

# CONSTRUCTING SOCIAL IDENTITIES IN EARLY IRON AGE AND ARCHAIC GREECE

Edited by  
Athena Tsingarida & Irene S. Lemos

ÉTUDES D'ARCHÉOLOGIE 12





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IN EARLY IRON AGE  
AND ARCHAIC GREECE**

**Editor**

CReA-Patrimoine

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**Cover**

Procession of female figures holding branches

Drawing by Piet de Jong. Protoattic amphora, Athens, Agora Museum P26411

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With the contributions of

Alexandra Alexandridou, Vivi Saripanidi and Vicky Vlachou

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Athena TSINGARIDA & Irene S. LEMOS

In this volume are presented the first part of the results of the research undertaken in the frame of a three-year jointed project between the University of Oxford and the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB). The project, initially entitled “Beyond the polis. Ritual practices and the construction of social identities in Early and Archaic Greece (12th-6th centuries B.C.)”, was made possible thanks to the generous funding awarded by the Foundation Philippe Wiener - Maurice Anspach.

For many years, the continuous and generous support of the Foundation has given us the opportunity to develop a close collaboration between the two Universities in the study of several aspects of Greek archaeology, history and culture. The Foundation provided the arena of collaboration between the teams in all levels: A. Tsingarida and I. S. Lemos, the two convenors of the project, had the opportunity to work together and to engage other scholars and students from both Universities. The Foundation also supported the appointment of three post-doctoral scholars, who worked in Oxford and Brussels. We would like to express special thanks to Professors Pierre Francotte and Jean-Victor Louis, former Presidents of the Foundation; Professor Catheline Périer-d'Ieteren, Vice-President; Professor Kristin Bartik, Executive Director and to the Scientific Committee of the Foundation W-A.

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# INTRODUCTION

Irene S. LEMOS & Athena TSINGARIDA

In the 1990s and the beginning of the 21st century, there has been a clear interest among archaeologists in identity studies and the diversity of the meanings that the term captures.<sup>1</sup> Social identity has been described as the way in which “individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their relations to others”.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, it is argued that social identity encompasses categories such as age, class, sexuality, gender and ethnicity.<sup>3</sup>

Studies in archaeology have been concerned with “archaeological cultures” that can reveal regional identities through artefacts and social practices.<sup>4</sup> While this approach has been criticised, it can indicate the utilisation by groups and individuals of practices and objects to promote some “self proclamation”.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, sustaining a distinct identity is a key goal for a person and by exploring social identity, insights can be gained into the values and behaviour patterns of the group/s under study.<sup>6</sup> Studies in material culture could attest regional practices and ethnic identities, as well as conveying their social and political implications.<sup>7</sup>

Following the above approach, the volume focuses on collective practices, such as religious, feasting, and burial rites, reconstructed from material evidence. The aim is to understand how collective practices were employed to articulate distinctive social identities in Early and Archaic Greece. The research was undertaken in the frame of a three-year joint project between the University of Oxford and ULB that brought together post-doctoral scholars from both these universities and beyond. Resulting from the research interests of the contributors, three important

geographical regions, Laconia, Attica, and Macedonia are presented as study cases. These are: the Late Helladic III-Early Iron Age Amyklaion in Laconia, the Late Geometric “Sacred Houses” in Attica, and a number of Archaic necropoleis in Northern Greece. The geographical location and character of these sites provide representative examples of ritual practices. Taking into account new evidence, the three study cases also offer the opportunity to discuss important issues: the continuity of practices between the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age at the Amyklaion; the formation of social identities in feasting activities at particular buildings such as the “Sacred” houses in Attica; and finally the observed changes in the funerary rites at a number of culturally diverse contexts in Northern Greece.

Vicky Vlachou offers, in the first chapter, a diachronic interpretation of the significance of rituals and cult practices from the Mycenaean to the Archaic period by examining the archaeological remains at the Amyklaion sanctuary in Laconia. The author emphasises the importance of the performative aspect of ritual behaviour and its significance in this specific social context. In that framework, this chapter offers a new reading for reconstructing belief expression from the Late Bronze to the Iron Age at this particular sanctuary. Indeed, by focussing on specific finds, most without a precise archaeological context, Vlachou offers innovative insights regarding ritual performances and cult practices at Amyklai. Following the distinctive chronological span of the study, Vlachou clearly demonstrates in a contextualised analysis of the archaeological material that there were several continuities but also significant changes in the ritual practices at the Amyklaion. The main marker of ritual participation, however, was that of a chthonic cult, represented by a male-female pair, whose character was embedded in the social transformations that communities in the region experienced diachronically from the Late Bronze to the Early Iron Age.

In the second chapter, Alexandra Alexandridou focuses on buildings discovered in proximity to burials in Attica in the Late Geometric period (mostly

1 SHENNAN 1994; JONES 1997; MESKELL 2002; HALES & HODOS 2010.

2 JENKINS 2008, 29.

3 HALL 2002; VAN DOMMELEN & KNAPP 2010, 4 with bibliography.

4 SHENNAN 1994, 5-30.

5 HALL 2012, 351; 2004.

6 GKIASTA 2010.

7 MORRIS 1998; MÜLLER & PROST 2002; MORGAN 2003; GRUEN 2011.

the 8th century BC). Such edifices are often called “Sacred Houses” and were generally recognized as serving cultic functions. In her analysis, Alexandridou presents all the known examples from Athens and the Attic countryside, and offers a detailed study that combines archive research, based on the diaries of excavators, her extensive knowledge on the ceramics of the period and results drawn from recent excavations. In particular the opportunity to revisit the discoveries at Academy provided the occasion to discuss in detail this iconic site and reconsider its significance. This careful reading challenges earlier interpretations and raises questions regarding the assumption that the so-called “Sacred House” was associated with the cult of the hero Akademos. Instead, Alexandridou argues that the evidence supports that the “Sacred House” was part of a domestic complex, where feasting activities of secular character were performed but which were not addressed to the veneration of ancestors. The study further shows that most of the buildings under consideration did not necessarily serve for cult dedicated to ancestors but were mainly used for commensality rites. Indeed, Alexandridou demonstrates that communal banqueting was the focus of ritual activity in Attica in the Early Iron Age. Evidence also suggests that the investment of wealth especially in the case of the Academy, where the quality and quantity of banqueting equipment was high, implying that such activities were employed to enhance bonds between elite kin groups.

The third and last chapter emphasises the importance of collective practices for the creation of Macedonian identity in the Archaic period. In particular, Vivi Saripanidi focuses on burial customs that provide sufficient evidence to address the elaboration of mortuary rituals during the Archaic period in the region. The author offers a valuable comparative

analysis of six cemeteries serving as the burials grounds of different groups of peoples active at the time in the region. These are Greek colonists (buried at the cemeteries at Adbera and Akanthos), Thracians (at the Mikro Doukata and the Amphipolis Early Iron Age burial grounds), and finally Macedonians buried in the two foremost cemeteries at Vergina and Archontiko. Her detailed analysis and nuanced approach reveal that diverse funerary rituals were performed by the different groups and remarkably that around 570 BC, a great transformation is evinced in Macedonia with the appearance of “princely” burials. Cultural similarities in the burial arena are according to Saripanidi the result of a selective appropriation of practices known from early periods in southern Greece. It is also roughly in the same period that a specific “funerary kit” appeared at Vergina and Archontiko characterised by a distinctive feasting set, which is not visible, however, in the burials rituals employed at the cemeteries of the Greek colonists and the Thracians. The author suggests that the ideological messages reflected in the new mortuary rituals imply that the Macedonians signified with their introduction, fresh ideologies and the formation of their identity. This identity entailed both differentiations from the rest of the Greek world and at the same times a connection with it through the perception of a common Greek origin.

The present volume will be complemented by the publication of the proceedings of the international symposium, “Beyond the Polis. Ritual Practices in Early and Archaic Greece”. The publication of the conference will offer supplementary studies of a number of geographical regions, as well as theoretical and archaeometric approaches to the study of ritual practices from the 12th to the 6th centuries BC.

# I. FROM MYCENAEAN CULT PRACTICE TO THE *HYAKINTHIA* FESTIVAL OF THE SPARTAN *POLIS*. CULT IMAGES, TEXTILES AND RITUAL ACTIVITY AT AMYKLES: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Vicky VLACHOU

“Ritual dynamics point at the same time to the ritual’s place and role in the society at a given time, and to the vitality and variability of its meanings in the course of time”<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

Ritual has long been a fundamental part of multidisciplinary research. The Durkheimian notion of “ritual” as the prominent communal activity placed an emphasis on the pivotal role of rituals within societies, even at an early date.<sup>2</sup> There are a number of approaches to ritual behaviour and to the relationships between rituals and other kinds of human behaviour that define our wider understanding of ritual process.<sup>3</sup> Of the quite numerous definitions of ritual in scholarship, I find that by W. Burkert is the most convenient in respect to our discussion: “ritual as a message is a type of language, a means of social interaction. From here we may approach several pathways of theory and

question...; the sense is that of communication by action in a social context”<sup>4</sup>.

During recent years, a number of studies have advanced a more dynamic and active aspect of ritual behaviours, by giving prominence to ritual performance. This approach is a relatively new tool in the field of ritual studies. The concept of “cultural performance” was introduced in the 1950s by the anthropologist Milton Singer, while in the mid-1980s V. Turner introduced performance as an approach to the study of rituals. Two points were emphasized by Turner, the performative aspect of ritual and its transformative power.<sup>5</sup> C. Bell focused on the purpose, efficacy and embodiment of ritual activity in particular social contexts.<sup>6</sup> “Acting ritually” was seen as a strategy for constructing power and negotiating authority, and thus the successful communication of the intentions of rituals that equally ensures to some degree the achievement of a social form of consensual meaning.<sup>7</sup>

In approaching ritual activity from an archaeological perspective, both the performative and communicative aspects have advanced considerations of ritual’s relationship to its material setting over time. In the seminal publication of C. Renfrew *The Archaeology of Cult* (1985), a methodology was advanced by establishing archaeological correlates of ritual.<sup>8</sup>

1 PIRENNE-DELFORGE 2006, 112.

My warmest thanks to A. Tsingarida and I. Lemos for inviting me to participate in the *Beyond the Polis* research project and for including my contribution in the present volume. I am most grateful to Prof. A. Delivorias and Prof. S. Vlizos, who invited me to study and publish the EIA ceramic assemblages from the Amyklaion, and to the team of the *Amykles Research Project* for an excellent collaboration. My thanks are due to the Ephorate of Antiquities of Laconia for providing all necessary assistance during my study of the material from the Amyklaion at Sparta. I would like to thank Don Evely for undertaking the language editing of my paper and all three reviewers for their insightful comments.

Chronological abbreviations: EH: Early Helladic, EIA: Early Iron Age, MG: Middle Geometric, MH: Middle Helladic, LBA: Late Bronze Age, LG: Late Geometric, LH: Late Helladic, LPG: Late Protogeometric, PG: Protogeometric

2 DURKHEIM 1915; GEERTZ 1966.

3 INSOLL 2004; MARCUS 2007. For the historical development of the term “ritual”, see BREMMER 1998, 14-24. See also discussion in MORRIS 1993, 15-27.

4 BURKERT 2006, 23.

5 TURNER 1982. For criticism to performance theory, see BELL 1992, 39-42; GRIMES 2004, 134.

6 BELL 1992, 8, 67, 93-98, 107.

7 BOURDIEU 2002, 106-109, 114-124; see also TAMBIAH 1979; RAPPAPORT 1999, 174.

8 RENFREW 1985, 11-26; 1994, 47-54. See also, MORGAN 1999, 304, table II.2; PILAFIDIS-WILLIAMS 1998, 124-125. WRIGHT (1994, 42 and 1995) argues that standardized and developed forms of ritual symbolism are to be found by LH III.

Renfrew organised these “potential archaeological correlates” into four groups, of which the fourth concerns itself with participation and offering. Within a religious context, active participation involves physical performances, such as movement, acts of offering to the deity, by both sacrifice and gifts, and also by consumption (eating and drinking). Recent publications on archaeology and ritual promote a view of ritual activity as a dynamic and fluid expression that engages interactive communication at different levels between the participants in the rituals, the community and the divine. J. Maran has aptly demonstrated how ritual performance operated on the acropolis of Tiryns through “the appropriation of moveable and immovable symbols of past greatness”, which enabled the postpalatial elites of the 12th century BC there to reinforce their supremacy and gain legitimacy by referring to the glorious past.<sup>9</sup> Attempts to reconstruct ritual practice through the material evidence are mainly centred on the recognition of repetition of these ritual actions in time and space.<sup>10</sup> Choral performances, involving music, dance and processions have been discussed for their significance in the LBA and again the EIA festivities.<sup>11</sup>

The nature of the cult activity in the transition from the LBA to the EIA has been a controversial issue. In the absence of textual evidence and the apparent absence of legal institutions regulating religious rituals at least for the period before the late 8th century BC, ritual activity is susceptible to regional diversity and is characterized by a certain degree of variation and change.<sup>12</sup> The sanctuary at Amykles has received considerable attention in scholarly research, being the only site in the Laconian territory that has provided evidence for cultic activity from around 1200 BC down to the Archaic period, and beyond to Roman times. Although continuity at the site has been debated in the past, the re-examination of the earlier discovered material and new finds from the most recent excavations at the site clearly demonstrate

that activity never ceased.<sup>13</sup> On the contrary to the sanctuary near Kalapodi at Phthiotis,<sup>14</sup> where architectural remains of the cult installations follow an exceptional continuity from at least the LH IIIA period onwards, ritual activity at Amykles seem to have maintained an *hypaethral* character until at least the late 8th century BC.

Although religious belief has undergone serious shifts and transformations between the Mycenaean and the early Archaic period, there seem to exist ritual expressions and acts that were not completely and radically transformed. The performance of ritual processions and the act of offering gifts to the venerated divinity seem to represent ritual expressions rooted in the LBA tradition that continue through the Early Iron Age into the Archaic period. One may advance objections as to the continuity or discontinuity of those traditions. But these objections do not eliminate the possibility of the enduring existence of similar forms of performance and communication within a ritual/religious context, despite the cultural shifts and the continuous process of reshaping of ritual structures. Within this framework, the persistence of certain ritual practices may be explained in terms of cultural memory, operating at a regional level.

Therefore, this paper places an emphasis on specific classes of material culture found at the sanctuary at Amykles that may provide insights into ritual performance and expression from around the 12th to the late 8th centuries BC: the large clay figures associated with the Mycenaean and the Geometric shrines, and the clay loom weights and spindle whorls of approximately the same date. Both classes of artefacts are frequently found in sanctuary contexts of the LBA and then the Geometric period. But, what role did they serve in the ritual practices for each period, and what do they reveal concerning the participants in these rituals? Can we argue for a LBA background for certain ritual practices, and for their ability to promote a formal framework of ritual expression in the course of the EIA? C. Morgan has argued that the emergence of Classical religion should be understood as a transformation effected upon a Mycenaean base.<sup>15</sup> My interest lies in the materiality of significant continuities and transformations in ritual practice, and what such means for religious

9 MARAN 2006, 125; MARAN 2011, 173-175.

10 More recently, see STAVRIANOPOULOU 2006; KYRIAKIDIS 2007b; BARROCLOUGH and MALONE 2007; D'AGATA and VAN DE MOORTELE 2009; MYLONOPOULOS 2010b.

11 WEILHARTNER 2013; MIKRAKIS 2015; 2017; WHITTAKER 2015.

12 DE POLIGNAC 1995, 29; MORGAN 1996; KYRIAKIDIS 2007a, 16; WHITLEY 2009. Also see discussion, PEKANNEN 2000-2001, especially 74, 77

13 PETTERSSON 1992, 91-123 (with further bibliography on this issue); ANTONACCIO 1994, 88, 103. For a recent discussion of the finds from Amykles, see DEMAKOPOULOU 2015; VLACHOU 2015.

14 NIEMEIER 2013; 2016a.

15 MORGAN 1996.

belief from the 12th to the 7th centuries BC. I shall first discuss the Mycenaean anthropomorphic terracotta figurines from Amykles, their potential role and symbolism during the ritual practices performed, in which these objects were engaged. In the absence of any data on their original archaeological context, an overview of related iconographical and three-dimensional specimens has to provide the necessary background for a contextualization of the Amykleian figures. I shall then examine the presence of the male and female terracotta figures of the Late Geometric period within the context of the Early Iron Age cult and performance at Amykles. Finally, I shall address the issue of cloth and textile dedications by considering the corpus of the finely decorated small terracotta spindle whorls that were found at Amykles. The dedication of textiles occupied an important part in the ritual performance in Mycenaean cult and then again in religious activity from the Archaic period onwards. The dedication of textiles shall be considered as a form of ritual performance that survived in a popular level at Amykles and developed into an important part of the religious ritual at the site.

#### THE ANTHROPOMORPHIC TERRACOTTA FIGURES OF THE LBA SHRINE: A REASSESSMENT OF THEIR ROLE AND SYMBOLIC MEANING

The low hill of Aghia Kyriaki (Fig. 1) lies at a distance of 5 km south-east from the centre of Sparta, roughly in the middle of the Spartan plain, on the west bank of Eurotas, and approximately 600 meters to the east of the modern village of Amykles (Sklavochori or Slavochori).<sup>16</sup> Excavations at the site were undertaken in four distinct periods between 1890 and 1925<sup>17</sup> and have been resumed from 2005 on under the joined direction of the Benaki Museum

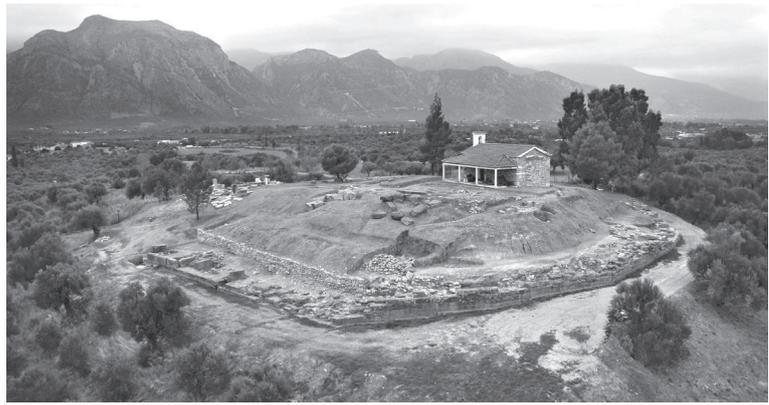


Fig. 1. Amykles, the excavated area of the sanctuary on the hill of Aghia Kyriaki. View from SE (© The Amykles Research Project).

and the Ephorate of Antiquities of Laconia.<sup>18</sup> The large quantities of Mycenaean, Protogeometric and Geometric material that were deposited in the area of the later altar of the sanctuary and alongside the monumental enclosure wall of the Archaic period (Fig. 2) are the only evidence for activity on the hill of this date; any architectural remains belonging to the early phases of the site are completely absent.

The earliest evidence of cultic activity dates to the end of the 13th century BC (LH IIIB2/LH IIIC).<sup>19</sup> The foundation of the shrine at Amykles falls in a period of major social and economic changes in the wider area of the Spartan plain. These are reflected in the destructions and final abandonment both of the newly discovered Mycenaean palace at Aghios Vasileios and equally of the largest occupation units at Meneleaion and further to the South at Aghios Stefanos.<sup>20</sup> Despite the considerable decrease of Laconian sites that survived the transition from the mid-13th to the 12th centuries BC (LH IIIB2 to LH IIIC1), there is still enough evidence for settlements and burials during this period, with Pellana and Epidauros Limera presumably among the most important.<sup>21</sup> The Amyklaion is the only site

16 TSOUNTAS 1892, 3; FIECHTER 1918, 223 nos. 11, 12; BUSCHOR and VON MASSOW 1927, 61-64 nos. 1-16; CONDE 2008, 61-93; VLIZOS 2009, 11-13.

17 TSOUNTAS 1982; FIECHTER 1918; SKIAS 1907, 104-107; BUSCHOR and VON MASSOW 1927; for a short history of the excavations in the sanctuary area, see DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 29-42; CALLIGAS 1992, 31-33; PETTERSSON 1992, 92-99; CONDE 2008, 61-69.

18 VLIZOS 2009, 11-13; 2015. The results of the more recent excavations on the site are currently being prepared for final publication; the author is responsible for the publication of the ceramic material. The suggestions in this paper should thus be taken only as preliminary conclusions that may be modified in view of the study of the rest of the material uncovered in the sanctuary.

19 For earlier activity on the hill, cf. DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 30-31; CALLIGAS 1992; VLIZOS 2009.

20 DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 112-113; WATERHOUSE and HOPE SIMPSON 1961, 115-117.

21 DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 97-121 and map 1; WRIGHT



Fig. 2. Amykles, the sanctuary. General view with the enclosure walls of the Geometric and the Archaic periods (© *The Amykles Research Project*).

that has produced evidence of cult activity, possibly serving as the meeting point of the apparently small communities settled in the wider area.<sup>22</sup>

The Mycenaean finds were discovered in unstratified deposits mixed with later material belonging to the Protogeometric and Geometric periods: they cannot provide any concise evidence as to the exact character of the ritual practices. Nonetheless, a quite large number of clay figurines was offered at the site: they consist of at least 74 handmade figurines of the Psi-type, at least 40 small handmade animal and bird figurines, two figurines of horse riders and

a collection of at least 33 wheel-made bovines or bulls, some with fine decoration all over their surface. Recent excavations at the site have added some more specimens in the above corpus.<sup>23</sup> Consumption of food and drink seems to have been equally part of the ritual activities according to the fragmentary pottery that comprised sherds from kylikes and other open vessels.<sup>24</sup> The presence of two fragmentary terracotta figures of large dimensions are of particular importance: an almost life-sized head wearing a *polos* (Fig. 4a-b) and a hand grasping the stem of a kylix (Fig. 10) demonstrate a notable artistic investment at the Amykleian shrine.<sup>25</sup> Both figures belong to unique tridimensional iconographic types in the large corpus of terracotta figures of Mainland Greece, presumably reflecting the particularities of ritual activity at the site. Both figures were found in mixed deposits in the proximity of the altar and the area to the east and

1994; for a survey of the evidence from Laconia from the end of the LH IIIC to the middle of the 10th century BC, see EDER 1998, 89-113. Recent excavations of the 5th Ephorate in the wider area of Sparta, namely on the acropolis and the surrounding area, revealed evidence for MH and LH habitation, see ZAVVOU and THEMOS 2009, 111.

22 MORGAN 1999, 384. For some LH IIIB and IIIC surface finds, cf. WATERHOUSE and HOPE SIMPSON 1960; 1961. For a survey of the topographical evidence, CHAPIN and HITCHCOCK 2007. Fragmentary pottery and bull figurines have been seen by K. DEMAKOPOULOU (1982, 105) as coming from the Argolid and Epidauros Limerá.

23 DEMAKOPOULOU 2015.

24 DEMAKOPOULOU 1982; 2009; 2015. Finds from the most recent excavation works are studied for the final publication by K. Demakopoulou.

25 DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 54-55 nos. 67 and 68a-b, pl. 25-26.

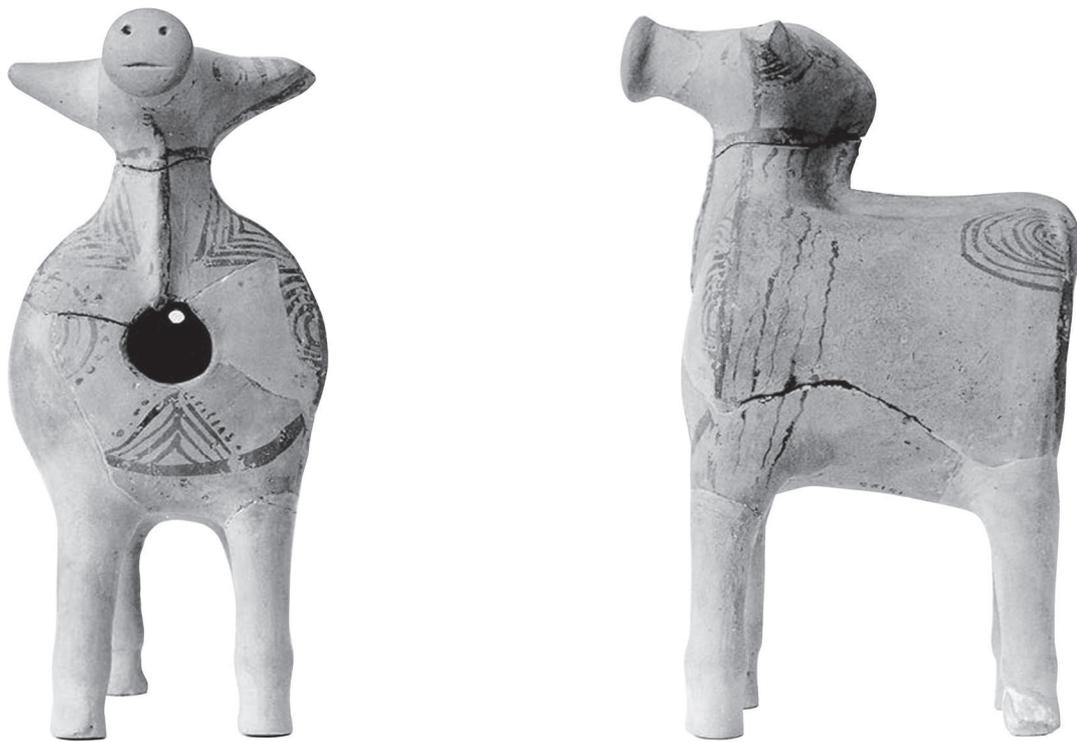


Fig. 3. Amykles. Wheel-made bovine figure with linear decoration, after DEMAKOPOULOU 2015, 110 fig. 9a-b.

south-east of it, along with mixed material dating from the Mycenaean to the Geometric period.

In her publication on the Late Bronze Age shrine at Amykles, K. Demakopoulou has dated the anthropomorphic terracotta figures to the late 13th century BC (LH IIIB2), together with the foundation of the shrine – to a period during which the official belief system of the palatial period had already deteriorated. Even so, it is evident that the cultic symbols and equipment used for the rituals performed on the hill derived from the Mycenaean religious context. On the basis of the stylistic criteria of the finds it seems possible that ritual activity involving the dedication and use of terracotta figurines of the Psi-type and wheel-made bulls continued throughout the 12th and 11th centuries BC (Fig. 3).<sup>26</sup> Whether the two large terracotta figures were also in use for such a long period of time cannot be positively argued.

The problems of interpretation of the anthropomorphic terracotta figures have been raised by a number of scholars.<sup>27</sup> Although the cultic function of these

images is beyond dispute, yet differing interpretations as to their exact use and meaning have been put forward, seemingly inextricably related to the particular context within which they were found as E. French suggested,<sup>28</sup> and consequently to the group or individuals involved in these ritual acts. In the context of the *hypoethral* cult practice at Amykles, the function of these figures should be considered as strongly interwoven with the religious performances, and thus any functional interpretations should consider the nature of rituals carried out at the site. In view of the small corpus of the large mainland terracotta figures of approximately the same date and the much fragmentary state of all specimens, parallels and cross-overs into two-dimensional art (namely the figured scenes that appear on vessels and clay sarcophagi of around the same period) might offer us a better approach to the meaning of these images in the context of ritual performance.

1992b; MYLONAS 1972, 29; RUTKOWSKI 1986, 179, 198; more recently, cf. BLAKOLMER 2010; BLAKOLMER 2011.

28 FRENCH 1981, 173. On the importance of both the archaeological context and the symbols and attributes of those figures, see more recently Moss 2005, 151.

26 DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 79-96; 2009; 2015.

27 TAYLOUR 1969, 92; FRENCH 1981, 173; MORRIS



Fig. 4a-b. Amykles. Upper part of head of a terracotta figure wearing a polos with an attached snake. Archaeological Museum of Sparta inv. No 799. Photo by the author © *The Amykles Research Project*.

The largest figure was most probably a female, of which only part of the *polos* with an attached snake, the forehead and the plastic upper part of the eye-sockets are preserved (Fig. 4a-b).<sup>29</sup> The clay is in a light red hue, 2.5YR 7/6 according to Munsell colour chart, light coloured and thin slip is applied on the surface of the face, while the attached snake and the eye-sockets are covered by a reddish brown paint. On the basis of the height of the preserved piece of 9.5 cm, we may then argue for an approximate height for the original head around 20-25 cm. This is among the largest so far among the large terracotta figures found in the Mainland and the Aegean. The *polos* headdress and the attached snake of the Amykleian head is a unique feature among the Mainland specimens, and reveals a close resemblance to the Cretan specimens.<sup>30</sup> Pictorial representations provide some evidence for flat headdresses, usually with an attached plume, which L. Steel has associated exclusively with females, namely priestesses, goddesses and sphinxes.<sup>31</sup> An interesting feature of the Amykleian head is its manufacturing technique: this leaves the upper inner part of the

headdress hollow (Fig. 4b). Narrow vertical and cylindrical cuts, still visible, might have been used for the securing of attachments of some kind. The large size of the figure, the presence of the headdress and the technique used seem closer to the Cretan production of large terracotta figures that continues in the PG period.<sup>32</sup> In the Mainland and the Aegean, the production of medium and large-sized figures for cultic purposes, as demonstrated by the extensive corpus of figures that have been found in the Cult Centre at Mycenae, Tiryns, Midea and Phylakopi, remained constant during the palatial (14th and 13th centuries BC), but progressively decreased and finally ceased in the course of the postpalatial period (12th to early/mid-11th centuries BC).<sup>33</sup>

29 Sparta, Archaeological Museum inv. no 799. For the publication of the head, see DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 54-55.

30 For a discussion, see KOUROU 2002b, 13-15. For the Cretan figures, see RETHEMIOTAKIS 1998. The Minoan type of the 'goddess with upraised arms' is commonly assigned attributes on the head, see ELIOPOULOS 1998, 301-313; 2004, 81-90; TSIPOPOULOU 2009, 124-127. However, snakes are rarely shown attached there. A magnificent head from the Patsos rock-shelter and later sanctuary of Hermes Kraniaios has snakes that create a sort of circular headdress, with its interior left hollow, RETHEMIOTAKIS 1998, 99; KOUROU AND KARETSOU 1994.

31 STEEL 2006, 151.

32 For a discussion of the Aegean and Cypriot terracotta figures of the LBA and EIA, see KOUROU 2002b. For a discussion of the Cretan large figures, see ELIOPOULOS 1998, 301-313 and 2004, 81-90; RETHEMIOTAKIS 1998, 44-58 and 89-103.

33 TAYLOR 1969 and 1970; KILIAN 1978 and 1981; FRENCH 1981 and 1985; MOORE 1988; MOORE and TAYLOR 1999, 46-47; KOUROU 2002b 12-21. Midea: DEMAKOPOULOU 1999; DEMAKOPOULOU and DIVARI-VALAKOU 2001 and 2009; Tiryns: KILIAN 1978 and 1981; VETTERS 2011, 40, Fig. 2.2. The figures from Midea and Tiryns that are described as large-sized are 30 to 40 cm high. More recently, a LH IIIB fragmentary wheel-made terracotta figurine from the sanctuary of Apollo near Kalapodi has been associated with ritual activity involving a clay horse-shaped altar and a bench. For a most recent analysis of the successive phases of the sanctuary and an approach of the cult activity there, see NIEMEIER 2016a; 2016b.

Some technical and stylistic similarities to the Cretan production have been highlighted by A. L. D'Agata for the case of the so-called "Lord of Asine" (Fig. 5a-b), dated mainly on stylistic grounds in the mid LM IIIC period.<sup>34</sup> The head of the Asine figure was found in a layer of ash and coal near a stone bench in room XXXII of house G, while it is not clear if its original place was actually on the bench. The figure has been variously interpreted as a male figure, a female figure with upraised arms and lastly as a fantastic animal of possible female identity in relation to the Cretan specimens and in particular, the one from the Aghia Triada shrine (HM 3145).<sup>35</sup> The head measures 12 cm in height and a total height of 25 to 30 cm has been suggested, according to the Aghia Triada (HM 3145) animal by A. L. D'Agata. A similar fantastic figure has been identified in a fragmentary head from Athens, and associated by A. L. D'Agata with rituals that took place in public rather than private shrines.<sup>36</sup>

A fragmentary hand of a large wheel-made terracotta figure is the most relevant to our discussion of the female head from Amykles. The fragment only preserves the wrist and the hand of a figure, and was found in a palatial workshop context in Thebes (Fig. 6).<sup>37</sup> Light-coloured slip is applied on the surface and dark paint is used to designate the outline and some of the anatomical details of the hand and wrist. The fragmentary hand seems to have originally belonged to the type of the "goddess with upraised arms". The preserved height do not exceed 5.5 cm, and is only comparable to the hands of the large Minoan wheel-made 'goddess with upraised arms'



5a



5b

Fig. 5a-b. Terracotta head from Asine. The "Lord of Asine" (LH IIIC). Nauplion Archaeological Museum in. no 3313. After DEMAKOPOULOU (ed.) 1988, 98-99 cat. no 24.

Fig. 6. Thebes. Hand of a large terracotta figure, after DEMAKOPOULOU 1974, 168 fig. 8.



6

<sup>34</sup> For the excavation and first publication of the "Lord", see FRÖDIN and PERSSON 1938, 74-76, 308 no 1, Fig. 211. For a detailed analysis and interpretation of the figure, see D'AGATA 1996.

<sup>35</sup> For a first identification of the terracotta figure with a fantastic animal, see LAVIOSA 1968. With a detailed analysis of the figure and previous bibliography, see D'AGATA 1996. See also discussion in KOUROU 2002b, 14-15, 22.

<sup>36</sup> For the fragmentary head from the Acropolis of Athens, see DEMAKOPOULOU 1970. D'AGATA 1996, 46.

<sup>37</sup> DEMAKOPOULOU 1974, 168, Fig. 8.



Fig. 7. Large terracotta figure of a “goddess with upraised arms” from Karfi (ht 87 cm).  
Archaeological Museum of Herakleion inv. no 11042. After RETHEMIOTAKIS 2001, 46-47 fig. 47.

from Karphi and Gazi (Fig. 7).<sup>38</sup> At the end of the LBA and the following PG period, large terracotta “goddesses with upraised arms” from sanctuary contexts at Vronta, Kephala Vasilikis, and the large head from Kalo Chorio provide comparable material for the Amykleian head and the fragmentary hand from Thebes.<sup>39</sup> Taking into account the difference in scale for the surviving Cretan figures between the upper and lower part of the body, it is possible that the head from Amykles, comparable in size to the one from Kalo Chorio (Fig. 8), would equally originally reached around or even more than 1 m high. The fragmentary hand from Thebes was recovered from the destruction layer of a partly excavated room that has been identified as a workshop for metal objects and jewelry related to the palace. A date in the LH IIIB1 period has been fixed according

to the numerous pottery sherds.<sup>40</sup> The head from Amykles has been found outside of its original context. K. Demakopoulou has suggested a similar date in the LH IIIB period,<sup>41</sup> although a somewhat later date as the one suggested for the “Lord of Asine” may equally be possible. An important aspect of these figures is their size, style and techniques of manufacture that were common in Crete during the same period, but exceptional for the Mainland.<sup>42</sup> It

38 RETHEMIOTAKIS 1998, no 18, pl. 61 (figure from Karphi, 87 cm high) and no 23, pl. 38 (figure from Gazi, 79 cm high). Also, KOUROU 2001, 13-14.

39 RETHEMIOTAKIS 1998, no 69, pl. 74; KOUROU 2002b, 24-25; ELIOPOULOS 2004, 86-87

40 DEMAKOPOULOU 1974, 170-171.

41 DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 54-56.

42 For an analysis of the technique of the Asine figure, see D’AGATA 1996. Modelling and decoration of the Mycenaean figures seem to have taken place in pottery workshops specializing in the production of fine-ware painted pottery: D’AGATA 1996; VETTERS 2011, 31-33. For the production and storage of vessels and figurines of a single workshop in the Petsas House at Mycenae, see SHELTON 2009. Yet, the construction and firing of the much larger and almost life-size figures require specific technical skills. RETHEMIOTAKIS (1998, 88) has argued in favour of specialized craftsmen for the Cretan figures, based mainly on the progressive enlargement of these figures and their standardized manufacturing techniques.

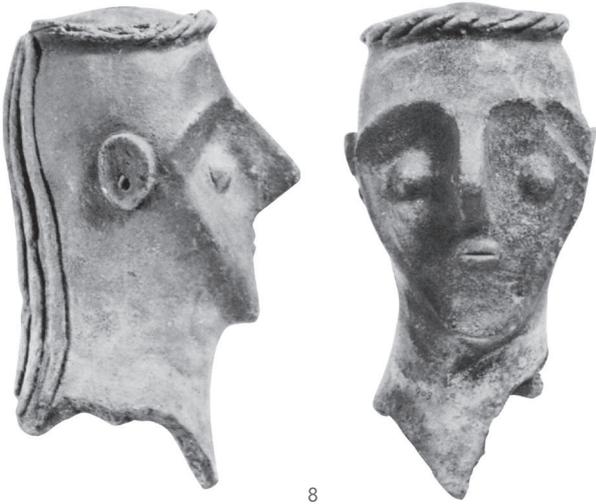


Fig. 8. Head of large terracotta figure of a "goddess with upraised arms" from Kalo Chorio (ht 27 cm). Archaeological Museum of Herakleion inv. no 803. After RETHEMIOTAKIS 2001, 48 fig. 48.

Fig. 9. Terracotta figurine from Tiryns, Lower Acropolis (ht 33 cm). After DEMAKOPOULOU (ed.) 1988, 196 cat. no 168.



is rather tempting to see these figures as the material traces of communities of craftsmen within the context of social, artistic and cultic interaction at the close of the palatial period.<sup>43</sup> Even though female figures from the Mainland or the islands are generally smaller in size and do not exceed 30 to 40 cm high, they differentiate from the typical Minoan type as to the modelling of the cylindrical body, on the contrary to the narrow waist of the latter, the lack of head attributes and the larger variety of hand postures, including the upraised arms.<sup>44</sup> Although there exists no evidence as to the modelling of the lower body of the Amykleian figure, it is possible that it followed the Mainland tradition of the figures with upraised arms that can be traced back at least from the LH IIIB period (Fig. 9).

In what way these figures served in the religious rituals in very different settings is impossible to reconstruct. Large terracotta figures of around 30 to 40 cm high have been seen as portable ritual images during religious activities, possibly carried in processions.<sup>45</sup> Such processions, during which either the representation of the deity or a cult image was carried around, have been associated with the *te-o-po-ri-ja* (θεοφορία) ritual, as it is known from the Knossian Linear B tablets<sup>46</sup> and possibly also from the palatial wall-paintings at both Mycenae and Tiryns.<sup>47</sup> From a

43 For social and cultic interconnections between the ruling elites of Thebes and Knossos on the evidence of the Linear B tablets, material remains and iconographic traits, see PALAIMA 2009, 529; VETTERS 2011, 42-43 and 44 note 2.

44 KOUROU 2002b, 14.

45 MYLONAS 1972, 29; KILIAN 1981, 56; 1992, 15; ALBERS 1994, 136; WHITTAKER 2009, 106-109.

46 HILLER 1984; HILLER 2011; WEILHARTNER 2013. Also CHADWICK and VENTRIS 1973, interpreting the word as possibly the name of a festival.

47 IMMERWAHR 1990, Fig. 33; KONTORLI-PAPADOPOULOU 1996, pl. 93; JONES 2009. For a recent discussion of



Fig. 10. Amykles. Hand of a large terracotta figure holding a kylix. Archaeological Museum of Sparta. Photo by the author © *The Amykles Research Project*.

different perspective, the figured scene that is shown on the one long side of an LH IIIc terracotta *larnax* from Tanagra in Boeotia is highly relevant.<sup>48</sup> A figure dressed in a long robe displays in his upraised arms to a group (a procession?) of four mourners what seems like an idol with raised arms, possibly in the same mourning gesture. Iconography offers a rare case in order to argue for a context of ritual performance or even for the performance of specific religious rituals of chthonic character. Whether the smaller portable figure was intended as the iconic representation of the divinity or not,<sup>49</sup> the importance is on the nature of the rituals performed and their successful completion with the use of specific gestures, acts and objects by the participants.

Nonetheless, the terracotta female figure from Amykles seems to have been rather large in size and quite heavy in order to have functioned as a portable image. The type of the “goddess with upraised arms” as it is argued here and its large size, both indicate that this should be identified as an image of the venerated deity, portrayed as a cult image, presumably a richly adorned female figure.<sup>50</sup> The small cylindrical cuts on the headdress of the figure, manifest that she may have received perishable decorative attachments, presumably flowers during the rituals. Thus, this

image may be better understood as part of the “stage setting”, possibly being placed close to the altar to so define the ritual space.<sup>51</sup> In this case, the symbolic meaning and function of the large female figure would have been actively associated with the character of the rituals performed. It is possible to approach its symbolic attributes in the same way: here, for example, the large plastic snake attached to the high *peplos* headdress of the Amykleian figure may have been intended to indicate a specific emphasis on the chthonic aspect of the cult. The snake attachment brings this figure within the tradition of the Bronze Age snake goddesses and namely the large terracotta figures of the LMIIIB and IIIc.

This aspect of ritual performance with an equal emphasis on the chthonic aspects of ritual activity may be further argued on the second fragmentary figure from Amykles (Fig. 10). The preserved part of the figure represents a human hand holding the high stem of a kylix.<sup>52</sup> The preserved height of the part does not exceed 3 cm and its length 5 cm. The colour of the clay is light red, 2.5YR 7/6 in the Munsell soil charts, a light coloured slip is applied on the surface, while large parts of the hand are covered in a brownish to reddish brown paint. The decoration of hand and wrist is comparable to that of the fragmentary hand from Thebes, and of a number of other terracotta figures from the Mainland (Fig. 9). Although only a small part of the hand is preserved, it would seem that the attached snake may have originally reached

the wall-painting in the light of some new findings, cf. PAPADEMETRIOU, THALER and MARAN 2015. See also BOULOTIS 1979. For similar divine processions in Mesopotamian and Hittite cult, see WHITTAKER 2009, 106-109. Also BURKERT 1985, 99-101.

48 From tomb 36. SPYROPOULOS 1973, pl. 10a (9-33); IMMERWAHR 1995, 113, 115-116, Fig. 7.5b.

49 On this issue, see BURKERT 1997. See also discussion in PALAIMA 2009.

50 The arguments put forward by ALEXIOU (1958) remain the most plausible interpretation. See also GESELL 1985, 41; 2010; ELIOPOULOS 2004; TSIPOPOULOU 2009.

51 MOORE (1988) has argued that the emphasis on the action performed by the monochrome terracotta figures from the Cult Centre at Mycenae manifests their function as the celebrants at the festivities, so placing an emphasis on a “continual offering”.

52 Sparta, Archaeological Museum. DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 54-56, pl. 25-26; BUCHHOLZ and KARAGEORGHIS 1971, nos. 1246, 1247a-b; DEMAKOPOULOU 2009, 96-97, figs. 10.1-10.2a-b.

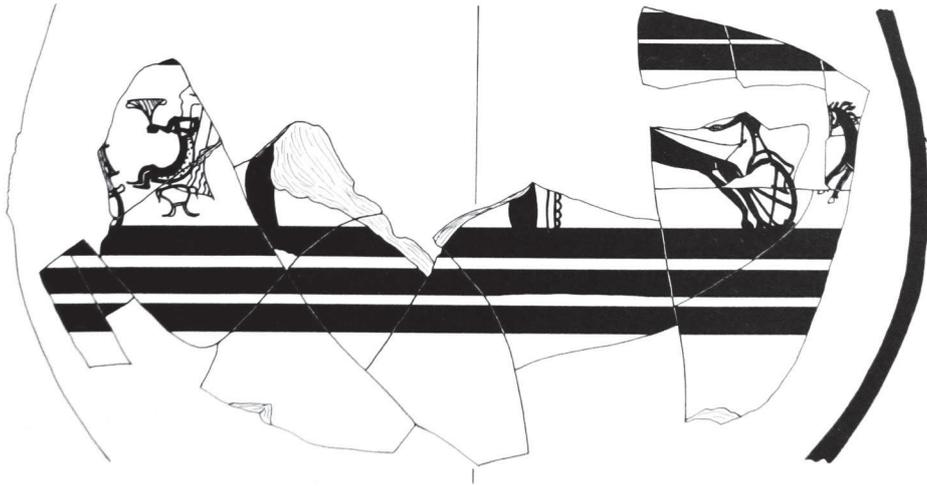


Fig. 11. Drawing of a fragmentary krater from Tiryns, representing a seated figure holding a kylix and a chariot race.  
After GÜNTNER 2000, pl. 5.1a-b.

the upper part of the kylix, following the type of a number of vessels with attached snakes from funerary and ritual contexts.<sup>53</sup> The presence of the applied snake seems to accentuate the chthonic character of the action performed by the figure, either pouring or drinking.

This figure seems quite a bit smaller than the large *polos* idol. Its unique posture of holding a kylix has been likened to the only other two-dimensional pictorial representation of a seated figure holding a kylix, as shown on a LH IIIC krater from Tiryns (Fig. 11).<sup>54</sup> A reference to ritual drinking has been put forward, as this activity is also apparent from the numbers of fragmentary drinking vessels, including stemmed kylikes, in the pottery assemblages at the site.<sup>55</sup> Ritual drinking and toasting scenes are not a new theme in LBA art. They involve mainly seated figures, holding kylikes or chalices, such as those on the ‘Camp Stool’ fresco from Knossos, and the banqueters from the Pylos megaron fresco.<sup>56</sup> Images of seated deities

holding cups have been arguably identified, among which the most complete is that on the much earlier golden ring from the Tiryns Treasure.<sup>57</sup> The addition of the procession of worshippers, as it appears on the Tiryns ring, or the well-known “Homage Krater” from Cyprus (Aradhippo) among others, is something new in the Aegean, although well rooted in Oriental art.<sup>58</sup> The depiction of the theme on the limestone sarcophagus of King Ahiram provides the prototype for processions addressing the seated king, who also acts as the representative of the god.<sup>59</sup> The rich iconographic evidence for the performance of processions seems to demonstrate their importance within the Mycenaean official cult.<sup>60</sup>

Although the fragmentary hand from Amykles has been largely approached in relation to the representation of the seated female on the amphoroid krater from Tiryns and largely interpreted as a female

53 See for example, in DEMAKOPOULOU (ed.) 1988, 166 cat. no 121 from Ialysos (Rhodes).

54 Although the exact find spot is unknown, the amphoroid krater has not been associated with a funerary context, cf. KILIAN 1980, 22 no. 10; GÜNTNER 2000, pl. 5.1a-b; WRIGHT 2004a, 164-165. For an interpretation of the chariot scene as a reference to an aristocratic life-style, cf. STEEL 1999, 806. See also BENZI 2009, 14. For a LH IIIC fragmentary krater from Lefkandi showing a seated figure before a large krater placed on the ground and containing (?) a kylix, cf. BENZI 2006, 240-241, 249, pl. 59, 71 B2b.

55 WRIGHT 1994; WHITTAKER 2009, 108-109.

56 KONTORLI-PAPADOPOULOU 1996, 44-45, 138, col.

pl. XII; SHAW 1997, 481-503; WRIGHT 2004a (with a discussion on the reconstruction of the Campstool fresco) and 163, Fig. 13 for the Pylos fresco.

57 NAM 6208 (15th century BC): SAKELLARIOU 1964, 179; HÄGG 1990, 181, Fig. 7. For a discussion of the importance of the treasure as a collection of *keimelia*, see MARAN 2006.

58 KARAGEORGHIS 1958, 386, pl. 99.3-4; VERMEULE and KARAGEORGHIS 1982, 23-24, 197, iii.29; BENZI 2009, 13.

59 HARAN 1958; MARKOE 1990.

60 For the enthroned female figures, see REHAK 1995; STEEL 2006, 149-151. For the PG large enthroned terracotta figure from Kephala Vasilikis, see ELIOPOULOS 1998 and 2004. For processions, see HÄGG 2001; WEILHARTNER 2013.

deity or a female figure of authority, presumably a priestess who could be acting as the deity, the fragmentary state of the hand does not provide any indication for the posture of the figure; it could have been either seated or standing. And while a seated figure holding a kylix has been discussed in past scholarship, what would a standing figure with kylix mean in the context of a postpalatial rural cult site? In the absence of other three-dimensional examples, our focus must be turned onto other representations, on the pottery and clay sarcophagi of largely the same period in the Aegean, Anatolia and Cyprus.

As a starting point the figured decorated sarcophagus from Episkopi in the district of Ierapetra (East Crete) will serve well. The rich and complex iconographical themes are organized in ten square and two almost triangular panels that cover the surface of the sarcophagus and that of its lid. The sarcophagus, dated around the middle of 13th century BC (LM IIIA2/LM IIIIB), was found in a chamber tomb along with two more in 1946 by N. Platon. The richness of the pictorial themes of the sarcophagus and the complexity of the scenes illustrated leave no doubt as to the ritual and possibly funeral connotations of the iconography, as published recently by M. Platonos.<sup>61</sup> Nine panels show thrice wild goats (*agrimia*), identified by their long horns and short upright tails, a figure holding the reins of a mare (?), twice hunting scenes, a figure performing some kind of a gesture before a cow, a chariot with three figures on board and three more placed in the field, and a large sized figure holding a kylix, the reins of an animal and a balloon-like object (Fig. 12a-b). The ideological and artistic contexts that motivated the selection of such iconography for a funeral monument will certainly have been complex and only tentative approaches may be attempted. The scenes are largely generic and highly symbolic: their exact association within a ritual narrative remains largely ambiguous. What is however interesting for our discussion is the repetitive use of specific objects, the stemmed kylix and the odd-looking balloons that could be taken as symbolic banners or even cultic emblems, in two of the figured panels, consecutively arranged on one long side of the sarcophagus. Both themes are fresh introductions into the repertory of LM sarcophagi, with no exact iconographic parallels in the Aegean.

<sup>61</sup> PLATONOS 2008. For earlier treatments of the figured decoration of the sarcophagus, cf. VERMEULE 1968, Fig. 35; KANTA 1980, 156-158 and pl. 63.1-5; WATROUS 1991, 300-301, pl. 93a-d. More recently, see KANTA 2012, 234 and Fig. 11.



Fig. 12. Long sides of terracotta larnax from Episkopi Ierapetra. Archaeological Museum of Ierapetra. After PLATONOS 2008, fig. 1-2.

The balloon-like objects have no antecedents in LBA iconography: they could be taken as either inspired by a local ritual tradition, or the result of the painter's idiosyncratic iconographic rendering of a specific event or ritual.

Within a religious context we may read these scenes as depicting parts of a ritual action, presumably in relation to the funerals. We may further attempt to identify the owner of the sarcophagus with the depiction of the largest figure of all, that holding in his hands a kylix, a round banner and the reins of what seems like a mare: assuredly a person of high prestige in the local community, perhaps wielding religious authority. All the figured scenes seem to have a strong ritual character, although its exact nature is not quite explicit in the scenes. The funerary connotations of the imagery have been explicitly discussed, but the same taken as a whole could be equally interpreted in terms of some ritual performance within the context

of mortuary rites, possibly of local importance. Different components of the ritual action might be identified all associated with the mortuary sphere and possibly making allusion to the status of the deceased in the local community.<sup>62</sup> The richly figured decoration of the sarcophagus and the combination of a variety of iconographical themes invite more than one approach and tentative interpretation. What is however explicitly communicated is an image of ritual performance, involving among others the performance of libations and/or drinking linked to the funerary context: a matter that find equally echoes in the archaeological assemblages, both of religious and funerary character.<sup>63</sup>

A comparable representation on a krater from Troy of a large human figure holding what seems like a kylix, while having his hands upraised, has been recently discussed by P. Mountjoy.<sup>64</sup> The krater has been dated to the LH IIIB2-LH IIIC period.<sup>65</sup> Two superimposed registers show two quadrupeds, interpreted as a lion and a bull, and a bird, while the large human figure, but fragmentarily preserved, fills both registers. Likewise, a standing male holding a kylix is shown on a PWP pyxis of LC IIIB (ca. 1125-1050 BC) in Cyprus (Cyprus Museum 1968/5-30/113), unfortunately without a known provenance. M. Iacovou has discussed the peculiar shape of this pyxis: it finds no close parallels in the contemporary Cypriote production, but rather recalls certain LM IIIC examples.<sup>66</sup> A goat and a bird occupy the upper register on one side, while a human figure with a large round shield covering the largest part of his body grasps in his outstretched hand the stem of a kylix (Fig. 13). M. Iacovou has suggested



Fig. 13. Line drawing of a Proto-White Painted ware pyxis. Nicosia, Archaeological Museum. After IACOVOU 1988, fig. 36.

that the male figure on the Cypriote pyxis raises his kylix in performing a libation on the occasion of a sacrifice, as indicated by the presence of the goat. Nonetheless, iconographical similarities between the above images should not be taken as evidence for similar symbolic meaning. In a somewhat earlier context from the Greek Mainland, a standing female holds in her raised hand a stemmed kylix, in the presence of a mourning female (Fig. 14).<sup>67</sup> The scene is shown on the long side of a clay larnax from Tanagra. Both object and imagery relate to the funerary sphere. It is obvious that variations on religious themes definitely played an important role in the visual constructions of ritual practices, while a funerary or chthonic aspect is equally emphasized in the figured iconography.

To this end, the fragmentary state of the hand with the kylix from Amykles does not permit any conclusive attribution as to the posture and sex of the figure. Although it has so far been exclusively viewed a seated figure, the only one of this size preserved in Mainland Greece, a reconstruction of a standing figure holding a kylix is equally possible, and even more probable. In contrast to the rarity of depictions of seated female figures holding a cup or kylix, standing figures pouring libations or even drinking from kylikes seem to be well embedded in the context of performative ritual of the LBA Aegean. Within this context, it is possible to argue on the specific function of the large terracotta figures within the rituals at Amykles, one presumably accentuating the chthonic character of the rituals performed. Although these large terracotta figures are of

62 For an interpretation of the figured decoration of the terracotta larnax from T. 22 at Tanagra in association with the age and status of the deceased, see BENZI 1999.

63 For discussion of recent finds, namely at Pylos and Methana, see WRIGHT 2004b. For a recent discussion of the rites of pouring and drinking as part of the funerary behaviour with a focus on Crete during the 14th and 13th centuries BC, see D'AGATA and DE ANGELIS 2016.

64 MOUNTJOY 2006, 107-110.

65 MOUNTJOY (2006, 110) notes that fragments of the krater were found in levels of different dates. The earliest was related with Phase VIIa destruction level dated to the Transitional LH IIIB2/IIIC Early, while a connection with the succeeding Phase VIIb is not excluded.

66 IACOVOU 1988, 16 no. 15, 35-36, 71, figs. 34-35; 2006, 199-200, Fig. 4a-c. The similarity of the form of the pyxis with the Aegean pyxides further emphasizes the Aegean connections.

67 SPYROPOULOS 1973, pl. 10β (11-21). For the interpretation of the scene as 'a funeral libation at the entrance of the tomb', see IMMERWAHR 1995, 113, 115-116 and Fig. 7.5a.



Fig. 14. Terracotta larnax from Tanagra T. 36 (Boeotia).  
After SPYROPOULOS 1973, pl. 10β.

an apparent religious and ceremonial character, even tentative reconstructions of their original and intended meanings involve a great degree of assumption. Linear B texts record the existence of several deities, who appear as recipients of offerings and most importantly certain of whom reveal at least linguistic correspondence to the later Greek Pantheon.<sup>68</sup> The identification of those specific gods and goddesses in the iconographic repertoire and the archaeological record remains an open issue in scholarly research; just as problematic to grasp is whether these cult images acted as representations of the goddesses or were to be equated with the priestess, or some other figure of authority in the human sphere. I. Mylonopoulos has described more concretely this conflict in his discussion of divine versus cult images in historical times: “Cult images were means of communication and in this respect they were very much like the priests who participated in festivals dressed like gods, thus evoking the presence of the honoured deity without being transfigured into a divine being”.<sup>69</sup> It would be thus the performative role and transformative power of those images that provided the communication between the divinity and the worshippers. From a different perspective, F. Blakolmer has recently focussed on the performative role of those images: irrespective of their identification as either deities or priestesses, they would have been actively engaged during ritual actions and thus become an embodiment of the sacred.<sup>70</sup>

68 BLAKOLMER 2010, 25-31; PALAIMA 2009.

69 MYLONOPOULOS 2010a, 8.

70 BLAKOLMER 2010, esp. 45-56. See also, MARINATOS 1993, esp. 165.

Although we are not yet in a position to fully comprehend the symbolic value of those figures, it is already evident that deliberate postures and specific attributes would have been important in emphasizing specific parts of the rituals, or even possibly in defining (to a point) the character of the religious ceremonies, rather than characterizing the divinity in detail. Accordingly, it would be possible to associate the individual character of these figures, be they from the Mainland and the islands or from Crete, with religious rituals: and especially those associated with celebrations at a regional level. It is possible that anthropomorphic clay figures of different sizes, in diverse postures and variously decorated were not intended to be used all at the same time or even on every occasions. The importance of the ritual acts and religious performances in the context of the festivities is argued to be the significant factor, rather than the exact definition of the character of the divinity or divinities. The diverse archaeological contexts that have produced the latest of the large terracotta figures in Mainland Greece seem to further support this suggestion. Going beyond the official religious practice attached to the Mycenaean palaces, their presence reinforces their association with the rituals performed and highlights their significance in serving the communicative aspects of these rituals.

S. Morris has argued in favour of a funerary symbolism attached to the large anthropomorphic figures, while K. Kilian has suggested that the kylix-carriers demonstrate associations with the cult of the dead, especially those in the figured decoration of the clay sarcophagi.<sup>71</sup> However, a more fluid and dynamic framework is argued for here, within the context of ritual practice and the character of the rituals that defined in each case the presence, absence and symbolism of these figures. Both figures found at Amykles seem to place a specific emphasis on the chthonic symbolism of the rituals performed. It is suggested that their reconstruction gives a large female figure with her arms upraised, and a presumably standing figure (male or female), holding a kylix. The iconographic type of both figures is well entrenched in the representational art of the LBA Aegean, and was thus readily recognizable to the participants to the rituals. The attached snake on the *polos* headdress of the larger figure and the snake placed on the fragmentary hand and possibly shown drinking for the kylix may be best understood as the dominant symbols of the figures associated with chthonic rituals, presumably equally performed to honour the

71 KILIAN 1980, 21-31; MORRIS 1992b, 209.

dead. The presence of tombs of the MH period on the Amykleian hill may have further contributed to the setting for ritual action at the site.<sup>72</sup>

It is possible to further propose that these images provided the necessary physical framework for ritual performance; and were thus dedicated by those families that were responsible for ensuring the necessary provisions for the rituals. M. Tsipopoulou has recently argued for the active role of the different groups (*gene*) within communities in the Isthmus of Ierapetra in the practice of dedicating “goddesses with upraised arms”, along with the rest of the cultic objects (such as snake tubes, kalathoi) at the site of Halasmenos.<sup>73</sup> If we accept the important role of the shrine at Amykles in preserving social memory, and as a place where social memory was used to construct group identity, as it has been convincingly argued,<sup>74</sup> the chthonic aspect of the rituals and the emphasis on the ancestors creates a coherent link between ritual performance and its expected outcome for the communities. The emphasis placed on the chthonic aspects of ritual activity at Amykles seems to continue throughout the Early Iron Age activity at the site. The aetiological myth for the cult of Hyakinthos at Amykles, his premature death and the naming of one of the most important Spartan festivals after the hero are eloquent.

#### EARLY TERRACOTTA IMAGES AT THE GEOMETRIC SANCTUARY: RITUAL VOTIVES OR CULT STATUES?

An even more difficult question to answer relates to the lifespan of the large clay images. In other words, how long did the LBA terracotta figures remain in

use, and did they have any specific effect on the participants of the rituals during the EIA? If we consider the mixed character of the material deposits at Amykles, where Mycenaean, Protogeometric and Geometric material were deposited in the area of the later altar of the sanctuary and alongside the monumental enclosure wall of the Archaic period, it seems that large cleaning operations of the top of the hill were undertaken around the late 8th century BC, possibly during the construction of the enclosure wall. It would thus seem likely that material remains of the Mycenaean period were directly accessible to those continuing to use the same area until the late 8th/early 7th centuries BC. It is however impossible to determine whether the figures themselves were in use from the late 13th/early 12th until the mid/late 11th centuries BC, when the production and the deposition of wheel-made bulls and female figurines of the Psi type equally came to an end. The re-use of older cult objects such as anthropomorphic terracotta figures in the EIA is extremely rare, or at least the archaeological demonstration of such behaviour is. The case of Aghia Irini on the island of Keos is among the best known and cited cases for such a phenomenon.<sup>75</sup> The materiality of ritual activity at the Amyklaion on the other hand undergoes significant transformations from around the late 11th and in the course of the 10th centuries BC that make it likely that older cult objects lost their original cultic significance and meaning. During this transitional period between the mid/late 11th to around the mid of the 10th centuries BC, collective rituals focus on commensality, as is manifested by the drinking sets that predominate in the pottery assemblages.<sup>76</sup> The dedication of offerings and the presence of cult objects gradually dominate the material corpus again from around the middle of the 10th century BC.

Large terracotta figures re-appear at Amykles by the end of the 8th century BC. The two clay figures, of which only the heads survive, were found during the early excavation at the site by Chr. Tsountas: they are very similar in their fabrication technique and decoration<sup>77</sup>. The surface is covered with a white slip, black glaze has been used to denote the locks of the hair and the anatomical features of the face. Both figures have large wide-open eyes, with nicely formed eyebrows framing the upper part of the cavities of

72 The hill was settled in the EH period, while part of a wall and two cist tombs that were excavated during the early work have been dated to the MH period. A clear break in the occupation has been identified in the late MH. The following use of the area involved the foundation of the open-air shrine during the late 13th century BC. FIECHTER 1918, 125-127; BUSCHOR and VON MASSOW 1927, 32-33 and Fig. 13; DEMAKOPOULOU 1982, 79-80; CARTLEDGE 2002, 33, 56-57, 93; VLIZOS 2009, 11.

73 TSIPOPOULOU 2009, 132-136. A LM IIIC “standard set” comprised figures with upraised arms, snake tubes, terracotta pinakes and kalathoi among other finds. GESELL 2001; 2010. On the evidence from Chalasmenos, see Tsipopoulou 2009, 124-130, 132. For a most recent re-assessment of the evidence and interpretation of the terracotta figures with upraised arms, see GESELL 2014; GAIGNEROT-DRIESEN 2016.

74 ANTONACCIO 1994; WRIGHT 1994.

75 CASKEY 1981, 128-136; 2009; GOROGIANNI 2011.

76 VLACHOU 2015 and forthcoming.

77 TSOUNTAS 1892, 14 pl. 4a, 5; SWEENEY, CURRY and TZEDAKIS 1987, 86-88 nos. 16-17; LANGDON 1998; KALTSAS 2006, 59-60 nos. 10-11.



15



16

Fig. 15. Head of a terracotta figure of a female figure from Amykles (ht 8.5 cm). Athens, National Archaeological Museum inv. no 4382. After KALTSAS 2006, 60 no 11.

Fig. 16. Head of a terracotta figure of a helmeted warrior from Amykles (ht 11 cm). Athens, National Archaeological Museum inv. no 4381. After KALTSAS 2006, 59 no 10.

the eyes. The female wears a *polos* decorated with repeated abstract motifs; small dotted circles painted on the lower part of the ears are probably intended as earrings (Fig. 15). The male wears a high conical helmet with a painted crest that identifies him as a warrior (Fig. 16).<sup>78</sup> The height of the heads reach approximately 10 cm each and thus an estimated full original height of about 40 cm has been proposed (or a bit bigger), which is close to the average size of clay figures known from the 7th century BC.

The two terracotta figures from Amykles are among the earliest large examples from the Mainland Greece

in the EIA.<sup>79</sup> Their exact function in the religious rituals at Amykles is far from clear. The male figure has attracted much more attention in scholarly research. An identification as the image of the armed Apollo remains rather uncertain.<sup>80</sup> The type of the armed male warrior finds its closest parallels in the bronze figurines of the Geometric period dedicated to sanctuaries (Fig. 17). The martial character of the figurine seems nicely fitted to the dedication of weapons and pieces of armour in the Amykleian sanctuary. Similar dedications at the other Spartan sanctuaries during the same period, emphasizes the role of the sanctuaries as the arena for competitive display among the early elites, at the time of the foundation of Taras and the successful outcome in

78 The terracotta head of the male warrior from Amykles is very close in style to the bronze figurine from Athens – NAM 6621: DE RIDDER 1896, 246 f., no. 700, Fig. 21. Also, bronze figurine from Olympia (first quarter of the 7th century BC) in NAM: PEDLEY 2002, 144 Fig. 5.25.

79 KOUROU 2000; 2002.

80 GEORGOULAKI 1994.

the First Messenian War.<sup>81</sup> As emphasized by the S. Langdon, in the case of the Amykleian figures, the male warrior and the female wearing a *polos*, were probably made in order to be dedicated together at the sanctuary: it is thus important to consider their symbolic meaning and function as a pair rather than independently.

The paucity of large terracotta figures in the archaeological record from around the late 10th to the early 8th centuries BC has been seen as the tangible expression of the significant social and religious shifts occurring in the Aegean during the same period.<sup>82</sup> From around the late 8th century BC onwards large images dedicated in sanctuaries and cult areas are generally believed to have acted as divine images or to represent the worshipers. Among the earliest terracotta figures are those from Amykles and from the sanctuary of Artemis at Hephaistia on Lemnos:<sup>83</sup> they are essentially contemporary with the three bronze figures (*sphyrelata*) from Dreros.<sup>84</sup> Somewhat later are the terracotta female figures from Kastro on Siphnos (Fig. 18) and Despotiko near Paros.<sup>85</sup> Although the male and two female figures from Dreros have been generally seen as among the earliest cult statues representing Apollo, Artemis and Leto, the Cycladic terracotta images cannot be safely identified as in such a way, despite the exceptional size of certain specimens and the elaborate decoration of their dresses, as the one from Siphnos. It becomes evident that no single interpretation for the function of these figures will do. The Mantiklos bronze from Thebes in Boeotia, is the only one that provides valuable information according to the inscription on his thighs.<sup>86</sup> The bronze statuette was dedicated



Fig. 17. Bronze figurine of a male warrior from Olympia (ht 23.7 cm). Athens, National Archaeological Museum. After PEDLEY 2002, 144 fig. 5.25.

81 PARKER 1991; MALKIN 1994, 67-142; NAFISSI 2009, 117-124; KENNEL and LURAGHI 2009, 249-251.

82 KOUROU 2000, 360-361; 2002

83 DELLA SETA, *AEphem* (1937), II, 651-653, pl. II-III; Chr. BOULOTIS, *LIMC* Suppl. VIII (1997) 772 no.5; KOUROU 2002b, 27-28, 37, figs. 7-8, 38, Fig. 9.

84 Herakleion Museum, Crete. The male figure reaches a height of 80 cm and the two females of around 40 cm. MATTUSCH 1988, 42-44; ROLLEY 1994, 112-113, Fig. 98. The "divine triad" was found on a bench.

85 Siphnos: BROCK and MACKWORTH-YOUNG 1949, 19-21, pl. 6-8; KOUROU 2000. Despotiko: KOURAYIOS 2004, 445; 2005; 2012. KOURAYIOS has suggested an identification of the female figure from Despotiko as Artemis or Apollo. A terracotta fragmentary female figure, very similar to the wheel made and painted figures from Siphnos, was found in the deposits from the sanctuary of Apollo Dalios on Kalymnos.

86 Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 03.997: VERMEULE



Fig. 18. Fragmentary female terracotta figure from Kastro, Siphnos (ht 40 cm). Archaeological Museum of Siphnos (second quarter of 7<sup>th</sup> century BC). After BROCK 1949, pl. 7.

by Mantiklos as a tithe to Apollo, anticipating something good in return. The Mantiklos bronze has been reconstructed as the figure of a warrior, wearing a helmet and carrying a spear and a shield, a type quite popular among human figures. N. Papalexandrou has suggested that the statuette was originally an attachment to a tripod that was dedicated to the sanctuary.<sup>87</sup>

Most of the large terracotta figures in the Aegean, including the two figures from Amykles, have been found outside their original context: thus a contextual analysis to reconstruct the practices in which those objects could have been engaged is not feasible. In addition, most figures are in a very fragmentary state and consequently discussions as to their original functions remain tentative. Nonetheless, the female figures share a number of common elements, such as their wheel-made cylindrical or bell-shaped body, clad in finely decorated garments (thus for the two figures from Kastro on Siphos, depicting horses and griffins) and the flat-topped *polos* headdress worn by the Amykles and Despotikon figures, and also the figure from Lemnos. Jewellery may be indicated in paint, such as the double-string necklace of beads on the Lemnos figure and the earrings of the Amykleian head, while bronze earrings have been added to the Lemnos figure (Fig. 19). It should be noted that in most sanctuaries more than one terracotta figure have been found.<sup>88</sup> Although an emphasis seems placed on the figure of Artemis, who embodies the characteristics and qualities of the older *potnia*, these images may be further understood as carrying a direct reference to the dedicators. To the age, gender and social status of the young daughters of the aristocratic families in the Mainland and the islands, whose existence is of central importance for the social and religious life of the *polis*.<sup>89</sup>

The Amykleian pair is however unique among the published terracotta figures. The female figure

1982, 83-84, 377-379 Fig. 138; VERMEULE and COMSTOCK 1988, 118 no 15; ROLLEY 1994, 129, Fig. 109 (with further bibliography). On the performative aspect of the inscription, see DAY 1994.

87 PAPALEXANDROU 2005, 84-86; 2011, 256-257.

88 Parts of armed figures from Kastro on Siphnos have been compared to the bronze figurine of an armed Athena of the late 6th century BC from the sanctuary of Athena Alea at Tegea, cf. VOYATZIS 2004, 192-193 and 204, Fig. 7; ROLLEY 1994, 23, Fig. 16 (Athens NM 14828, late 6th century BC, Laconian bronzework or Arcadian under Laconian influence).

89 For a treatment of Artemis Ekvateria on Siphnos, see KOUROU 2005.



Fig. 19. Wheel-made terracotta figure from the sanctuary of Hephaistia on Lemnos. Athens, National Archaeological Museum inv. no 19242.

may be seen as one of the earliest in the series that appeared in the Aegean sanctuaries from the late 8th on into the 7th and 6th centuries BC, as has been argued above.<sup>90</sup> The *polos* headdress appears in the iconography of the late 8th century BC,<sup>91</sup> after its introduction shortly before on the PGB Cretan figures of the 'nature goddesses' with upraised hands. The use of the *polos* headdress seems associated with a female figure of authority, presumably the divinity,

90 For a comparable bronze figurine from the Menelaion, cf. WACE, THOMPSON and DROOP 1908-1909, pl. X; KALTSAS 2006, 159 no. 62. Also a terracotta head (with no *polos*) from the Heraion at Perachora, dated to the early 7th century BC. Payne *et al.* 1940, pl. 87.1; ROLLEY 1994, 140-141, Fig. 120 (Athens NAM 16491). A comparable although later terracotta figurine comes from the Menelaion, H.W. CATLING, 'Excavations at the Menelaion, Sparta, 1973-1976', *Archaeological Reports* 23 (1976-1977, 24-42) 40, Fig. 41.

91 For the small ivory statuettes from Athens (Dipylon grave 13), cf. Athens National Museum, NAM 776-779; SCHWEITZER 1971, pl. 147-148; CARTER 1985, 1-7, 40; ROLLEY 1994, 96, Fig. 81; ZOSI 2012. For an interpretation of the tomb and the finds, see LANGDON 2005, 16-17; VLACHOU 2016.

and/or the priestesses, although in no consistent way. An early iconographical depiction of a nature goddesses has been suggested for the female figure on the large pithos from Knossos,<sup>92</sup> for the female figures from Dreros identified generally as Artemis and Leto, while an exaggeratedly high *polos* is worn by a wooden statuette presumably depicting Hera from Samos.<sup>93</sup>

The male warrior finds his closest parallels in the Geometric bronze figurines that seem reflecting the qualities of the Oriental smiting-god.<sup>94</sup> Within the same tradition is placed a largely contemporary statuette, the Mantiklos bronze, manifesting thus the dynamics of the Geometric iconography of the warrior statuettes in the context of Early Greek sanctuaries. It is probable that the helmeted head from Amykles was equally shown in the same posture, standing and holding in both hands a spear and a shield. A reference to the iconography of Apollo is thus rather straightforward. The presence of the female figure on the other hand, makes a strong reference to the involvement of women in the cult activity at Amykles. The active presence of girls, maidens and women in the rituals at Amykles, together with evidence of female occupations, such as weaving and cloth-making, as it shall be discussed further below, further support this suggestion. It would be very tempting to identify a cult of Polyboia, Hyakinthos' sister, who shares certain common features with Artemis and namely her virginity. According to

92 COLDSTREAM 1984; COLDSTREAM and CATLING 1996, III Fig. 109, from tomb 107. For one more Knossian PGB pithos from Fortetsa 1440, see BROCK 1957, pl. 77 and 163, no. 1440 from tomb P; BOARDMAN 1998, 78, Fig. 146.1-2

93 KYRIELEIS 1981, Fig. 6; ROLLEY 1983, 112-113, Fig. 98; 1994, 147, Fig. 128; BAUMBACH 2004, 168-169 and figs. 6.46-47. From the first half of the 7th century comes the terracotta 'goddess' from Gortyna (Herakleion Museum 11305) and somewhat later the stone reliefs of presumably Leto and Artemis accompanying Apollo. ROLLEY 1994, 126 figs. 105-106.

94 Athens NM 6613, a bronze attachment of a tripod lebes, DE RIDDER 1896, 247-248 no. 702, Fig. 219; SCHWEITZER 1971, pl. 159-161; FLASHAR 2002, 23-41, 61a-c; SCHOLL 2006, cat. 64, Fig. 261-b; KALTSAS 2006, 57 no. 8; HAUG 2012, 284, Fig. 235a-b. For the decoration of the helmet as representing, the omphalos discs of the Homeric helmets, designed to deflect sword blows, see LANGDON 2008, 278. For the interpretation of the Cretan bosses in relation to helmets, see LEBESSI 1992. See also, bronze warrior from Olympia (c. 700-675 BC) in the National Archaeological Museum, Athens (23.7 cm high). PEDLEY 2002, 144, Fig. 5.25.

the myth, Polyboia as her brother Hyakinthos died unmarried and it is as adolescent heroes that were represented already during the archaic period.<sup>95</sup> In this way, both the male and female terracotta figures establish an ideal visual for the youths and maidens projecting the social roles and values they are expected to embody. It would thus seem possible to approach both figures as a specific category of dedication inextricably related to the self-presentation of certain important families of the local communities around the late 8th century BC.

Whether these figures could have actually served as cult images during the rituals is unclear. Early cult images seem to have been made out of wood and follow a plank-like shape, following the description of the first cult statue of Hera on Samos.<sup>96</sup> Recent work in the oracle sanctuary of Apollo at Abai/Kalapodi brought to light the cremated remains of a wooden plank statue that seems to have served as the cult image of in south temple 6 erected in the MG II period.<sup>97</sup> The wooden statue seems to have been standing on a limestone base, in front of which was actually found, that further supports its function as the cult image. Nonetheless, early cult activity at Amykles has not left any traces of similar constructions, possibly due to the character of ritual activity at the site that seems to have remained mainly hypaethral until at least the construction of the monumental *Thronos* for Apollo. It would thus seem that a cult statue was not necessary for the deployment of the rituals at the site. This would actually be the case if we accept the chthonian character of the cult at Amykles, to which the cult of Apollo was incorporated in a later stage, probably in the late 9th/early 8th century BC, as it is discussed further below.

In order to understand better the function of the two terracotta figures in the Geometric sanctuary it is necessary to provide an overview of the changes in the votive behaviour at Amykles during the second half of the 8th century BC, and to provide a background for a contextualization of these figures. The second half of the 8th and the early 7th centuries BC coincides with a peak in activity at Amykles. The large corpus of material, the elaboration of the feasting equipment and the various categories of votive offerings soundly demonstrate the importance of the cult in the religious life of the Spartan *polis*. The dedication of bronze tripods, weapons, jewellery and various

offerings emphasize the role of the sanctuary as the arena for competitive display among the Spartan elites.<sup>98</sup> Around the same period, dedications at Amykles include small lead wreaths and figurines, clay votive offerings such as plates of large dimensions and fine decoration that should have served as containers for perishable offerings, miniature vessels, jewellery, double axe pendants and hair ornaments: all are equally to be found at the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia and the Menelaion around the same period. The introduction of the male-female pair among the dedications is another element shared by the sanctuary of Apollo at Amykles, that of Artemis Orthia and the Menelaion at Sparta. An emphasis on mythical and/or divine couples is made plain on a unique marble pyramidal monument in the Sparta Museum: here two male-female pairs are shown, one on each side, that have been variously interpreted as Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, Paris and Helen, or Menelaus and Helen.<sup>99</sup> Although the exact function of the monument either as cult object or funerary monument is uncertain, its singular character and the significance placed on couples of legend makes evident the particularities of Laconian funerary and cultic monuments.

The phenomenon of overlapping votive offerings in sanctuaries and the possibility of 'visiting gods' has been discussed recently by B. Alroth and applied to the Spartan cults by C. Antonaccio.<sup>100</sup> F. de Polignac placed the votive offerings at the centre of a triangular relationship between the donor, the deity and the cultural community within which the donor acts.<sup>101</sup> In his view, the act of offering takes place in a cultural and social context that permits the contextualization of both the offerings and the ritual practice of offering. The introduction of the male-female pair (or the goddess and her consort) around the same time at the Spartan sanctuaries has been discussed by S. Langdon within a similar framework: she argues that it reflects

95 BRELICH 1969, 148; CALAME 2001, 179-181. On the performances of girls, see more recently NOBILI 2014.

96 KALLIMACHOS, fr. 100. ROMANO 1980, 250-251.

97 NIEMEIER 2016a.

98 For the dedication of tripods as expression of power and authority within the sanctuary context, see DE POLIGNAC 1994, 11. For the early dedication of such artefacts at the cave at Polis on Ithaka, see BENTON 1934-1935, 51. For the c. 20 to 30 fragmentary bronze tripods from the sanctuary near Kalapodi, see FELSCH 2007, 29-41, 248-253, cat. nos 1-57, pl. 5, 7, 13-15; NIEMEIER 2013 and 2016a.

99 G. KOKKOROU-ALEVRAS, «Laconian Stone Sculpture from the Eighth Century BC until the Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War», in: KALTSAS 2006, 89-94 (esp. 90, Fig. 1a-b).

100 ALROTH 1987; 1989, 9-19; ANTONACCIO 2005, 99-112.

101 DE POLIGNAC 2009.

the need of the leading families to establish social cohesion and provide the necessary ancestral models for the younger members of the society.<sup>102</sup> In this way, it is possible to better contextualize the presence of the young warrior and the maiden within ritual activity at Amykles: it registers and mirrors the social concerns and tensions that are firmly intertwined with kinship and the *oikos*.

A specific feature of the festival at Amykles that is emphasized in later sources is the involvement of almost all age classes, from children to adults of both sexes.<sup>103</sup> Ritual activity seems to have focused on initiation rites for youths and maidens. Iconographic representations of around the same period involve youths and maidens in musical and dancing performances, and in at least one case athletic games.<sup>104</sup> C. Calame has discussed the *Hyakinthia* festival as a marker of the end of initiation for young citizens in Sparta. In this way the festivities stood in direct relation to the past of the city, while providing the necessary framework for the stability and sustainability of the new body of citizens after the period of initiation. “As *Hyakinthos* and *Polyboia*, the young Lacedaemonians were born again on the second day (of the festivities) to a new life, for which they expressed their thanks to Apollo”.<sup>105</sup> It would thus seem appropriate to associate the two large terracotta figures with the images of the youth and maiden initiates, who embodied the ancestral values and provided the necessary prototypes.

Concerning the earliest divine image of Apollo at Amykles, Pausanias (III, 19, 9f.) remains the only source of information. The statue of Apollo was of colossal dimensions resembling most a bronze pillar to which a face, hands and feet were added, and holding in his hands a spear and a bow.<sup>106</sup> Our best evidence that corroborates Pausanias’ description is to be found on the bronze coinage of Sparta during the period of the emperors Commodus and Gallienus. The statue is presented as a bronze pillar standing on a base.<sup>107</sup> A relief stele of the 3rd century BC from the Amyklaion found by Tsountas carries a dedication to Apollo and presents a similar image

of the God.<sup>108</sup> Pausanias specifically notes that the cult statue was old (*αρχαῖον*) and not to be assigned to Bathykses who was responsible for the erection of the “Throne”. The most recent study of the pediment of the statue by M. Korres confirms the ancientness of the statue that was fixed there in comparison to the construction of the monumental “Throne”.<sup>109</sup> The date of the earliest cult statue of Apollo Amyklaios remains an open question, but the end of the 7th/early 6th centuries BC has been put forward as the most likely.<sup>110</sup> The placing of a cult statue at Amykles should be considered as an important political event that further demonstrates the political significance of Amykles for Sparta. There is no reference to a cult image of *Hyakinthos* or *Polyboia* at Amykles, where the tomb of the hero acted as the centre for his cult.

#### THE DEDICATION OF RITUAL CLOTHES AND THE CHITON FOR THE AMYKLAIAN APOLLO

The physical evidence for textiles is rare in the archaeological record, although not entirely absent.<sup>111</sup> The presence of pins, fibulae and decorative attachments such as rosettes, made out of various materials and often of gold, have served as indicators for the use and offering of garments, robes and textiles in the funerary record. When it comes to sanctuary and ritual contexts, however, it is not evident that these objects were dedicated together with clothes or on their own.<sup>112</sup> At the same time, another class of dedications including loom weights and spindle-whorls have been seen as votive offerings related to female donors, and occasionally as possible attachments to unfinished textile dedications.<sup>113</sup> Miniature spindle whorls are generally seen as votive offerings without any practical use, due to their small size and weight. Another alternative however may

102 LANGDON 2008, 276-279.

103 For a general treatment of the evidence, see CALAME 2001, 174-185; PETROPOULOU 2015.

104 VLACHOU 2015.

105 CALAME 2001, 182.

106 ROMANO 1980, 102-103.

107 S. GRUNAUER-VON HOERSCHELMANN, *Die Münzprägung der Lakedaimonier*, Berlin, 1978, pl. 32.12.

108 B. SCHRODER, “Archaische Skulpturen aus Laconien”, *AM* 29 (1904), Fig. 2.

109 KORRES 2015, 137-138.

110 ROMANO 1980, 103-104. For an earlier date, see MELLINK 147-148.

111 For the cloth found at Toumba Lefkandi, see POPHAM, TOULOUPA and SACKETT 1982, 173, pl. 25; POPHAM, SACKETT and THEMELIS 1979-80, 227-229, pl. 237a-b; BARBER 1991, 197. For some Geometric examples from Athens, cf. KOUROU 2011.

112 For a short discussion, see BAUMBACH 2004, 35-37, 61, 91-92.

113 BRULÉ 1987, 229-230; GRECO 1997, 185-200; GRAS 2000, 605; NEILS 2009, 143.



Fig. 20. Amykles. Selection of decorated terracotta whorls of small size (© *The Amykles Research Project*).

exist. The quite large corpus of miniature spindle whorls and the few loom weights that have been found at Amykles may be considered as the material evidence for the dedication of textiles, already since the 10th century BC, rather than as isolated offerings by female donors to the early sanctuary.

All specimens from Amykles are of terracotta, plain and undecorated, or decorated with painted and incised ornamentation. They belong mainly to the conical and biconical types and stylistically they can be dated from the mid/late 10th century BC onwards, though some LBA specimens are likewise present in the assemblages.<sup>114</sup> They range between 2.5 and 3 cm in diameter, have an average weight of 8

gm and they all have a central perforation. Although all were found in the mixed deposits of the sanctuary and outside their original context, most of them are finely decorated in a manner comparable to that of the ceramic vessels from the site, while their fabric and manufacture technique clearly demonstrate that those were made in the same workshops as the pottery found at the sanctuary (Fig. 20).

Miniature spindle whorls with a long history in LBA Aegean contexts have been variously interpreted as fastenings (buttons), dress ornaments (clay beads), or weights for dresses and dress accessories.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>114</sup> Sixteen steatite conuli are also reported from the find context of the fragmentary large figure from Thebes (see above). DEMAKOPOULOU (1974, 168-169) suggested that those were produced in the excavated workshop area.

<sup>115</sup> For a discussion, see IAKOVIDIS 1977, 113-119; CARINGTON SMITH 1975, 287-288, has argued that spindle whorls weighting less than 10 gm are too light to have been used in the spinning process. For their use as actual spindle-whorls, see DAVIS 1986, 98-99, pl. 38d, 66 E45-46, S 27 and S 29. For a discussion on spindle-whorls, see TZACHILI 1997, 121-123.

S. Iakovidis noted the absence of uniformity among these *conuli* that were made out of a variety of materials, including clay. Their size is generally small; their average diameter does not exceed c. 2.5 cm and their weight is often around 8 to 9 gm. S. Lipkin in her study of textile making in Central Tyrrhenian Italy has tested spindle whorls of different qualities, sizes and weights and was able to produce threads even with the lightest spindle whorls of 4 gm.<sup>116</sup> The finest of threads were achieved with these spindle whorls, although such came out as rather thin and fragile. Thus spinning with such small whorls would have required skilled spinners. It is thus practically possible that miniature spindle whorls could be used for the preparation of fine cloths: as Lipkin notes ‘concerning spinning, the greatest difference was between spinners, not fibres’. The apparent absence of spindles from the sanctuaries of the Geometric and Archaic periods, in contrast to the whorls, may well derive from the fact that these were made out of wood and so not preserved in the archaeological record. Alternatively, it is perfectly possible that in the case of the miniatures, often finely decorated, they were made and intended as accessories to finished cloths, garments and textiles, for it is difficult for them to have functioned as dedications *per se*. In this way the act of dedication cannot be fully understood without considering the textiles to which those small objects should have been attached, irrespective as to their use as weights, beads or buttons.

Despite the potential practical character of these miniature objects connected to the spinning and weaving processes, their dedication would make more sense if accompanied by the finished (or unfinished) product. This would give those objects specific meaning as offerings in a ritual context. Finely decorated small loom weights, such as the one assigned to the Head-in-air Painter from the sanctuary of Hera at Perachora and decorated with two pairs of lions and sphinxes,<sup>117</sup> may be seen as special gifts, possibly by skilled weavers or women of certain social status in order to be dedicated together with clothes. The large number of finely decorated spindle whorls that were found at the

sanctuary of the Nymph on the south slope of the Acropolis could be better understood in the same way, items dedicated along with the elaborate textiles produced.<sup>118</sup> The sanctuary there was closely linked to wedding rituals from the early 7th century BC onwards: it received the symbolic offering of the clay *loutrophoi*, a specifically Attic shape used as the container of the nuptial bathwater. Dedications at the sanctuary have been associated with women, embodying both aristocratic and cultic associations. In the same manner, it is possible to understand the use of certain clay balls frequently found in funerary, domestic and sanctuary contexts: as both decorative attachments and as weights helping to keep the lighter cloths in place.<sup>119</sup>

Spinning and weaving are tasks that require time and effort to learn, particularly when specialized techniques are employed to make textiles and clothes. But not every women involved in this process became a skilful textile maker. The production of cloths and textiles should be seen as a continuous process from the concept to the finished object: in this way the tools involved may acquire a symbolic meaning. It is evident that textile-making influenced one’s social status: on several occasions in the Homeric epics the quality and quantity of cloths and garments constituted an effectual way of signalling one’s wealth.<sup>120</sup> They are also quite frequently praised for their perfumed scent, their attractive red colour or their shiny effect.<sup>121</sup> Clothes are equally described as having tassels or presumably tassel-like attachments (*Od.* 19.242): if the small spindle whorls were also utilized as such attachments to cloths, clothing and textiles, then the senses of hearing would be stimulated along with those of smell and sight.<sup>122</sup>

118 SABETAI 2014, 56-59; GRECO 2010, 200-203; KYRKOU 2011; PAPADOPOULOU-KANNELOPOULOU 1997.

119 Clay balls with incised and painted decoration were found in the Athenian tombs of the 9th and 8th centuries BC: KÜBLER 1954, pl. 15; STRÖMBERG 1993, 95-99; LANGDON 2005, 12-13; PAPAGGELI 2012, 107 Fig. 6. From the Geometric settlement of Skala Oropou are a number of examples from inside houses and from the open space around them, while a small corpus of clay balls along with spindle whorls were found at the sanctuary of Apollo at Eretria: HUBER 2003, 103, pl. 51 and 135; VERDAN 2013, 140-141. Clay balls with or without a central perforation are found in the same contexts: they look to have been used in a similar, although not identical, manner.

120 VAN WEES 2005, 17-18. SHELMEARDINE 1995.

121 SHELMEARDINE 1995, 99-107.

122 Note the small female terracotta figurine from Myrsini in the Archaeological Museum of Aghios

116 LIPKIN 2012, 20-35.

117 DUNBABIN 1962, 129-130 no. 1312, pl. 48 (middle of 7th century BC). For finely decorated loom-weights from the Athenian Acropolis, see GRAEF and LANGLOTZ 1925, pl. 113.2757-2760. For some Corinthian examples, see DAVIDSON 1952, pl. 74. 1070, pl. 146d and 149. For some finely decorated spindle whorls from Perachora, see DUNBABIN 1962, 130-131, pl. 39.1315-1322 and 56.1313-1314.

In this context, the presence of miniature spindle whorls that are rarely attested from other EIA sanctuaries and cult places could be linked with the dedication of textiles and possibly equally clothes at Amykles, as early as the late 10th century BC. It is equally possible that the use and offering of textiles was part of the ritual activity at the LBA sanctuary, as manifested by the spindle whorls and loom weights that seem to date to this period.<sup>123</sup> The importance of this class of artefacts in the religious ceremonies and the palatial economy has been largely discussed and demonstrated in recent scholarship.<sup>124</sup> A. Vasilogambrou has shown the importance of textile's economy at the newly discovered palatial complex at Aghios Vasileios based on the evidence of the Linear B tablets that were found there.<sup>125</sup> What is however much more difficult to answer is the exact function of this category of dedications in the context of the LBA and again in the EIA ritual activity. It may be possible to approach through the act of offering of textiles the continuous mutations of a ritual tradition that since at least the archaic period takes at Amykles the form of the preparation and dedication of a specific cloth, a *chiton* for Apollo. The weaving of the *chiton* for Apollo and its ceremonial transportation to the sanctuary at Amykles was an important part of the rituals, at least by the time that Pausanias visited the sanctuary (III, 16, 2). In her treatment of early Greek cult statues, I. Romano noted that this was the only Archaic image of Apollo that received real clothing, despite the fact that it cannot be said with certainty either whether the *chiton* was actually worn by the giant statue of Apollo, or if this practice echoes Archaic or later traditions.<sup>126</sup> J. Mansfield emphasized that although the offering of textiles and clothes at the sanctuaries is a common ritual practice, the tradition of weaving ritual garments for a specific cult statue is quite rare; it is associated with only few sanctuaries, that of Athena

*Poliás* at Athens (*peplos* woven annually),<sup>127</sup> Hera at Argos and Olympia (every four years),<sup>128</sup> Apollo at Amykles and possibly also Athena at Argos. Amongst these, the only secure case where the cult statue was robed was at Athens. Mansfield placed the beginnings of such traditions to the 8th century and associated it with the formation of the *poleis* at Athens, Sparta and possibly also Argos by *synoecism*. He saw the act of communal weaving of cult-clothes as associated with the development of communal cults in the areas where a political unification was achieved during the 9th and 8th centuries BC.<sup>129</sup> In the case of Athena at Athens, the ordering of the *peplos* was officially made, while the presentation of the *peplos*, the dressing of the image and the washing of the garments became progressively important parts of the rituals.<sup>130</sup> For the rest of the cases, the bulk of pictorial evidence that survives for the Athenian rituals is lacking. As for Amykles, our only source for the preparation and dedication of the *chiton* is Pausanias. The weaving of the garment by particular weavers in a special room (called the *chiton*) is associated with the sanctuaries of Hilaeira and Phobe.<sup>131</sup> This has been considered as evidence for an official order of cult textiles and clothes.

E. Barber has argued that the tradition of weaving story-clothes, such as the *peplos* of Athena, should be traced back to the Bronze Age.<sup>132</sup> Textiles and their female producers played an important role in the Bronze Age Aegean economy and ritual, and thus the act of weaving and ritually presenting the clothes to the deity seems well rooted in this period. Linear B tablets record different types of cloth in association with cult and cultic activity. M.-L. Nosch and M. Perna have argued that clothes had a specific role in the ceremonies, either as offerings or as remuneration for cult personnel.<sup>133</sup> As an offering, the *webanos* is the type of cloth dedicated to the divinity, male or female. In certain cases the dedication seems to occur on a specific occasion, possibly within the context of a festival; it may be associated with a specific action, such as ritual binding, girdling or wrapping. The earliest reference of textile dedications to a

Nikolaos (no. 1860, dated to the LM IIIA2) that seems to have small 'spindle whorls' hanging from her garment: RETHEMIOTAKIS 1998, 65, Fig. 74.

123 At least one terracotta spindle whorl has symbols incised all around it that might point to a Cypriot or even Phoenician origin. I thank Ch. Boulotis for this information, who is currently studying the small spindle whorl in view of its publication.

124 Cf. the recent volume edited by NOSCH and LAFFINEUR 2012, and especially GULIZIO 2012 and NOSCH 2012. Also BOULOTIS 1987; NOSCH 2008.

125 ARAVANTINOS and VASILOGAMBROU 2012.

126 ROMANO 1980, 103.

127 BARBER 1992; MANSFIELD 1985.

128 GRECO 1997, 185-199.

129 MANSFIELD 1985, 443-444.

130 ROMANO 1980, 415-417; BARBER 1992, 106-117. Also SCHEID and SVENBRO 2003, 17-30.

131 PAUSANIAS 3.16.2; CALAME 2001, 176-177.

132 BARBER 1992, 111-112, 117.

133 NOSCH and PERNA 2001.

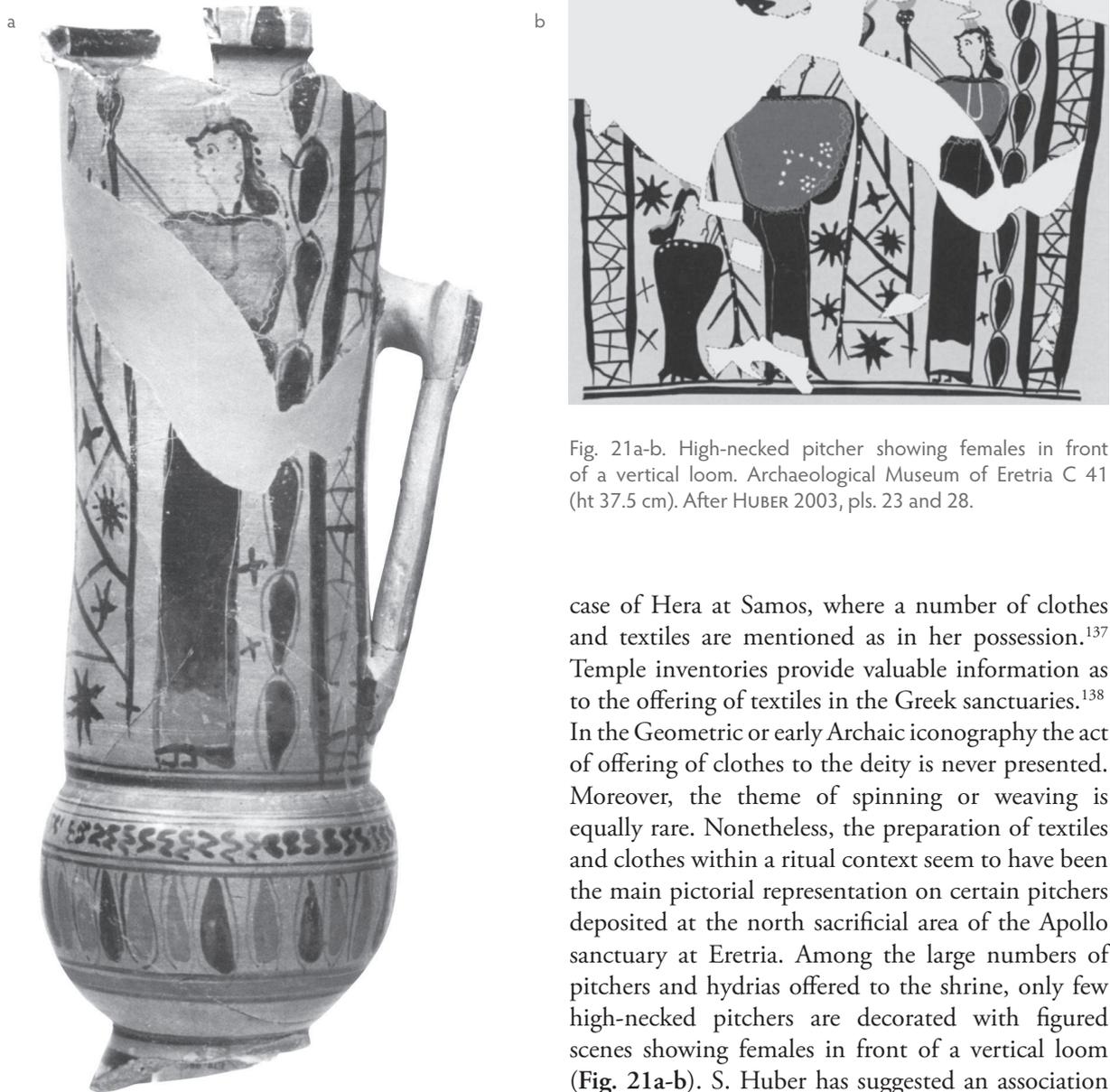


Fig. 21a-b. High-necked pitcher showing females in front of a vertical loom. Archaeological Museum of Eretria C 41 (ht 37.5 cm). After HUBER 2003, pls. 23 and 28.

female deity is the robe presented to Athena by the Trojan queen Hekabe in Book VI of the *Iliad* (293-303). An equally early reference is made by Alcman to the offering of a dress (*pharos*) to *Orthia* at Sparta by a procession of young girls.<sup>134</sup> The strong association between women and textiles is often cited in texts and inscriptions, mainly dating to the Classical period.<sup>135</sup> Images of gods and even *xoana*, old statues made out of wood, were often draped with changeable garments in a ritual known as the *kosmesis*.<sup>136</sup> The richest evidence can be found in the

case of Hera at Samos, where a number of clothes and textiles are mentioned as in her possession.<sup>137</sup> Temple inventories provide valuable information as to the offering of textiles in the Greek sanctuaries.<sup>138</sup> In the Geometric or early Archaic iconography the act of offering of clothes to the deity is never presented. Moreover, the theme of spinning or weaving is equally rare. Nonetheless, the preparation of textiles and clothes within a ritual context seem to have been the main pictorial representation on certain pitchers deposited at the north sacrificial area of the Apollo sanctuary at Eretria. Among the large numbers of pitchers and hydrias offered to the shrine, only few high-necked pitchers are decorated with figured scenes showing females in front of a vertical loom (Fig. 21a-b). S. Huber has suggested an association between the iconography of those pitchers and the *peplophoria* ritual – that is to say the weaving of the *peplos* to be dedicated to the venerated deity, possibly Artemis.<sup>139</sup> The iconographical theme of female weavers and the depiction of a vertical loom are new in the repertoire of the late Geometric and early Archaic period. Whether or not this can be associated with the preparation and the eventual dedication of ritual clothes and textiles in the sanctuary it remains a matter of interpretation. The image however of the females in front of the loom should be seen as a visual

134 ALCMAN, *Partheneion* I, 60-63.

135 NEILS 2009; CLELAND 2005.

136 ROMANO 1988; KLEIJWEGT 2002, 105-108.

137 OHLY 1953, 46-49.

138 BRØNS 2015. Especially for the case of Artemis at Brauron, see also KAHIL 1983.

139 HUBER 2003, C41 on 129-133, C37 on 134, 141-142. For the ritual use of these pitchers with high neck, see also HUBER 2013, 87-89.



Fig. 22. Detail of the decoration of the neck of an amphora assigned to the Passas Painter. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York inv. no 21.88.18. After MOORE 2004, pl. 41.

reference to the skill at weaving, and presumably the elite status and wealth of the weavers. It brings in this way in mind Penelope, and how her work on the loom defined her skills and embodied aspects of her life, by using the weaving as a trick to deceive and forestall the suitors. S. Langdon associated the highly selective class of Eretrian pottery with women producers, dedicators and probably also participants in the rituals.<sup>140</sup> The theme of weaving is to be found again on a small Corinthian aryballos dated to the late 7th century BC, depicting the contest between Athena and Arachne.<sup>141</sup> Although the emphasis there is placed on the agonistic part of the myth and the eventual transformation of Arachne into a spider, it is equally the skill at weaving that define the identity of both the young woman and the goddess. As M.-L. Nosch notes “it seems likely that the epic tradition of diligent female heroines singing before a loom is not only a mundane reflection of an Iron Ages woman’s daily life but also stems from an

<sup>140</sup> LANGDON 2008, 44-45 and Fig. 1.7.

<sup>141</sup> For the earliest representation of a loom on the Corinthian aryballos, see WEINBERG and WEINBERG 1956, 262-267.

ancient narrative universe in which women designed and described their destiny through weaving”.<sup>142</sup> Clothes and textiles commonly served in the *epics* as a non-verbal form of communication and representation of social class and status.<sup>143</sup> Lavish cloths, garments and textiles were greatly valued and associated with different social and ritual occasions, such as the rites of marriage and funerals, while also serving as gender and age indicators. By at least the late 8th / early 7th centuries BC onwards, Attic iconography provides evidence for richly decorated clothes that seem closely associated with the self-definition and expression of the contemporary *elites*. Certain pieces of cloth (such as the long mantles) were intended to distinguish the social status of certain persons and presumably also their involvement in the religious life of Attica. On the neck of the neck-amphora now in the MMA, a male figure of authority is shown holding with both hands what seems like a sceptre (Fig. 22).<sup>144</sup> The figure is dressed in a long garment (*chiton*), while a large mantle falls from over his shoulders to ankle height; it is decorated with a reclining goat placed in a small panel. It is possible to recognize in this figure an athletic victor wearing his prize, the long mantle, as W. Hahland has suggested.<sup>145</sup> Or it may be equally possible to read the male figure as holding a sceptre and dressed as a priest, within a context of a religious festival. On a fragmentary amphora from Phaleron the male figures to the left of the chariot are shown with a similar mantle, bearing figured decoration.<sup>146</sup> On an almost contemporary example from Pylla in Cyprus, today in Paris, a female figure with her both hands upraised, probably the priestess, follows two men carrying a goat attached to what seems like a tree branch.<sup>147</sup> The high *polos* headdress, the long

<sup>142</sup> NOSCH 2014, 99.

<sup>143</sup> REINHOLD 1970, 16; VAN WEES 2005.

<sup>144</sup> MOORE 2004, 66-69, pl. 39-41; for the Passas Painter, see also MOORE 2003. The long tasseled mantle of the figure has been identified as *claina* by VAN HEES (2005, 3, Fig. 1, the animal decorating the mantle is not shown in the drawing).

<sup>145</sup> W. HAHLAND in Corolla: Curtius 124, note 9, 127-128, pl. 41.

<sup>146</sup> Athens NM, 15957, 15983, 15994, 15995, 15958. COOK 1934-1935, pl. 48-49; HAMPE 1960, figs. 26-29; HAUG 2012, 103-105 and Fig. 72.

<sup>147</sup> Amphora, Bichrome III, MNB 322 Louvre, Paris: KARAGEORGHIS and DES GAGNIERS 1974, VI, 248-249; KARAGEORGHIS 2006, 113-114. The figure has been identified as a female from the long dress, the headdress and

cloth hanging down her back and the gesture of the hands, seem to conform well with her identification as “the goddesses with uplifted arms or her priestess”. Early Archaic iconography provides evidence for the elaborate patterned decoration of female dresses.<sup>148</sup> Such clothes are always associated with their makers in Homer, reflecting the sophisticated skills in weaving and spinning and also the material resources available. H. van Wees associated spinning and weaving with “the three cardinal virtues of Homeric women: skill, ‘mind’ and beauty”.<sup>149</sup> Evidence for richly decorated textiles and luxurious garments is provided by the large Archaic terracotta figures that were found in a number of Aegean sanctuaries from around the middle of the 7th to the first half of the 6th centuries BC.<sup>150</sup> Geometric and floral motifs are combined with human figures, wild animals and fantastic creatures that are placed in panels or in continuous zones, recalling contemporary vase painting. As A. Moustaka has shown, there existed significant regional preferences for the decoration of the clothes of these figures; unlike Attica and the Cyclades, the garments of the female figures from the sanctuaries of Sparta, namely those of Artemis *Orthia* and Athena *Chalkioikos*, demonstrate simpler forms woven in a less decorative manner.<sup>151</sup>

Women have been identified in most cases as the active dedicators of textiles and clothes and it would not be unreasonable to suggest a similar situation for the Amyklaion. But to whom were those offerings made for, and what we may say for the ritual context of these dedications? A. Strömberg, in her study of the burial gifts of the Protogeometric and Geometric periods in Athens, demonstrated that despite the

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the gesture of both arms. However, because of the similarity of the style of this figure with the rest of the male figures in the same scene, it may equally be interpreted as a male.

148 MPA mug, Kerameikos 80 (c. 670 BC) with a sphinx, a standing horse and a female mourner decorating the long dresses of the female mourners: KÜBLER 1970, pl. 14-15; VAN WEES 2005, 22, Fig. 13; HAUG 2012, 64, Fig. 28. For the production and use of Protoattic pottery by the Attic *elites*, see WHITLEY 1994. For the changing significance of richly decorated and colourful cloths after 600 BC, see VAN WEES 2005, 23-25.

149 VAN WEES 2005, 21. BARBER (1991, 358-382; 1994) has long argued on the importance of pictorial weavings in the preservation of images and myths from the 12th century BC down to the Geometric period. ATCHITY and BARBER 1987, 15-36.

150 KOUROU 2000; 2002; MOUSTAKA 2009, 48.

151 MOUSTAKA 2009, 48-49; MARANGOU 1969; DAWKINS 1929.

association of those objects with female activity, only occasionally are they placed with burials. They appear in 19% of the female tombs of the day, some of which received rich furnishings.<sup>152</sup> A number of the clay spindle whorls, beads and balls with incised decoration belong to that specific class of EIA production known as Attic Dark Age incised ware.<sup>153</sup> S. Langdon has associated from ethnographic parallels, this class of production with females and possibly also their children: they may have been made especially for the tomb and offered by female mourners.<sup>154</sup> Even so, the selective deposition of spindle whorls in the funerary record and the almost complete absence of loom weights may carry not merely a symbolic meaning, but a practical one too, accompanying cloths and textiles. Consequently, fine cloths and garments could once have been placed in the richly furnished burials of Athenian women and maidens.<sup>155</sup>

If we accept a chthonic context for the early cult activity at Amykles, as manifested by the myth of young Hyakinthos, his tragic death and his tomb on the hill, then it may be possible to approach the offering of textiles in relation to the chthonic aspect of the rituals there performed. Among the dedications of the 10th and 9th centuries BC, certain objects – such as clay boxes, pointed pyxides, ring vases, and the considerable number of small lekythoi and hydriae – within the material assemblages at Amykles, constitute common finds among contemporary burials, while they are only rarely reported among the finds from other cultic assemblages.<sup>156</sup> Interpreting ritual activity from material culture only is certainly risky, but the objects offered at the early sanctuary at Amykles could indicate the character of the activities if seen as a whole. Although not accepting that particular objects could have been exclusive to Olympian, chthonic or hero cults, R. Hägg draws

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152 STRÖMBERG 1993, 95.

153 SMITHSON 1961, 170-172; BOUZEK 1974; REBER 1991, 118-139. The Attic origin of this class of artifacts is now generally accepted.

154 LANGDON 2005, 12-13.

155 For traces of such a fine cloth in an Athenian Geometric burial of possibly a young female, see KOUROU 2011.

156 The sanctuary at Amykles has been compared for the most part with other mainland sanctuaries, such as Isthmia: MORGAN 1999; Olympia: KYRIELEIS 2006; EDER 2001; Kalapodi: FELSCH 1980; 1996; 2007; NITSCHKE 1987; NIEMEIER 2013, and Epidauros, Maleatas: LAMBRINOUDAKIS 1976; 1981; 1982.

attention to the proportions of such that may be contained in the votive assemblages.<sup>157</sup> It would seem that the finding of more than one individual objects together in the same assemblages, might eventually qualify the character of the ritual activities. Small terracotta spindle whorls are certainly extremely rare in sanctuaries and cult places of this period: this seems equally true for clay boxes, pointed pyxides and ring vases. If we consider the chthonian aspect of the cult at Amykles, as seems manifested by the presence of the anthropomorphic terracotta figures of the LBA, it may be possible to argue for a similar context in the EIA when taking into account the myth of Hyakinthos and his veneration as a hero at Amykles, as well as the material remains of the early ritual activity on the hill. There seems to have been a specific emphasis on the chthonian aspect of the ritual during the earlier phases at Amykles that remained an important part of later festivities as well. Independent of the dual presence of the god and of the hero, the succeeding ritual phases of mourning and rejoicing seem to reflect significant diversities in the composition and evolution of the festival. Continuous shifts and transformations in ritual activity throughout the long period of the use of the sanctuary do not allow clear-cut distinctions between the rituals addressed to Hyakinthos and those addressed to Apollo. It would seem however, that at a certain point, probably by the late 8th century BC the identity and character of the venerated god and hero had established a solid framework for the development of the cult at the site. Nonetheless, the participation of women in the performed rituals at Amykles remains an important aspect of the early cult activity on the hill.

#### FROM THE LBA RITUALS TO THE HYAKINTHIA FESTIVAL: AN OUTLINE

Mythological narrations dating to the 6th century BC explain why Hyakinthos was worshipped as a hero.<sup>158</sup>

157 HÄGG 1987, 99. For offerings made to the Laconian sanctuaries and *heroa*, see ANTONACCIO 2005.

158 MORENO-CONDE 2000; CONDE 2008, 9-11. The earliest mention of the myth is given in fragment 171 of the *Catalogue of the Women*, largely dated to the 6th century BC. ROMANO 1980, 99; for the transmission of the cult from Crete, see MELLINK, 134-135. P. Calligas and more recently A. Petropoulou have argued that the beginnings of the cult of Hyakinthos should be placed around or after 800 BC. However their arguments rely almost entirely on the presence of a certain class of pottery, the miniature hydriae: CALLIGAS 1992, 46; PETROPOULOU

The handsome youth was accidentally killed by the discus of Apollo. By the late 5th century BC we have the earliest mention of the cult and the *pannychis* by the Eurotas, founded by Apollo in memory of Hyakinthos: this comprised female choruses and animal sacrifices.<sup>159</sup> Antiochus of Syracuse refers to the *Hyakinthia* festival as the setting for the conspiracy of the *Partheniai*, an event that led to the foundation of Taras.<sup>160</sup> The signal for the attack by the conspirators was to be given during the athletic contest (ἀγών) and in the presence of all Spartans, who participated at the festivities. Although the historicity of the event remains a matter of interpretation, the foundation of the only Spartan colony has been traditionally dated to the late 8th century BC (706 BC).

The most important reference to the festival is to be found in the fourth book of *Deipnosophistai*, where Athenaios (*Deipnosophistai* 4. 139c-f) quotes at length Polykrates' description of the meal at the *Hyakinthia*.<sup>161</sup> Two different types of meals corresponded to the two successive parts of the festival, addressed both to the chthonic hero *Hyakinthos* and the Olympian Apollo. Pausanias (3.1.3; 3.19.3) also informs us about the two consecutive, although distinct, stages of ritual activity at Amykles, one centred on the tomb of *Hyakinthos* and the other on the altar of Apollo. The character of the ritual activity at Amykles seems to display the degree of complexities and transformations in its religious practices that would require an early origin.

M. Pettersson has argued that the cult of the dead Hyakinthos formed an original part of the cult and can be traced back to the LH IIIC rituals.<sup>162</sup> The strength of the hero cult at Amykles is much later shown by Pindar,<sup>163</sup> who refers to the murder and burial of Agamemnon at the site. The same tradition is recorded by Pausanias (3.19.5), who saw what was known as the tomb of Agamemnon. It would thus

2015, 153, 156-157. The earliest reference to Apollo at Amykles is an inscription to Apollo on the handle of a bronze object by a certain Δορκονίδα: SEG 11 (1954), 129 no. 689; W. v. MASSOW, AM 42 (1972), 61-64. See also discussion in PETROPOULOU 2015.

159 EURIPIDES, *Helen* (1465-1474). See also, DIETRICH 1975; CALAME 2001, 181-182; CONDE 2008, 13-14; PETROPOULOU 2015.

160 STRABO 6.3.2=FGrH 555 F 13 [from Antiochus' work Περὶ Ἰταλίας (Πολιτεῖαι)].

161 Also, PAUSANIAS 3.19.3; BRUIT 1990; BRULÉ 1992; PETTERSSON 1992, 9-29; CONDE 2008, 13-59.

162 PETTERSSON 1992, 9-41, 106-109 and 122-123.

163 *Pythian* 11.31-32.

seem that particularities of the ritual practices at the Amykleian sanctuary and the dual character of the cultic celebrations (equally addressed to the dead hero *Hyakinthos* and to Apollo) were embedded in long-term social and ritual transformations.<sup>164</sup> The presence of Middle Helladic tombs on the hill may have acted as a visible reference to the ancestors who formerly lived and buried their dead at the same area. It would seem however that the evolution of the ritual activity is not that straightforward, but rather emerges through the use and display of ritual symbols in a continuous and dynamic re-definition of the ritual space – influenced by and both changing social contexts and cultic associations. Thus we may better appreciate the use of the large LBA cult images during the rituals performed at the site: both serving as markers of the ritual activity and of the ritual space, and at the same time fashioning discernible associations with the particular character of the rituals performed. Both images manifest chthonic features, and as suggested further above are better understood within the context of a chthonic cult.

After a short period from around the mid/late 11th to the early 10th centuries BC, which is characterized by a severe reduction in the material remains from the site, the Amykleian hill becomes the focus of interest for the communities living in the vicinity.<sup>165</sup> While drinking and dining activities are clearly demonstrated in the material record, the assemblages include a collection of vessel forms unrelated to drinking or dining, such as lekythoi, small-sized hydriae and ring vases that seem to have held some kind of liquid offerings, clay boxes and pyxides, as well as clay figurines, loom weights and miniature handmade vessels that only make sense as dedications within a cult context.<sup>166</sup> The homogeneity of the ceramic material, as to its style and manufacture techniques, demonstrates the local character of the production, probably for a regional clientèle participating in the activities. The collective rituals at the site seem to have placed an emphasis on the shared consumption of food and drink, and even presumably to a shared sacrifice. The earliest material evidence from the other sanctuaries of the Spartan plain belongs to the late 10th/early 9th centuries BC,

on the basis of stylistic criteria alone. Only a few sherds have been reported from the Acropolis of Sparta, the Sanctuary of Athena Chalkioikos, the Heroon and the Sanctuary of Artemis Orthia.<sup>167</sup> Further to the south of Sparta and to the west of the Eurotas plain a few PG sherds have been reported from the area of Anthochori, where a sanctuary of Zeus Messapeus has been identified.<sup>168</sup> Still, these few PG sherds that antedate the Geometric material at the Spartan sanctuaries cannot be compared to the large corpus of material from Amykles. Throughout this period, the Amykleian hill seems to have remained the point of reference, possibly for the small communities dispersed in the wider area.<sup>169</sup>

Material evidence is our only source of information for the earlier phases of the cult: such cannot be used to argue directly on the religious beliefs. Nonetheless, we may contend that the continuities and discontinuities in the history of the shrine as expressed in its material assemblages could reflect transformations of its ritual practices. Although no solid evidence exists for the character of those early activities on the hill, the preceding Mycenaean ritual activity might have provided the necessary background for the perception of the sanctuary as an old and established one, and so provided the necessary link for hero or ancestral veneration. Material evidence shows that during the LBA and into the EIA consumption of food and drink has been carried out on the hill without a break. W. Burkert has emphasized the connecting role of consumption during a funeral: “... the only kind of festive meal to which one may come with no personal invitation, for by participating one testifies to one’s own personal participation”.<sup>170</sup> This could fit well with

164 BUSCHOR and MASSOW 1927; CALLIGAS 1992; *Hyakinthos*: LIMC VI, s.v. *Hyakinthos* (L. and F. Villard); DIETRICH 1975; CARTLEDGE 2002, 79-82. For the sacrifices that were intended for heroes in close connection with death, see EKKROTH 2002, 99-101.

165 VLACHOU 2015.

166 VLACHOU 2015 and forthcoming.

167 COULSON 1985; EDER 1998, 107-109; ZAVVOU and THEMOS 2009.

168 ZAVVOU 2009, 29-31, Fig. 4.7.

169 DE POLIGNAC 1984, 38-39 and 45 n. 42; ANTONACCIO 1994, 88, 103. Besides Amykles, sites usually mentioned are the sanctuary of Apollo Maleatas near Epidauros, Eleusis, Olympia, and the sanctuary at Ayia Irini on Keos. One of the strongest cases for cult continuity from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age has been demonstrated at Kalapodi: NITSCHKE 1987, 35-49; FELSCH 1980, 47-54; NIEMEIER 2013. See also the *ypethral* sanctuary at the site of Herakles on Kos, where a number of wheel-made and finely decorated terracotta bulls were dedicated, see SKERLOU 2004. Also the votive deposits from the sanctuary of Apollo Dalios on Kalymnos. Certain bull figures from both cult sites demonstrate distinctive similarities with the material from Amykles, in style and decoration.

170 BURKERT 2006, 34.

the chthonian character of the LBA and again the EIA ritual activity at Amykles. Within this context, the archaeological evidence of common gatherings, possibly at regular intervals, where consumption seems to have been the main activity, could have promoted the creation of a common identity among the participants. During the same period we witness the emergence of the local Protogeometric style in pottery, as illustrated by the large ceramic assemblages from Amykles. The seminal work of W. D. E. Coulson on the Dark Age pottery from Sparta<sup>171</sup> demonstrated the origins for this from the preceding Mycenaean repertory, strongly challenging any definite cultural disruption in the area. It becomes thus evident that the participants in the activities both linked themselves to the past, while introducing new features in how they expressed themselves materially. Within this, ritual practices such as the preparation and offering of textiles, probably within the funerary festivities, constitute specific stages in ritual practice. The constant presence of spindle whorls and also few loom weights in the material assemblages from the site act as valuable indicators for the likely dedication of objects made out of materials that only rarely survive in the archaeological context, namely clothes and textiles.

In his discussion of the Boiotian festival of *Daidala*, A. Chaniotis argues that “festivals known primarily or exclusively from later sources are the result of the natural and unavoidable tensions and conflicts between an inherently conservative element on the one hand and a very dynamic element on the other: between ritual actions, which have to be performed in a particular way, and the continually changing community of the performers, participants, and receptors or spectators”.<sup>172</sup> The continuities and changes in the ritual activity at the Spartan Amyklaion, as well as the progressive consolidation of the Hyakinthia festival, may only be understood as the result of the social shifts, economic transformations and ultimately of changes in the community of the participants.

The latter half of the 9th century BC sees the second important stage in the development of the sanctuary. The introduction of new shapes in the local feasting equipment, a visible growth of non-Laconian ware that reached its climax in the second half of the 8th century BC, and new forms of dedication, such as clay and bronze tripods, together demonstrate a clear change in the nature of the wealth investment by

the participants in the feasts and rituals. Elaborate offerings, metal dedications and imported goods display competitive interactions between the local communities and mark a significant difference to the homogeneity of the material assemblages and ritual practices of earlier periods. The Early Iron Age shrine at the Amyklaion progressively evolved to a stage of competitive display, reflecting contemporary social, economic and even political developments. M. Pettersson has argued that around the same period, the late 9th century BC, the prestige and power of the local ruling elites, the Agiadae, the Eurypontidae and the Aigeiadae, would have been largely based on the control of the most important cults of the later Spartan *polis*.<sup>173</sup> Pottery belonging to the distinctive Laconian PG style is found beyond the limits of Sparta: on the way to the area of Vrasies, which seems to have facilitated the connection between Sparta and the sites of the Argolid gulf, and further to the North to Tegea, presumably associated with the open-air shrine under the *pronaos* of the late Classical temple, and eventually on Mt. Lykaion.<sup>174</sup> The period from the end of the 9th to the late 8th centuries BC has been generally seen as a prolonged period of internal struggles, economic pressures and increasing competition among the ruling families. The settlement of Lakonians on Thera (c. 800 BC) and at Taras (c. 700 BC) are among the events that marked the two ends of this period, reflecting contemporary social and economic upheavals.<sup>175</sup> Tradition places the annexation of Amykles into the Spartan *polis* around the same period (c. 760-740 BC), as the final event in the creation of the Spartan territory through the *synoecism* of the five villages (Pitana, Mesoa, Kynosoura, Limnai and Amykles).<sup>176</sup> Within this

173 PETERSSON 1992, 105-106, 109-112. For the character of Sparta as a conglomerate of villages, THUCYDIDES 1.10.2. It has been argued that until the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, the Spartan territory was occupied by small scattered settlements with burial grounds in the adjacent areas: STIBBE 1989, 69; KOURINOY 2009. See also, ZAVVOY and THEMOS 2009; KENNEL and LURAGHI 2009, 240-241, 245-247.

174 Cave Sitzas: FAKLARI 1990, 159-169, pl. 72c-d; Prusias or Vrasies: FAKLARI 1990, 129-137; Tegea: VOYATZIS 1990, 269-273; 2004, 188-190, Fig. 2; 2005; ØSTBY *et al.* 1994, 134; Mount Lykaion: ROMANO and VOYATZIS 2014.

175 PELAGATTI 1956, 7-44; MALKIN 1994, 67-142; NAFISSI 1999; HALL 2009, 111-114.

176 This situation has been largely discussed as the struggle between two culturally different populations, the Achaean Amykles and the Dorian Sparta: see CARTLEDGE

171 COULSON 1985.

172 CHANIOTIS 2002, 24.

set-up the Amykleian sanctuary should have had an important symbolic and cultic status in the definition of the Spartan territory, mainly due to its seniority compared to the rest of the cult places in the plain and because of its Mycenaean pedigree. The struggle of the Achaian Amykles against the Dorian Sparta seems to indicate something of this nature,<sup>177</sup> while the mention of Amykles in the Homeric catalogue of ships (*Il.* 2.584) may reflect the growth of the site around the same period, emphasizing its importance in the regional economy and topography.<sup>178</sup>

The second half of the 8th and the early 7th century BC coincides with a peak in the activity at the Amyklaion and the construction of the first enclosure wall around the foot of the hill. The remodelling of the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia at Limnai and the foundation of the cult of Menelaos and Helen show parallel transformations of the religious practice taking place elsewhere. The sanctuary was almost completely re-organised in the late Archaic period, when the famous Throne of *Apollonos en Amyklai* [Ἀπόλλων(ος) ἐν Ἀμυκλαίοι] (*IG V* 1.823) dominated the hill and a strong *temenos* wall defined the sacred area.<sup>179</sup> According to the description of

Pausanias (III 19), instead of a temple an enormous throne dominated the hill, in the middle of which stood the altar that provided access to the tomb of Hyakinthos and the column-shaped statue of Apollo. It is the distinctive character of this structure placed on the top of the hill at Amykles that attracted the interest of scholars already from an early date.<sup>180</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

Religious belief has undergone serious shifts and transformations from the Mycenaean through the early Archaic period: much regarding those early activities yet awaits elucidation.<sup>181</sup> The Amyklaion is among the few religious sites of the Greek Mainland that was founded at the very end of the palatial period and continues to provide evidence of ritual activities through the Early Iron Age and onwards. Between *c.* 1200 and 800 BC the archaeological picture is still incomplete and the practices difficult to interpret in a definite way. As it seems, the presence of large terracotta figures in both the LBA and the EIA ritual practices provides significant evidence as to the character of the rituals performed at Amykles: both a chthonic and a hero cult are argued for. Yet, the meanings behind these objects and the symbolic associations they display vary significantly. The figures of the LBA are associated with the specific character of the rituals performed, presumably serving as markers of the ritual activity and cult space.

The figures of the late 8th century BC seem to have been specific dedications by the aristocratic Spartan or even Amykleian families, providing the necessary ancestral and social models for the younger members of the society. The materiality of certain continuities and discontinuities reflect different social settings. The emergence of a distinctive local pottery style quite early in the 10th century BC may be associated with specific visitors to the site, who embraced the earlier activity and provided the necessary links to

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2002, 92-106. PETERSSON (1992, 106-112) has seen it as the outcome of interregional struggles between the aristocratic elites. For a discussion of the importance of rituals in renegotiating power relations, see U. RAO, "Ritual in Society", in: J. KREINATH, J. SNOEK and M. STAUSBERG (eds), *Theorizing Rituals: Issues, Topics, Approaches, Concepts*, Leiden and Boston, 2006, 143-160 (esp. 158).

177 ARIST. *Fr.* 532 (Rose); PAUS. 3.2.6; PETERSSON 1992, 107-111; VLACHOU forthcoming. For the mention of Amykles in the *Catalogue of Ships*, *Il.* 2.584; PINDAR, *Pyth.* 1.65.

178 On Homer and Laconian topography, see CHAPIN and HITCHCOCK 2007, 255-262. The location of the EIA settlement is speculated to lie between the hill of Aghia Kyriaki and the modern village in the south, where the other important sanctuary, that of Alexandra Kassandra, is located. POLYBIUS (5.19.2) placed the town of Amykles twenty stades south of the Classical *asty* of Sparta. In 1996, a burial group with 12 PG graves was revealed during rescue excavation of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Laconia in the modern village of Amykles; a substantial quantity of Protogeometric and Geometric pottery found mingled with later material reinforces the identification of the EIA settlement in this area. See E. ZAVVOU, *Deltion* 51 (1996), *Chronika* B1, (D. Konidaris plot) 129-131, pl. 45a-b; *Deltion* 53 (1998), *Chronika* B1, 172-173.

179 The site was first identified by W.M. LEAKE (*Travels in the Morea I*, London, 1830, 144) and confirmed by the discovery of stamped tiles with the name of Apollo

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Amyklaios and by epigraphical evidence: TSOUNTAS 1892, 3; FIECHTER 1918, 223 nos. 11, 12; BUSCHOR-VON MASSOW 1927, 61-64 nos. 1-16; VLIZOS 2009, 11-13. For a detailed treatment of the literary and epigraphical evidence, see PETERSSON 1992; CONDE 2008. For a short treatment of the bibliography on the throne of Apollo, cf. VLIZOS 2009, 12-13; DELIVORRIAS 2009.

180 VLIZOS 2009, 12-13; VLIZOS 2015; MATALAS 2015.

181 SOURVINOU-INWOOD 1989, 153; MORGAN 1999, 369-372. For a short overview, see DICKINSON 2006, 220-237.

the future through the rituals performed on the hill. From a different point of view, the material remains of textiles and cloths argued to have been offered at Amykles demonstrate the persistence of certain ritual practices that at the same time both integrate and set apart different levels of the society. In this context

the particularities of ritual practices at Amykles, namely the distinction of two ritual phases within the same festival, seems to have been shaped over time by integrating the older local cult into one of the most important Spartan festivals.

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