faunal remains, whose study is underway, were found inside the filled-in platform.⁷¹ Preliminary analysis of the 252 bone fragments that Levi collected during the excavation, has permitted their attribution to cattle, sheep and pigs. The bone fragments of sheep consist mostly of limbs, with a smaller number of vertebrae and ribs, whereas the pig bones can be attributed primarily to skulls, and especially jawbones. The most interesting example is the partial skull of an *agrimi* with almost entirely preserved horns.⁷² For the final publication, the zooarchaeological study will allow us to define the occurrence and frequency of animals present, as well as the ways in which they were consumed.

As stated above, the formal deposition and hoarding of feasting paraphernalia retrieved from inside the platform in Room IL appears to be the repository from a single feasting event held nearby, most likely in the Lower West Court of the palace. In this sense, the platform deposit’s make-up, including hundreds of drinking pots and several special paraphernalia dating to MM IIA, i.e. earlier than the MM IIB destruction levels, seems connected with the architectural and functional transformations that occurred there. The filled-in platform can therefore be interpreted as the material mnemonic record of an exceptional and memorable event, likely represented by a

⁷⁰ Koehl 2006, 353.

⁷¹ The zooarchaeological study of the faunal remains from the platform deposit in Room IL by Erica Platania, undergraduate student at the University of Catania, Italy, is in progress. My special thanks to Erica Platania for giving me her preliminary observations on the faunal remains collected from the platform deposit in Room IL.

⁷² Caloi 2012, 52, fig. 10.

feasting event on the occasion of the renovation of Block A (*i.e.* northern part) of the building, and especially of Room IL.

The Room IL filled-in platform deposit is not just the result of a feast, but the high number of ritual vases turns it into a special deposit. Indeed, the presence of a cluster of three bull *rhyta* sealed inside a platform has led Koehl to interpret the deposit as a ‘dedicated deposit’, which was ‘used in rituals associated with the completion of the palace’.⁷³ The platform deposit’s ritual connotation is also increased by the deposition of an *agrimi* skull with impressive horns. In fact, following recent studies, the latter may be connected to specific ritualised behaviour;⁷⁴ the presence in a sealed deposit of an *agrimi* skull appears to point to the exceptional and theatrical character of the event, which would have created a memorable social occasion.

The character, scale and exceptional nature of the platform deposit in Room IL find their best parallel in the Neopalatial Temple Repositories at Knossos, though the latter are underground structures. A fortiori, also the scale and exceptionalism of the structured deposit built into the extraordinarily large and visible platform in Room IL appears to be in accordance with the monumentality of the First Palace of Phaistos and thus to mark the beginning of a new cycle in the Phaistos palace’s long use.

The filled-in platform structured deposit from Room LI/first floor in the South-West Building (Figure 4, n. 4)

Levi uncovered a filled-in plastered platform set against the north wall of Room LI/first floor (Figure 9) during the 1953 excavations in Block B of the South-West Building. As already observed, Room LI/first floor followed the same history as the South-West Building. It was constructed in MM IB, then it went through several transformations during both the successive MM IIA and MM IIB phases, and finally it was destroyed at the end of MM IIB. The floor deposits found in Room LI/first floor belong to the last phase of use, *i.e.* late/final MM IIB.

An important assemblage of vases on the platform includes a well-known elaborate pedestalled vase, a fire-box and four *pithoid* vases (Figure 14).⁷⁵ There were also two niches found, the first in the west wall (40x40x25cm) and the second in the east. Inside the western niche, whose floor level is the same as the upper surface of the platform, were found two *pitharakia* with lids.⁷⁶

According to Levi, the platform was originally only 33 cm high and 40 cm wide, set against the northeast side of the room and filled only with sherds. Then, in a second stage, it was enlarged in order to become as long as the northern wall and filled-in with whole and fragmentary material (Figure 14). It appears that several different layers of plaster were added (Figure 15) in order to raise the platform during the MM II phase.

The filled-in platform deposit was composed of 13 ceramic vases: nine pouring vessels (mostly jugs and juglets), two containers (one *stamnos* and one four-handled high-necked jar), one cup, and half an offering table.⁷⁷ They were placed in a horizontal position. Although a few examples could be MM IIA in date, most of the vases are datable to MM IIB.

A contextual analysis of the room led Carinci⁷⁸ to interpret Room LI/first floor as both a preparation room, where some form of liquids were prepared, and a specialised storeroom, in connection with the find of the aforementioned *pitharakia* inside the western niche (Figure 14). It appears, therefore,

⁷³ Koehl 2006, 332-333.

⁷⁴ Hamilakis 2008, 9-10.

⁷⁵ Levi 1976, 211-215, fig. 333; Carinci 2001, 486.

⁷⁶ Carinci 2001.

⁷⁷ Levi 1976, 211-215.

⁷⁸ 2001, 486-487.



Figure 14. Assemblage found on the filled-in platform in Room LI/first floor (Photo *Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene* Archive).



Figure 15. The plastered platform in Room LI/first floor during the excavation of the deposit (Photo *Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene* Archive).

that some liquids were prepared in order to be consumed outside, most likely in the Lower West Court (Figure 3).

It is interesting to observe that the vases found on the platform resemble those retrieved from the platform fill, as both the deposits consist mostly of containers and pouring vessels. It appears, therefore, that the material in the platform's fill could have been used in the same way as the material found on it, to serve the same functions. Since the platform was repaired several times, as the excavator suggested, it was probably fundamental for the room's function. The practice of employing older vessels to renovate the platform is likely connected with the desire to preserve a memory of events in which the vases were used. Nonetheless, the practice could also be linked to the need for replacing frequently the necessary equipment for preparing liquids to be consumed in communal events in the palace's Lower West Court. If this is the case, it is plausible that the vessels used were discarded and placed in the platform so as not to be re-used.

In Room LI/first floor, the re-opening and re-filling of the same platform with the twofold aim of depositing and concealing selected objects and to increase the functionality of the platform, seem to reflect a social action that aims at producing mnemonic effects. The community attending or using the room may have desired to highlight the continuity of use of this specific room devoted to the preparation of liquids for commensal activities through the recurring renovation of its functional, multi-layered platform. The latter seems indeed to represent the materialisation of a multi-layered time,⁷⁹ as it was used during late/final MM IIB (i.e. last phase of the South-West Building), but built with vases belonging to the previous MM IIA and MM IIB phases.

Concluding remarks: Preserving memory of major changes in the Phaistos First Palace's biography

The deliberate deposition and concealment of material 'is a strategy that requires serious effort and time, as opposed to dispersal and abandonment'. The choice not to scatter the material, but to place it in a specific context and in a structured manner is a practice aimed at preserving and memorialising events.⁸⁰ From this perspective, Phaistian filled-in bench and platform deposits appear

⁷⁹ On the multi-temporality of the archaeological record see Lucas 2005, 42-44.

⁸⁰ Hamilakis 2010, 195.

to be examples of a mnemonic practice comparable to other Minoan Bronze Age cases, such as the abovementioned structured deposits of Nopigeia-Drapanias, Malia and Thronos/Kephala.⁸¹ Feasting hoards resulting from special events (such as the above-discussed cases of Corridor III/7 and Room IL) are well attested also in other Protopalatial sites of Crete,⁸² as demonstrated by the structured deposits of Lakkos at Petras and of Early Magazine A at Knossos.⁸³ Nevertheless, unlike these deposits, Phaistian filled-in bench and platform deposits are different especially because they are sealed in built, above ground (i.e. not buried) and functional structures. As already stated, these deposits differ also from foundation deposits because they are not buried under the floors or walls of buildings, but are visible and fully integrated into the life of the building in which they are found. In fact, Phaistian filled-in bench and platform deposits are sealed within settings that remain functional; people can use platforms to work and prepare food, as well as to sit on as benches.

Concerning the patterning of actual artefact depositions, we have observed that filled-in bench and platform deposits are different one from another. They contain a variable number and type of objects and can result from a variety of social actions. Despite this variability, the filled-in bench and platform deposits appear to have the same purpose. Looking at the biography of the deposited objects, they were first used during a social event or action, then removed from circulation and finally incorporated within expressly constructed (or re-built in case of Room LI/first floor platform) benches or platforms. After their sealing, these filled-in benches and platforms would have been used by the community living at Phaistos, becoming part of the community life. Using these benches and platforms, the community would have remembered the social practice that had produced their construction, whatever feasting or other social events. In this sense, it seems that the purpose of these filled-in benches and platforms is multiple: they are not only functional as benches or platforms, but also commemorative of more or less special events.

Filling-in new architectural structures with intentionally deposited objects appears to be a social practice strictly associated with the Protopalatial Phaistian community, and to have become a part of Phaistian tradition since the emergence of the First Palace. Indeed, during the Neolithic and Prepalatial periods, the Phaistian structured deposits consisted of pits and/or cists, which were buried beneath floors and/or walls.⁸⁴ On the contrary, the practice of creating structured deposits within new, visible and functional architectural arrangements arose at the same time as the emergence of the palace at Phaistos in MM IB. Filled-in bench or platform deposits are not present at Neopalatial Phaistos, when some examples of structured deposits have been found only in built, but underground structures, which were constructed to inaugurate superimposed rooms or buildings.⁸⁵

From what has been observed in the previous pages, it seems therefore that the practice of making-up new benches and platforms with material resulting from special events or actions originated at Phaistos in the Protopalatial period. It arose in MM IB with the foundation of the First Palace and stopped in MM IIB, with the palace's collapse. This practice sounds like a means to create a common symbolic language to be recognised by the Protopalatial Phaistian community, and can thus be interpreted as a ritualised attempt to establish a clear link between people and the place where they live or where they are symbolised. The social meaning of the Phaistian structured deposits

⁸¹ For Nopigeia-Drapanias see Hamilakis and Harris 2011; for Malia see Driessen *et al.* 2008; for Thronos/Kephala see D'Agata 1997-2000.

⁸² The already observed formal diversity of Minoan foundation deposits is recognizable also in feasting hoards of Minoan Crete, as reasonably underlined by Hamilakis (2008, 7): 'An indisputable feature of feasting and communal consumption in the Prehistoric Aegean, [...] is their extreme spatial, chronological, formal diversity, rendering any checklist and typology futile...'

⁸³ For Petras see Haggis 2007; for Knossos see Macdonald and Knappett 2007.

⁸⁴ See the Early MM IB *larnax* deposit found beneath Protopalatial walls in Neopalatial Room 11 in Caloi 2009; see other Neolithic and Prepalatial examples in Todaro 2013.

⁸⁵ A good example from Phaistos is represented by the structured deposit found in a stone-lined cist (known also as *cassella*) beneath the Neopalatial room 50 and containing 115 handleless conical cups and many animal bones (La Rosa 2002, 39). These kinds of structured deposits, which can be defined as foundation deposits, are also attested at Neopalatial Ayia Triada (i.e. beneath Room 49; cf La Rosa 2002, 41 with bibliography) and Knossos (e.g. the Temple Repositories; cf. Hatzaki 2009, 2011). Very similar is also the sealed room recently discovered at Neopalatial Gournia (Watrous *et al.* 2015, 431-433).

is to remind people living in and/or visiting the palace of the event connected with the deposit sealed within the bench/platform, and thus to develop and reinforce the sense of being part of the community that gravitates toward Phaistos and shares the same habitus. In fact, only people living or attending Phaistos could know or remember that these platforms and benches were made-up of the remains of feasting or other social events. Since these specific filled-in structures were constructed with material belonging to a certain stage of the Protopalatial period, but went on to be used during the successive phases of the same Protopalatial period, they seem to materialise the temporal continuity of use of the palatial rooms or areas where they have been built. The high concentration at one site of these specific, multi-layered features points to the Phaistians' need to mark their settlement's continuity and longevity. It appears, therefore, that the practice of using old material in order to construct something not only new, but also visible and functional for posterity, was greatly valued by the Phaistian community in order to stress the site's perpetuity.

Filled-in benches and platforms are so far not attested outside Phaistos in the Protopalatial period. We have, however, already observed that the only case that is comparable to the Phaistian ones, and especially to the one from Corridor III/7, has been recently discovered in the Neopalatial court-centred building of Sissi (see *supra*), where it appears to be connected with its MM IIIB construction. It seems therefore plausible that these kinds of visible structured deposits were born at Protopalatial Phaistos and then spread out to other Minoan palaces during the successive Neopalatial period, keeping the same function of embodying the mnemonic record of communal events connected to important changes in the palaces' biography.

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