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The Funerary Complexes of Kamilari and Ayia Triada in the Protopalatial Period: Competition or Integration?

SINCE IT IS GENERALLY assumed¹ that in the Protopalatial period many Mesara *tholos* tombs continue to be used following the same ritual behaviours attested in the late Prepalatial phases, and especially in MM IA², in this paper I will show that the material manifestations of these burial and cult places varied regionally and chronologically. In particular, I will focus on two of the most important funerary complexes of the Western Mesara in use in the Protopalatial period, namely Kamilari and Ayia Triada.

Recent revisions of settlements and funerary complexes of the Mesara plain have indeed provided finer chronological divisions for the Protopalatial period which allow us to follow changes in shorter time spans³, that means from the end of Prepalatial times (MM IA) through all the phases of the Protopalatial period, that are MM IB, MM IIA and MM IIB. In particular, since the Protopalatial phases of the Kamilari cemetery have been recently reassessed by myself⁴ after the first 1958 Doro Levi excavation⁵, moving from the evaluation of the archaeological evidence retrieved from this cemetery, in this paper I will present the ritual behaviours attested in Protopalatial times and mostly the changes from those occurring in Prepalatial times. Moreover, I will make comparisons with the near necropolis of Ayia Triada, trying to find out the kind of relationship existing between the two complexes, whether competition or integration, and also to understand their correlation with the emergence of the Phaistos palace.

1. I would like to thank Filippo Carinci and Vincenzo La Rosa for the opportunity they gave me to study the Protopalatial phases of the Kamilari cemetery. I am also grateful to Filippo Carinci, Simona Todaro and Aleydis Van de Moortel for their suggestions.
2. Murphy 2011. Legarra Herrero 2011.
3. Caloi 2009a, b. Carinci 2003, 2004.
4. Caloi 2009.
5. Levi 1962.

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Without dwelling upon the limits of the study of mortuary practices attested in the Mesara tholos tombs, I will just remind that these limits are mostly connected to the nature of these collective tombs, used over long periods of time, cleared periodically, not well excavated or poorly documented.

KAMILARI IN THE PROTOPALATIAL PERIOD

My recent analysis of the MM IB-MM IIB pottery retrieved from the funerary complex of Kamilari, combined with the revision of the excavation reports, allowed me to affirm that the cemetery was constructed in MM IB⁶. The original nucleus of Kamilari appears to have consisted of the circular room, the antechamber α , located outside the entrance on the Eastern side, the contiguous room β and the courtyard to the North, bounded in the North-Western part by a *peribolos* wall⁷. From the courtyard there is the entrance to the antechamber α ; this passage has been in use from MM IB to the end of MM IIB, and it was likely closed in MM III, when the access to the cemetery has been moved to the East.

For MM IB the ceramic evidence displays only 17 diagnostic vases⁸, which are mainly pouring vessels. The majority of MM IB pottery was found outside the *tholos*, in the courtyard, while inside only few MM IB vases have been recovered. Moreover, it has been observed that most of MM IB entire vases have been retrieved from a specific area of the courtyard, that is between the passage to the antechamber α and the *peribolos* wall. The entire and diagnostic vases found here include mostly jugs, such as *barbotine* and dark on light jugs, as well as the recurrent *askoid* jugs with curving stripes⁹.

In MM IIA, the quantity and the distribution of the pottery suggest an increase in the use of the cemetery, where occurred also an increment in drinking pots and the appearance of a new pouring vessel, that is the bridge-spouted jar. Among the new forms attested at Kamilari from MM IIA onwards, there are bridge-spouted jars, conical cups and fine carinated cups. In particular, some MM IIA bridge-spouted jars display new innovative decorations, consisting of impressed and incised motifs, such as ridges and zig-zag¹⁰, reproducing decorations of metallic prototypes. The appearance at Kamilari of new forms with impressed or incised

6. Caloi 2009b.

7. Caloi forthcoming a, fig. 1.

8. Caloi 2009b, 42-50.

9. On the topic: Caloi 2008-2009.

10. Caloi 2009b, 859, 900, pls. 31, 33.

decorations, and with the occurrence of particular handles imitating metalwork, seems to follow the trend attested at Phaistos from MM IIA¹¹.

At Kamilari, the strongest sign of changes both in mortuary and ritual practices occurred in MM IIB, when the Kamilari cemetery is characterized by: 1) a strong increase in the use of the cemetery, attested by the foundation of a new tomb (Mylona Lakko), the explosion of the ceramic material and the expansion of the occupied areas towards East; 2) new ossuaries and new rituals in association with the relocation of the bones, which are a clear evidence of the typical Early Prepalatial two-stage process, including primary and secondary depositions, but without the use of *pithoi* and *larnakes*; 3) the equipment of a slab altar. For MM IIB the evidence suggests a spatially and functionally differentiation of the spaces outside the tomb, where there are areas exclusively linked to mortuary feasting and others used mainly for non-funerary activities, likely connected to the worship of dead ancestors, and not related to specific funerals¹².

At Kamilari a large amount of ceramic material datable to MM IIB was found scattered in the courtyard. In comparison with the previous phases, the number of the vessels, both entire and fragmentary, has strongly increased. In MM IIB the increment in the use of drinking pots, that are double the pouring vessels, attests the performance of rituals that comprise mostly drink consumption.

Summing up, in MM IB the Kamilari cemetery displays strong changes in comparisons with the MM IA mortuary behaviours attested in other *tholos* tomb cemeteries of the Mesara plain, such as the nearest Ayia Triada¹³, as well as Moni Odighitria, Koumasa and Platanos¹⁴. First of all, at Kamilari in MM IB there is no clear evidence of the typical Early Prepalatial two-stage process involving the primary burial of the corpse and the secondary treatment of the bones. In MM IB no featured rooms were found for the disposal of the skeletal material, although it cannot be avoid that the skeletal material was removed toward the periphery of the *tholos* interior. Therefore, no clear evidence is attested for ancestor worship in MM IB, whereas from MM IIB this kind of evidence becomes much more visible¹⁵.

Then, differently from Prepalatial cemeteries, Kamilari has been provided with an open area for ritual activities since its foundation in MM IB. Nevertheless,

11. Caloi 2009a, 420-427, figs. 14-16.

12. On the topic: Caloi forthcoming b, figs. 3-4.

13. Carinci 2003.

14. Branigan 1998a. Vasilakis and Branigan 2010.

15. Caloi forthcoming b.

from the quantity and the distribution of the ceramic material, it seems that in MM IB the area for the performance of funerary rituals was restricted to few people and limited to the North-western part of the courtyard and to the antechamber α. The MM IB vessels found here consist of a few entire vases lying in secondary deposition which, as already proposed by Levi¹⁶, can be interpreted as vessels used during the funerary rituals which were likely performed here, then placed inside the circular room and finally moved out during the various cleanings of the *tholos*. Moreover, since many entire vases dating from MM IB to MM IIB¹⁷, were found here, the evidence suggests that this area continued to be used for centuries as the focus of ritual activities, as well as a heap area for the disposal of ceramic material from the circular room.

Finally, from the MM IB ceramic evidence, the ritual activities performed in the open area were not large-scale ceremonies involving drink and food consumption, as attested in the aforementioned MM IA cemeteries. In fact, from Kamilari no traces of food were retrieved, even if the latter is a difficult category of material to maintain. In any case, in MM IB no evidence is offered by pottery and other implements associated to food and drink consumption, since no cooking pots, no bowls and only two drinking vessels are attested, while most of the pottery consists of pouring vessels¹⁸. Therefore, from the almost exclusive presence of jugs it may be inferred that in MM IB the main ritual focused on pouring actions, making it plausible that in the courtyard occurred libations as well.

It is interesting to observe that in MM IB at Kamilari a new monumental *tholos* tomb was constructed reproducing the Prepalatial prototypes, but, at the same time, the funerary complex seems not to be used following the same ritual behaviours generally attested in *tholos* tombs cemeteries of the Late Prepalatial period (i.e. MM IA), when occurred large-scale communal ceremonies involving food and drink consumption¹⁹. Moreover, the involvement of much work to construct a monumental tomb seems not to correspond to a strong occupation of the *tholos*, which appears limited in its use. In fact, although it is clear that the MM IB pottery from inside the tomb has been likely removed for cleanings, the ceramic evidence from the funerary chamber is actually scant. It is not attested a large-scale use of the cemetery in comparison with the stronger occupation in the successive Protopalatial phases (i.e. MM II-MM III). It seems therefore that

16. Levi 1962.

17. Caloi forthcoming b, fig. 1.

18. Caloi 2009b, 42-50.

19. On the topic: Hamilakis 1998; 2008.

in MM IB the *tholos* tomb was not the focus of the ritual activities, which were instead performed in the courtyard. For these reasons I wonder if the tomb was originally built in MM IB mostly as a focal point, in the sense of a territorial marker for one or more communities, rather than as a proper burial place, as it will become from MM IIA.

From MM IIA the funerary evidence at Kamilari has revealed the first changes from MM IB. From the ceramic evidence of Kamilari it is noteworthy to remark that from MM IIA occurred the introduction of shapes (i.e. bridge-spouted jar, conical cups and fine carinated cups), which implies the occurrence of new ritual forms, mostly based on drink consumption. For MM IIA and MM IIB drinking is largely attested in comparison with food consumption, suggesting that people were involved in drinking, rather than in eating. Moreover, the high number and variety of pouring vessels lead to think that the ceremonial activities performing outside the *tholos* tomb involved mostly pouring actions. The same picture is visible in the Kamares Cave, where the Protopalatial assemblage (MM I-MM II) has revealed a large number of pouring vessels in comparison with the drinking pots, making it probable that the pouring actions were also the principal focus of ritual activities, such as the cave cult²⁰.

Moreover, it has to be noticed that the new forms attested at Kamilari from MM IIA onwards are not only typical of the near Phaistos palace, but also consist of the ceremonial sets used in the communal areas of the palace, as testified by the numerous fills and/or dumps retrieved from the palatial area²¹. The adoption at Kamilari of the ceremonial sets used at Phaistos may signify a social strategy of imitation and emulation of ritual performances acted in the communal area of the Phaistos palace. Therefore, the emulation of consumption forms from the palatial context could reflect new needs of the Kamilari community to remind to elite feasting, in order to display its membership of a much wider elite community. From MM IIA it seems that Kamilari is integrated in a new system of regional entity, likely focused on Phaistos, which from MM IIA seems to have played a new role²². On the basis of the ceramic evidence, in my opinion already from MM IIA the Phaistos palace begins to play a key role in legitimating that regional integration, which *refers to the socio-economic reorganisation of a region into a subordinate hinterland by a centre*²³.

20. Van de Moortel 2006a, 82-83.

21. Caloi 2011, 179-180.

22. Caloi in preparation.

23. Schoep and Tomkins 2011, 23.

AYIA TRIADA IN THE PROTOPALATIAL PERIOD

Ayia Triada, together with Kamilari, is the only cemetery of the Mesara plain displaying the foundation of a new *tholos* tomb in MM IB, that is *Tholos B*²⁴. Moreover, both the new *tholoi* have been built with large and smoothed blocks, well arranged in the lowest rows, displaying a new way of constructing the circular room, which is different from that occurred in Prepalatial times and which instead could be typical of the Protopalatial period²⁵.

Following an opposite trend in comparison with the pattern offered by most of the Mesara *tholos* tombs, in the MM IB phase at Ayia Triada and at Kamilari, occurred an increase in the use of the cemeteries. Besides the new *Tholos B*, the archaeological evidence shows that in MM IB *Tholos A* of Ayia Triada continues to be used, although in a limited way, together with some annexes located to the South and known as *Camerette*, which were employed from MM IA until the end of MM IB not for burials, but likely as pottery repositories. Nevertheless, differently from the main *tholos* of Kamilari, *Tholos B* of Ayia Triada is the second foundation of the complex, and, although many hypotheses could be proposed to explain the establishment of a second *tholos* in the same cemetery, in my opinion it could signify segmentation within the community (or communities) burying at Ayia Triada. Indeed, *Tholos B* was founded in MM IB, likely by a new emerging group/family of the community, exactly when the other *Tholos A* began to decline after its *acmé* in MM IA. As Carinci has well pointed out²⁶, at Ayia Triada there was a strong change in funerary rituals from MM IA to MM IB. Indeed, in MM IA occurred a massive use of *Tholos A* and of its annexes to the East, in combination with an intense ceremonial activity involving drink and food consumption, and large quantities of persons. On the contrary, in MM IB the funerary ritual seems to be limited to less people, not involving in food consumption. In fact, although the two *tholos* tombs are both in use, the best evidence of MM IB is not offered by the vessels retrieved from the respective circular funerary rooms, but by the large amounts of jugs found in the *Camerette*. If the MM IB establishment of the second tomb at Ayia Triada is connected with the new use of the *Camerette* as focus of the ritual activities, the new emerging group of the community has chosen to display its status through the exhibition of large amounts of pottery highly elaborated. In fact, the numerous MM IB jugs found in the *Camerette* are

24. Cultraro 2003. Carinci 2003.

25. Caloi 2009b, 234-235.

26. Carinci 2003, 109-113; 2004, 29f.

mostly polychrome jugs, decorated with *barbotine* work. The focus on pouring actions could signify that the emphasis was on the group distributing the liquids, rather than on the number of the participants involving in drink consumption as in the Prepalatial period, when the high number of drinking pots had an important role in displaying networks of affiliation.

Summing up, in MM IB the Ayia Triada *tholos* tombs A and B are in use contemporaneously, but, from the poor publication of the tombs, it seems they do not have revealed many vases²⁷. From *Tholos A* have been retrieved some *barbotine* jugs and cups²⁸, while from inside *Tholos B* only few sherds and two stone vases were found²⁹. Also the disposal area, identified behind *Tholos B*, has revealed only few MM IB vessels³⁰. On the contrary, the *Camerette* were found full of MM IB *barbotine* jugs, that means about 70 pieces³¹. As already observed at Kamilari, although a new *tholos* tomb has been constructed in MM IB, it seems that the mortuary area is really scantily used in this phase. Indeed, it is not only separated by the area of the ritual activities, but mostly not represented, as the emphasis is on the ritual activities performed in the area of *Camerette*. Moreover, the latter are no more based on large-scale food and drink consumption as in Prepalatial times, but they are based on pouring actions as testified by the numerous *barbotine* jugs found in *Camerette*.

It is also interesting to observe that in MM IB Ayia Triada, the increase in monumentality of the cemetery does not correspond to a strong occupation of the settlement, which has revealed few structures dating to MM IB³² and also a few MM IB ceramic deposits³³. Nevertheless, it cannot be avoided that during the MM IIB phase, when the settlement increases in size and growth, the previous structures were destroyed and levelled away to make space for new constructions.

The ceramic evidence of MM II from Ayia Triada is really difficult to find out because of the scanty publication of the necropolis, nevertheless it seems that from MM IIA the Ayia Triada cemetery begins its decline. From the publications by Banti and Cultraro, both the *tholoi A* and B have revealed only few vases

27. Banti 1931. Cultraro 2003.

28. Banti 1931, 228-230, nn. 313-317. Cultraro 2003, 316-318.

29. Paribeni 1904, 685, nn. 1-3.

30. Paribeni 1904, 694-699, fig. 9, pl. XLII, 2.

31. Cultraro 2000.

32. La Rosa 1979-1980.

33. Carinci 2003.

which, in my opinion, could be dated to MM IIA or more generally to MM II³⁴, whereas the *Camerette* have not provided MM II vessels.

As far as concerns MM IIB, the cemetery of Ayia Triada seems not to be used, except for few vessels which are considered the last depositions of *Tholos A*. These vessels published by Cultraro as dating to MM IIA may have dated to final MM IIB, moving the last depositions of *Tholos A* to the MM IIB phase³⁵. They consist of five pouring and containing vessels which find good correlations with vases retrieved from the destructions levels of the Phaistos Palace³⁶. If the few aforementioned vessels are dating to final MM IIB, it is likely they could represented a final re-occupation of the *tholos* tomb A, to be interpreted as a cultual action. I wonder whether during the MM II the funerary complex went out of use as burial place in order to change its function, as demonstrated by the transformations occurring in the area during the MM II. Indeed, as presented by La Rosa in 2001³⁷, a new function of the area seems to be associated with a paved rectangular space constructed to the West of the *Camerette*. In the centre of the paved space was found a rectangular area with small hollows, which can be ascribed to an offering table. This area has been interpreted by the excavator as a sacred and public space, more connected with an institutionalization of the ritual³⁸ rather than with a *mnemomscape* for ancestors worship.

It is interesting to observe that in MM IIB, when at Ayia Triada a strong increase in settlement size and growth occurred, the near cemetery is out of use. Since in MM IIA the site of Ayia Triada seems not to be occupied intensely³⁹, I wonder whether a new group has occupied the settlement in the successive MM IIB phase, transforming the funerary area in a sacred place and choosing another area as burial place. The best candidate to be transformed in the necropolis of Ayia Triada could be the near cemetery of Kamilari, where, as already observed, occurred a new expansion exactly in MM IIB⁴⁰.

34. Concerning *Tholos A*, there is only a *barbotine* jug which could be dated to MM IIA (Cultraro 2003, 317, fig. 17), whereas from the disposal area found behind *Tholos B*, three are the vessels which can be dated to MM II (Paribeni 1904, pl. XLII, 4; XLIII, 1-2).

35. Cultraro 2003, 317, figs. 17-19.

36. Caloi 2009b, 309.

37. La Rosa 2001, 225, pl. LXXIVe-f.

38. La Rosa 2001, 225.

39. Carinci 2003.

40. See *infra*.

DISCUSSING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KAMILARI
AND AYIA TRIADA IN THE PROTOPALATIAL PERIOD

In MM IB the new demographic increment of the Western Messara, attested by the emergence of the Phaistos palace, the increase in settlement growth of Kommos and the first use of the Kamares Cave, is also testified by the new increase in funerary monumentality well visible both at Kamilari and at Ayia Triada. If we compare the two cemeteries in the Protopalatial period, in MM IB they display a similar pattern, whereas from MM II and mostly in MM IIB the two funerary complexes show two different, but complementary patterns.

Concerning the MM IB phase, the cemeteries of Ayia Triada and Kamilari display a similar pattern for the following factors:

1. the investment of much labour for the construction of a monumental *tholos* tomb, which, however is scantily used and is not the focus of the ritual activities;
2. the focus of the ritual activities is outside the *tholos* tomb, respectively in the courtyard at Kamilari and near the *Camerette* at Ayia Triada;
3. the ritual activities do not involve food consumption (no cooking pots);
4. the almost total absence of drinking pots;
5. high presence of jugs shows that the focus of the ritual activities was on pouring actions.

In MM IB Kamilari and Ayia Triada are the only known sites of the Mesara plain providing new foundations of *tholos* tombs. Since they are less than 2 km far from each other, the obvious question is whether there are signs of competition among the communities using the two cemeteries or they were perfectly integrated⁴¹. If the *tholos* tombs are usually considered the focus of one or more communities burying in the same communal tomb and exploiting the area around it, the presence of two cemeteries with monumental tombs could be an example of strong competition among communities exploiting the resources of the same rich and fertile landscape?

Since we observed that both the necropolis in MM IB display the same rituals activities focusing on pouring actions, it is difficult to suppose they were in competition, but is more likely to think of interdependence among communities burying in two diverse necropolis, but sharing the same material culture and mostly the same ritual behaviours. This hypothesis is also supported by the fact

41. On the topic Sbonias 1999; 2011.

that other MM IB sites of the Mesara plain display the same ritual behaviours observed at Kamilari and Ayia Triada. Two interesting parallels are offered by the cemetery of Koumasa, and by a cult place, that is the Kamares Cave. At Koumasa the few MM IB-MM IIA vessels found outside the tombs include only pouring vessels, which are mostly elaborated *barbotine* jugs. They can be interpreted as evidence of non-funerary rituals occurred after the last use of the cemetery, which happened is in MM IA⁴². At the Kamares Cave, among the Protopalatial pottery, the pouring vessels outnumber the drinking pots⁴³. As already pointed out by some scholars⁴⁴, it would be likely that in the Mesara Protopalatial period, the ritual performances, both in funerary and non-funerary occasions, were focused on pouring rather than on drinking actions. On the basis of these parallels among funerary and non-funerary sites, I wonder whether the two complexes of Kamilari and Ayia Triada were mostly used in MM IB as areas for ritual activities rather than as funerary complexes, since the funerary evidence from both the necropolis is really scant, as testified by few vases retrieved from inside the respective funerary chambers. Therefore, it cannot be avoided that in MM IB the two monumental *tholos* tombs respectively built in the two cemeteries were more aimed to be symbolic territorial markers or centres of gravity for the communities, rather than proper burial places.

Looking at this pattern of interactions, can we speak about integration within a larger regional entity? And what about the role of the Phaistos, where a palatial building emerged in MM IB?

From the ceramic evidence, the aforementioned ritual behaviours seem not to be attested in the Phaistos Palace, which displays a different pattern in MM IB. The Phaistian ceramic deposits dating to MM IB seem to show that the best attested shape is the conical cup, found often in association with jugs, but mostly with globular open-spouted jars⁴⁵. In particular, the latter pouring vessel appears at Phaistos in the MM IB phase, but it is difficultly attested outside the palatial core and in the surrounding areas⁴⁶. In the quarters near the Phaistos palace (i.e. Ayia Photeini, Chalara) and in the settlement of Ayia Triada, the globular open-spouted jar is scantily present, whereas at Kommos occurs only the elongated conical shape⁴⁷, while the globular shape seems not to be attested. The only site

42. Xanthoudides 1924, 41-43. See also Soles 1992.

43. Van de Moortel 2006a, 82-83.

44. Cultraro 2000. Van de Moortel 2006a.

45. Caloi 2011.

46. Caloi 2007,

47. Van de Moortel 2006b, Ja/27-30, Jf/7, Jh/1.

where the globular open-spouted jar is largely present with many specimens in MM IB is the Kamares Cave⁴⁸, making it plausible that the relationship of Kamilari with the Kamares Cave was really strong already in MM IB⁴⁹.

Although in the area surrounding Phaistos the sharing of the same Phaistian ceramic tradition is strong, from the ceramic evidence, it seems clear that ritual activities attested in MM IB in the palace of Phaistos are completely different from those attested outside. Although this is the topic of another paper⁵⁰, it is interesting to point out that in MM IB at the Phaistos palace the ceremonies were mostly based on drink consumption, involving large quantities of people using mostly globular open-spouted jars and drinking in conical cups.

In MM IB the palace of Phaistos seems not to be the centre of a subordinate hinterland, as it will be from MM IIA, as its influence on the surrounding territory appears to be limited. Nevertheless, the sites of Kamilari and Ayia Triada display an interesting case of integration between communities, represented by two different centres of gravity, but sharing the same ritual behaviours. I speak in favour of integration, rather than competition, between the communities burying at Kamilari and Ayia Triada, also because of their complementarity in MM II. Indeed, it is relevant to point out that in MM II, when the Ayia Triada cemetery begins its decline as funerary complex, the Kamilari cemetery starts its expansion and growth. From MM IIA the first changes occurred in both the necropolis: at Kamilari the funerary area begins to increment its use and to reveal the first changes in material culture⁵¹, while Ayia Triada begins its decline as funerary area. Moreover, in MM IIB Kamilari becomes an important and frequented necropolis, provided with another *tholos* tomb (i.e. Mylona Lakko) and with two ossuaries, whereas the funerary area of Ayia Triada is transformed into a public sacred space⁵².

If the ceramic evidence shows that the MM IIA phase is scantily represented at Ayia Triada, both in the settlement and in the funerary area, I wonder whether the site was abandoned in this period, and re-occupied in MM IIB. The ongoing studies by Giorgia Baldacci on the settlement of Ayia Triada in the Protopalatial period could confirm or deny the hypothesis of the abandonment of Ayia triada during MM IIA. If the reoccupation of Ayia Triada occurred in MM IIB, as testified by some structures and many ceramic deposits/fills dating to MM IIB,

48. Dawkins, Laistner 1913, 16, fig. 3, pls. V,VII.

49. Caloi in preparation. On the topic see also Van de Moortel 2011.

50. Caloi in preparation.

51. See *supra*.

52. See *supra*.

and by the change in function of the funerary area, it is likely that the new group has decided to choose another burial place. Considering the new expansion of the Kamilari cemetery and mostly the foundation of a new *tholos*, that is Mylona Lakko, I wonder whether the Ayia Triada community has shifted its burial place to Kamilari. The MM IIB shift of the necropolis from Ayia Triada to Kamilari could be in line with the Prepalatial custom of the Western Mesara communities to change continuously settlements and burial places, using the same sites in alternating periods. Moreover, since the continuous shifting is well attested in the Prepalatial period at Ayia Triada⁵³, I wonder whether it occurred in the following Protopalatial period as well. From the MM II ceramic evidence, it is rather difficult to say if the new group at Ayia Triada has provided new ceramic innovations, however the strong sharing of MM II ceramics among the sites surrounding Phaistos seems to support the regional integration promoted by the centre of Phaistos from MM IIA⁵⁴ and increased in MM IIB, as demonstrated by the MM IIB evidence provided by Militello⁵⁵.

The new evidence emerged from the recent study of the Kamilari cemetery, as well as from the revision of the near Ayia Triada necropolis, has indeed shown that several changes in ritual behaviours occurred not only from MM IA to MM IB, but also from MM IB to MM IIA-MM IIB. These changes definitely integrate new evidence into the discourse of socio-political development of Protopalatial Western Mesara, contributing to shed new light on the different role played by the Phaistos palace from Late Prepalatial through the end of the Protopalatial period. Although the settlement and funerary evidence of Western Mesara is still far to be well defined, nevertheless, looking at the material culture of the Protopalatial period in detail, hints of a clearer and more complex picture arise, which will be the subject of another paper.

53. Todaro forthcoming.

54. Caloi in preparation.

55. Militello 2011.

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