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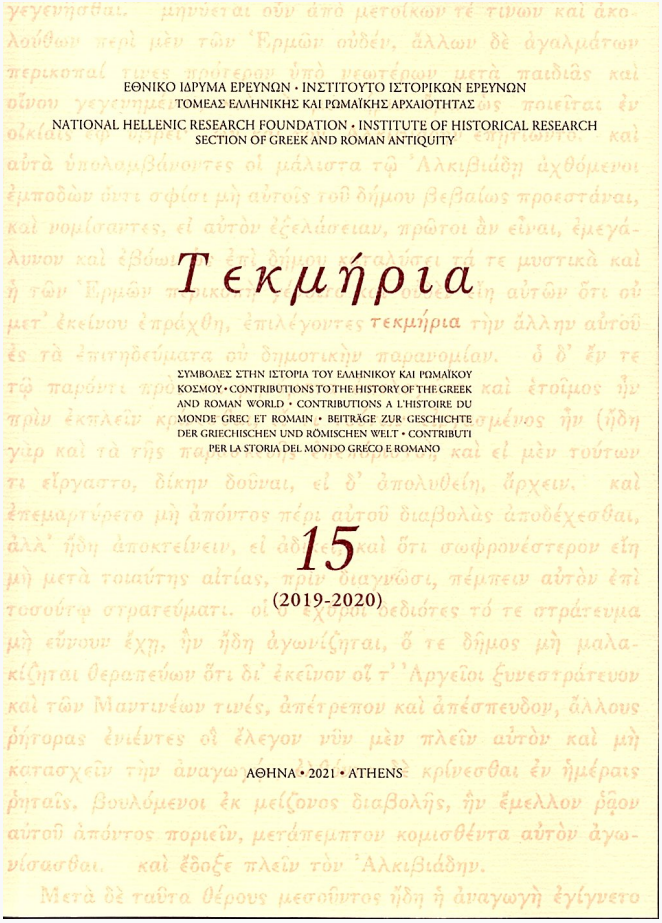

Heirloom or Antique? Import or Imitation? Objects with Fictive “Biographies” in Early Iron Age Knossos

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Heirloom or Antique? Import or Imitation? Objects with Fictive "Biographies" in Early Iron Age Knossos

Introduction[1]

People accumulate objects in their lifetime. Objects, like people, have "biographies",[2] and most of the time they share these "biographies" with people. According to ethnographic studies, men and women can even "narrate their life through their possessions".[3] The lifespan of an object, however, is often much longer than that of a person. The cultural biography of objects and the parallelism, by Koppytoff,[4] between commodity and slavery were introduced into the corpus of archaeological theory in a collection of articles edited by Appadurai.[5] Koppytoff supports that objects have cultural biographies and that the status or cultural context of commodities can be modified during their "lifetime".[6] In certain societies, people apart from exchanging items and products they also offer them as gifts. Even in this case, however, the taker is expected to repay the gesture with another gift as part of a social obligation.[7] Objects acquire new biographies "as they repeatedly move between people".[8] In the archaeological record, finds discovered far away from their production area can be interpreted as objects with more than one "biographies" and/or identities. For example, archaeologists discovered a mid-sixth century BC

1. I am grateful to Joseph Maran for reading and commenting on an earlier draft of this paper. My special thanks go out to Antonios Kotsonas for his insightful comments and suggestions; he has also kindly permitted me to reproduce in Map 1 the outline of the extent of the city of Knossos, after Kotsonas 2019, 7, fig. 6. I truly appreciate the feedback and corrections offered by Myrina Kalaitzi and two anonymous reviewers.

2. Kopytoff 1986, 65.

3. Harding 2016, 7. See Hoskins 1998 for an analysis on biographical objects.

4. Kopytoff 1986.

5. Appadurai 1986.

6. Kopytoff 1986, 65.

7. Mauss 1966, 1-9.

8. Gosden, Marshall 1999, 174.

Corinthian helmet inside a seventh/sixth-century BC cist grave in Malaga, Spain.[9] Was this helmet part of the military equipment of a Greek mercenary who died in the land of the mythical Tartessians?[10] Was it a commodity sold by Phoenician traders, who were very active in that area, to a local warrior? Was it a prestigious gift by Phocaean explorers to a local aristocrat? For those who placed it in the tomb, this helmet was also considered "dead", in the sense that no one would use it anymore. Ironically, the helmet has now acquired a new identity and life cycle as an archaeological find, and will assume yet another one as a museum exhibit.

It is difficult to follow the trajectory of an object like this helmet in the Mediterranean Sea before its deposition in the Malagenean tomb. Ancient literature can offer some hints. Homer provides us with stories about imports and exchanges of prestigious items. The most celebrated example of such an exchange is the Phoenician silver crater which Achilles offered to the winner of the funeral games in honour of Patroclus.[11] Sidonians crafted this crater, and their merchants offered it to the king of Lemnos, who then offered it to other kings. Through gift exchange between members of the Aegean elites the crater ended up as a ransom to Achilles for one of Priam's daughters.[12] This crater may be considered a luxury good. According to Appadurai, the use of this category of objects and the "necessity in which they respond is fundamentally political"[13] and it might have been restricted only to the elites.[14]

Archaeologists[15] use the Greek word *keimelion*[16] to describe objects such as Achilles' silver crater. *Keimelion* can be translated in English as "anything

9. García González et al. 2013, 277.

10. Herodotus offers an account of the relations between the people in the South of the Iberian Peninsula and their mythical king Arganthonios, the Phoenicians and the Phocaeans, before and after the flight of the latter from Asia Minor in the mid-6th cent. BC (Hdt. 1.163-169).

11. Aubet 1994, 106; Whitley 2013, 401-402.

12. Hom. *Il.* 23.740-745. See also Crielaard 2003, 53.

13. Appadurai 1986, 38.

14. Appadurai 1986, 38.

15. See, for example, Catling 1984, 91; Aubet 1994, 106.

16. Hom. *Il.* 17.292.

stored up as valuable, treasure, heirloom".[17] Translating *keimelion* as "heirloom" implicates that an object, apart from being old and valuable, has been with the same family for over one generation. For Lillios an heirloom "is an object that has been inherited by kin, either before or after the death of its original owner, and it has been maintained in circulation (i.e. not buried or destroyed) for a number of generations".[18] Whitley rightly argues that not all *keimelia* are heirlooms.[19] He claims that an antique object which is not an heirloom can also be important because of its "deeply entangled biography".[20] In this respect, all heirlooms are entangled objects, but not all entangled objects are heirlooms. Crowe suggests using the term "antique"[21] for "an object with a production date significantly older than that of its redeposition context".[22] I also feel that this general term can describe better the meaning of the Greek word *keimelion*, whereas the term "heirloom" can be used for archaeological finds the context of which suggests that these could have been inherited within the same family group. In his theoretical framework on antique imports, apart from *keimelia* and heirlooms, van Wijngaarden sees a third category of antique objects: these were the antique objects circulating for a long period in the area of production, before ending up in another area and deposited in a tomb as a kind of "souvenir". However, as he himself admits, "it is difficult to assess the significance of an archaeological find that is older than the context in which they occur".[23]

Gift exchange between Greek, Cypriot and Phoenician elite members[24] is only one path for the circulation of *keimelia*. Traders, merchants and craftsmen

17. *LSJ*[9], s.v. κειμήλιον. In medieval and modern Greek *keimelion* is closer to the meaning of "heirloom", see Dimitrakos 1956, s.v. κειμήλιον.

18. Lillios 1999, 241.

19. Whitley 2013, 402.

20. Whitley 2013, 402.

21. According to the Cambridge English Dictionary "*antique* is something made in an earlier period and considered to have value because of being beautiful, rare, old, or of high quality" (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/antique) (accessed 16/11/2020).

22. Crowe 2019, 482.

23. Van Wijngaarden 2005, 407.

24. Aubet 1994, 107.

also participated in the distribution of goods in the ancient Mediterranean.[25] These activities are echoed in Herodotus,[26] when he describes how Phoenicians, after having sold most of their commodities, abducted women from Argos; soon after, Cretans landed at Tyre and kidnapped princess Europa.[27]

In the Aegean, especially during the Late Bronze Age (LBA), prestige objects played an important role for the emerging political entities.[28] Maran[29] sees two conflicting principles for the justification of leadership in Post-Palatial Tiryns: the first is based on individual accomplishments. The second principle is to establish proof of descent from the former elite.[30] Entangled objects and especially heirlooms were the ideal tools for this proof of descent. In societies with hereditary rank (i.e. chiefdoms), these objects provided rulers with the power to construct and maintain social inequalities.[31] The sceptre of Agamemnon was such an object.[32] Hephaestus made it for Zeus, who gave it to Pelops, who passed it on to his son Atreus. After an intermission in Thyestes' possession (brother of Atreus), the sceptre was given to Atreus' son Agamemnon, "that so he might be lord of many isles and of all Argos".[33] Other scholars claim that Homeric entangled objects share more common characteristics with the material culture of the Early Iron Age (EIA) than with the LBA.[34]

As suggested in the following sections, before assuming the identity of a *keimelion* and/or heirloom, certain prestige objects were first imports. Nevertheless, archaeologists have demonstrated that in the ancient Mediterranean an import was not considered necessarily a prestige item. This was not related to the nature or value of the object, but to how a given society perceived it. According to van Wijngaarden, Mycenaean pot shapes for dinning

25. Van Wijngaarden 2012, 68.

26. Hdt. 1.1.

27. Hdt. 1.2.

28. Deger-Jalkotzy 2002, 47; Bennet 2004, 93; Maran 2006, 123-124; Maran, Stockhammer 2012, 1-3; Jung 2012, 104-105.

29. Maran 2006, 143.

30. Maran 2006, 143.

31. Lillios 1999, 235-236.

32. Hom. *Il.* 2.100.

33. Hom. *Il.* 2.100 (trans. Murray 1924).

34. Whitley 2013, 411.

and drinking were imported and copied in LBA Cyprus, the Levant and Italy.[35] Levantines perceived these Mycenaean ceramic vessels as international goods but not necessarily as prestige items, and used them in both domestic and cultic activities.[36] Cypriots incorporated and copied Mycenaean pottery to such an extent that "the origin of the pots was no longer relevant".[37] LBA Italians, on the other hand, at first used these same types of Mycenaean pottery as prestige items, but gradually started using local imitations for the same purposes.[38] This means that an object can be important not as an import as such, but because of its "biography" or function. In addition, the way modern people perceive authenticity might not be the same as the way past civilizations did.[39]

In the EIA cemeteries of Knossos objects catalogued as imports were deposited in the tombs of the local elite.[40] Some of these imports predate the entire context of the tomb by a century. In Knossian cemeteries, apart from these Near Eastern imported antiques, archaeologists have also discovered their EIA local imitations. The present paper discusses the stylistic and contextual dating of Near Eastern imports that predate the context of the EIA Knossian graves, in which they had been deposited. It also examines whether the EIA local imitations of LBA and EIA Near Eastern imports held the same status as prestige objects as their prototypes and whether they could have functioned as antiques and/or heirlooms. It is argued that the use of Near Eastern imports and local imitations discovered in Knossos had a great impact on the EIA local society and the competitive elites. LBA local grave goods discovered in the same EIA tombs along with Near Eastern imports could signify that the Knossians had developed different ways of reinventing their past.

35. Van Wijngaarden 2008, 126-145.

36. Van Wijngaarden 2008, 132.

37. Van Wijngaarden 2008, 132.

38. Van Wijngaarden 2008, 135.

39. Van Wijngaarden 2008, 125-129; Kotsonas 2012, 160.

40. Hoffman 1997; Jones 2000; Kotsonas 2006; Antoniadis 2017; Crowe 2019.

Late Minoan IIIC (LM IIIC)	1190-1100 BC
Sub-Minoan (SM)	1100-970 BC
Early Protogeometric (EPG)	970-920 BC
Middle Protogeometric (MPG)	920-870 BC
Late Protogeometric (LPG)	870-840 BC
Protogeometric B (PGB)	840-810 BC
Early Geometric (EG)	810-790 BC
Middle Geometric (MG)	790-745 BC
Late Geometric (LG)	745-700 BC
Early Orientalizing (EO)	700-670 BC
Middle Orientalizing (MO)	670-630 BC
Late Orientalizing (LO)	630-600 BC

Table 1. A chronological sequence of Knossos based on Coldstream (1996; 2001).

Early Iron Age Knossian cemeteries, local society and the Minoan past

Around 1200 BC, a major collapse occurred in the Mycenaean palace system in the Greek mainland. Constituting one of the major exceptions to the general rule of sudden changes in the Aegean, Knossos remained prosperous.[41] Recent archaeological evidence from a major survey in Knossos suggests that in the PG period there was an extensive settlement near the then abandoned BA/Minoan palace (**map 1**).[42] It extended from the Acropolis hill to the Kairatos river, and from the Vlychia stream "until roughly midway between the Minoan palace and the Kephala hill".[43]

The main concentration of EIA isolated tombs and larger burial sites (**map 1**) lies to the north/north-west of the settlement, in the so-called Knossos North Cemetery.[44] Medical Faculty (also known as Knossos Medical

41. Coldstream 2006, 581; Kotsonas 2019, 1.

42. Whitelaw et al. 2007, 30; Kotsonas et al. 2012, 219; Kotsonas et al. 2018, 71-73. On the nature and extent of the settlement of Knossos during the EIA, see Davaras 1968, 142; *contra* Coldstream, Catling 1996d, 714; Antoniadis 2017, 32, 37-38; Kotsonas 2019, 4-9.

43. Kotsonas 2019, 7-8.

44. Coldstream, Catling 1996a.

Faculty/ KMF),[45] Teke, Khaniale Teke, Fortetsa 1967, Kephala and Ayios Ioannis are the main burial sites which constitute the Knossos North Cemetery[46]. Near the village of Fortetsa, to the west/south-west of the settlement, lies a separate EIA cemetery.[47] Bronze Age cemeteries also lie in the same area, but EIA Knossians, apart from very few cases, never extensively reused Minoan tombs. Since there is no evidence for major domestic activity, one can assume that the entire area extending from the northernmost part of the settlement to the south suburbs of modern Herakleion city was an extended burial ground. Chamber tombs arranged in clusters of four to six constituted larger cemeteries.[48]

This paper examines material from 166 fully published tombs dated by their context to the EIA.[49] The reason for discussing only fully published tombs is that finds published selectively, isolated from their (unpublished) assemblages, have no value for any contextual approach.[50] The great majority of these 166 tombs are chamber tombs (118 out of 166) and accommodated multiple burials. By including inhumations and cinerary urns discovered inside the tombs as well as in a few isolated cist graves, one estimates that, in total, 931

45. For a detailed presentation of the Knossian cemeteries, see Antoniadis 2017, 27-67.

46. Tombs discovered further north, in the suburbs of Herakleion, at Atsalenio, Mastabas and Katsabas, are probably not directly associated with the city of Knossos, but with an EIA coastal settlement (i.e. the harbour of Knossos). For a fully published EIA tomb at Katsabas, see Lebesi 1970.

47. Brock 1957.

48. Cavanagh 1996, 657. It is difficult to distinguish between smaller groups of tombs and separate cemeteries. In most cases, different groups of tombs have been characterized as cemeteries because of the predetermined extent of the rescue excavations that have taken place in the area over the last century.

49. For a catalogue of the fully published graves in the area of Knossos, see Antoniadis 2017, 140-147, Appendix I. Most of the unpublished graves, not included in the present article, lie in Knossos North Cemetery. For partly published and unpublished EIA tombs in the area of the North Cemetery, see Kourou, Grammatikaki 1998; Kourou, Karetsou 1998; Rousaki, Anagnostaki 2012.

50. On the importance of the contextual approach for the study of heirlooms, see Lillios 1999, 240.

burials were carried out during the entire EIA.[51] Taken at face value, this calculation would indicate that during the EIA two people died per year (actually 1.86) at Knossos. More likely, this could mean that only part of the Knossian society had the right to formal burial in these cemeteries. If one combines the limited number of burials, the complex construction of the chamber tombs and the pit-cave graves, the high cost of the rite of cremation, and the golden, silver and ivory objects deposited in most of these tombs, then one can assume that these graves belonged to the members of the local elite.[52]

Different clusters of chamber tombs and cemeteries around Knossos could signify competition between different elite groups,[53] which were members of a conservative society.[54] This can be seen in the way they disposed of their dead. During the entire SM period, they buried their dead in the same way as before. Inhumations in chamber tombs, pit-caves and in some cases also shaft graves, was a customary way to bury the dead in LM II and LM IIIA. There are even few cases of EIA reuse of BA tombs, even directly above LM burials. For example, in a chamber tomb at Ayios Ioannis, two burials dating to the SM period were discovered near a group of LM burials.[55] In rare cases, Knossians also buried their dead in LBA tholos tombs during the PG period on the Kephala ridge[56] and in the PGB at Khaniale Teke.[57] One big change is obvious to the modern archaeologist, although it was not necessarily so to ancient Knossians: after the EPG, cremation in pithoi gradually replaced inhumation as the main burial rite. The fact that only a handful of Minoan tombs were reused during the entire EIA suggests that, as with Near Eastern LBA imports and supposed antique objects/heirlooms,[58] certain members of the community exclusively controlled and granted access to old tombs.[59]

51. Antoniadis 2017, 45.
52. Antoniadis 2017, 45-46.
53. Antoniadis 2017, 46-49; Kotsonas 2019, 5.
54. Snodgrass 1996, 596.
55. Hood, Coldstream 1968, 209-213.
56. Coldstream 2002, 216.
57. Hutchinson, Boardman 1954, 215-216.
58. See the next sections, pp. 81-88.
59. Lillios 1999, 236.

Other evidence that shows the need for a connection between the EIA elite and BA Knossians are the fragments of *larnakes* found inside EIA chamber tombs. EIA Knossians used some of these BA *larnakes* as coffins for their own inhumations. Sixteen *larnakes* were found in the North Cemetery and all of them date to LM III A-B period.[60] The context of the *larnakes* and the stratigraphy of the tombs suggest an EIA reuse. This means that, at least in the PGB, Knossians used these antique clay coffins in order to manifest continuity with the past.[61] Even a LM I amethyst gemstone was used and later deposited in a grave (Tomb 18, Medical Faculty) by EIA Knossians.[62] There is also evidence for cult activities related to a female vegetation-nature goddess from the very beginning of the EIA, which also reveals a strong bond with Minoan female deities: from the LM IIIC to the SM period there was cult activity related to the Goddess with the Upraised Arms in the Spring Chamber.[63] In the PG period a cult to a female deity was established at the south-west corner of the Central Court of the Minoan palace,[64] which otherwise remained uninhabited and saw no new building activity on its site.[65] By the eighth century BC an open-air worship of Demeter was established on the lower slopes of the Gypsades hill, immediately to the south of the Minoan palace.[66] A temple dedicated to the same goddess was built there shortly before 400 BC.[67]

Near Eastern antiques and/or heirlooms

In the aforementioned EIA burial sites, there are imports of Near Eastern provenance, namely from Cyprus, North Syria, Phoenicia and Egypt. Dating these imports is not a straight-forward process: all these antique and antique-like objects are made of metal and most of them can only be dated based on the context of the tomb, as their exact provenance is not clear. For example, it is not certain whether a bronze lotiform jug discovered at the Fortetsa

60. Coldstream 1998, 58; Crowe 2019, 483.

61. Catling 1996c, 639; Cavanagh 1996, 656.

62. Higgins 1996, 540.

63. Prent 2004, 414-416.

64. Prent 2004, 416-418.

65. Pendlebury 1939, 305.

66. Coldstream 1973, 182.

67. Coldstream 1973, 180-181.

cemetery (Tomb P) is of Egyptian manufacture, normally of earlier date, or a Cypriot copy.[68] The same stands true for non-metallic imported objects, such as faience scarabs and beads that were first made in Egypt and then copied in Phoenicia and are stylistically dated from the LG to the EO period.[69] In such cases, the main criterion for dating these objects is the typology of the associated ceramic vases, which in their vast majority belong to the local and Attic traditions. According to Coldstream, "Attica is by far the most prolific source of pottery"[70] discovered in the tombs of the North Cemetery of Knossos. Near Eastern, mostly Cypriot, imported pottery represents only 1.11% of the 5.203 pots discovered in the 166 fully published EIA Knossian tombs.[71] Since the use of most of the tombs spans more than one generation, it is very hard to match each object with a specific burial inside the chamber.[72] In most cases, successive burials in cinerary urns have been found inside the main chamber, with older burials having been relocated in the tombs' *dromoi*. There were also cases with looted burials discovered in a chaotic state. This is, for example, the case of the seventeen burials of Tomb 283 at the Medical Faculty site.[73]

For this reason, discussion here focuses on the imports that stylistically predate the entire context of the tombs, regardless of the number of interments. Only two Near Eastern imports meet this requirement: a four-sided bronze stand and an inscribed bronze bowl. The first was discovered at the site of the Medical Faculty in one of the earlier tombs, if not the earliest, of the entire EIA in Knossos. This was Tomb 200-202, a SM pit-cave grave with three small chambers/niches (**fig. 1**). The first niche (Tomb 200) probably belonged to a woman, while in Tomb 201 the remains of a man and a woman and perhaps those of a child were found. Nothing was found in Tomb 202, apart from a few fragments of bones. All remains in the niches were found cremated:[74] fragments of a four-sided bronze stand (**fig. 2**)[75] were found in the main

68. See Hoffman 1997, 120-136 for an extensive discussion.

69. Coldstream, Catling 1996c, 123.

70. Coldstream 1996, 393.

71. Antoniadis 2017, 115.

72. Whitley 1986, 278-279; Kotsonas 2006, 150; van Wijngaarden 2012, 63.

73. Coldstream, Catling 1996c, 230-231.

74. Coldstream, Catling 1996c, 192.

75. Coldstream, Catling 1996c, 193.

chamber of the tomb (Tomb 201).[76] For the excavators[77] this was a Cypriot BA import (late thirteenth – early twelfth century BC).[78] Matthäus supports that the stand is of Cypriot manufacture and might have been a *keimelion.*[79] Papasavvas dates the stand to the LBA and argues that it belongs to a Cypriot workshop.[80] Hoffman argues, less convincingly, that this might be an eleventh-century Cretan imitation.[81]

The four-sided stand of Tomb 200-202 had been destroyed by fire and had been placed in the funeral pyre of a body or bodies, whose remains were found in chamber 201. The stand predates the rest of the finds in the tombs by at least 150 years. In the same chamber there were five bronze arrowheads of Levantine or Cypriot provenance, and bone inlays from Cyprus. In the western chamber (Tomb 200) of this burial structure there was a gold necklace of eighty-one beads from Cyprus and an ivory comb from North Syria or the Levant. Apart from the bronze stand, all other imports of the burial complex date to the SM Period (contextual dating). Catling and Coldstream suggest that Knossians established (or re-established) the Medical Faculty site in SM times.[82] The first clusters created there were the groups of tombs located around the SM pit-cave 200-202 and pit-cave 186. This makes Tomb 200-202 the earliest tomb of this site. In fact, the arrangement of clusters I and II in the Medical Faculty burial site suggests that the entire EIA North Cemetery expanded northward from this pit-cave grave.[83] According to Kotsonas, "an 'oikistic flavour' is indicated by the congregating of later burials in the vicinity of these tombs".[84] This means that this burial structure was of great importance to SM Knossians.[85]

76. Catling 1996a, 519-521, 533-534.

77. Catling 1996c, 645-649.

78. Coldstream, Catling 1996c, 195.

79. Matthäus 1998, 129.

80. Papasavvas 2001, 82-84, 241-242 no. 26, figs. 53-54a.

81. Hoffman 1997, 118.

82. Coldstream, Catling 1996d, 715.

83. Coldstream, Catling 1996d, 715.

84. Kotsonas 2018, 17.

85. Antoniadis 2017, 120-121; Kotsonas 2018, 15; Crowe 2019, 484.

The second truly antique import (**fig. 3**) is the inscribed semi-spherical bronze bowl discovered in Tomb J.[86] This was an undisturbed chamber tomb at the site of Teke, used for two burials (inurned cremations) dating to the EPG-PGB.[87] Various dates have been proposed for the bowl and the inscription, which come from "an excellent closed Protogeometric context".[88] Scholars[89] date the inscription and the bowl before 1000 BC[90], while others suggest that the inscription, but not necessarily the bowl, could be contemporary to its burial context.[91] Regarding the inscription, most of the proposed translations read it as: "The cup of Shena, son of..."[92] or "The cup of Shena, son of Labanon".[93] Lipínski proposed a different dedicatory meaning: "Bowl which Tabni fashioned for Amon".[94] The Phoenician inscribed bronze bowl apparently belonged to one of the deceased. The dating, provenance and context of the bowl considered together with its inscription suggest that it could have assumed the identity of an heirloom at the time of its deposition.

There is an ongoing debate on the dating of other bronze bowls discovered in EIA Knossian tombs. A bronze bowl with loop handles and lotus flowers was found in Tomb 219 (a chamber tomb; LPG-LO), one of the richest among the tombs excavated at Knossos. It is a Cypriot import, dating, based on its context, to the LG period.[95] Two bronze Phoenician bowls and two bronze bowls with lotus-bud handles from Egypt were found in Tomb P at Fortetsa.[96] This is one of the most important and impressive chamber tombs of all EIA Cretan cemeteries. It was in use from the LPG to the LO period. It contains

86. Coldstream, Catling 1996b, 25.

87. Catling 1996b, 563-564; Coldstream, Catling 1996b, 25; Hoffman 1997, 28; Jones 2000, 223.

88. Catling 1996b, 564.

89. Cross 1974, 1-12; Lipínski 1983, 129-133.

90. Hoffman 1997, 121.

91. Sznycer 1979, 92-93.

92. Negbi 1992, 608.

93. Cross 1974, 1-12.

94. Lipínski 2004, 182. See Bourogiannis 2018, 62-64 for further discussion.

95. Coldstream, Catling 1996c, 210-225.

96. Brock 1957, 101.

approximately seventy-one burials (inurned cremations).[97] Whitley thinks that some of these bowls were older than their associated burials,[98] but this cannot be demonstrated in looted or reused tombs, containing multiple burials found in a chaotic state. What seems more certain is that these bowls were Near Eastern imports and not faithful local imitations.

Local imitations of Near Eastern antiques

There are objects which scholars first interpreted as antique imports, but recent studies have demonstrated to be EIA local imitations of LBA Cypriot imports. The first object in this category is a four-sided stand which dates to the PG period (contextual dating). As shown by Papasavvas, this is a late eighth-century Cretan imitation/adaptation of a LBA Cypriot stand and not a genuine import.[99] The stand was found in the *dromos* of the Khaniale Teke tomb. This is a tholos tomb constructed in the LBA and excavated by Hutchinson in 1940.[100] Knossians reused the tomb in the EIA, from the PGB to the EO period.[101] Boardman suggested that the gold jewellery found in the tholos tomb could have belonged to a Near Eastern craftsman and his family.[102] Hoffman[103] and Kotsonas[104] have criticised this view. They stress the link between the circulation of metals in the eastern Mediterranean and their control by the local elite.[105] Kotsonas is probably correct in his proposition that the stand belonged to a member of the local elite.[106] What is important regarding the present discussion is that those buried in the Khaniale Teke tomb had a taste for oriental objects. Apart from two pots from Cyprus, all the other imported

97. For the calculation of the number of burials, see Cavanagh 1996, 660 and Antoniadis 2017, 72-73.

98. Whitley 2013, 403.

99. Hoffman 1997, 27, 101; Papasavvas 2001, 174-175, 204, 252.

100. Hutchinson, Boardman 1954, 222; Boardman 1967, 59; Kotsonas 2006, 150.

101. Hutchinson, Boardman 1954, 220; Boardman 1967, 59.

102. Boardman 1967, 57-67.

103. Hoffman 1997, 191.

104. Kotsonas 2006, 149.

105. Hoffman 1997, 191-234; Kotsonas 2006, 149-172.

106. Kotsonas 2006, 149-172.

finds in the chamber are related to ornaments and metalwork. The discovery of a pair of Minoan "horns of consecration" in the tomb shows a need of some PGB Knossians to connect themselves with the Minoan past (**fig. 4**). The structure and finds of this tomb reveal that those who used it in the PGB period combined elements from the Minoan past and the LBA and contemporary Near East, mostly from North Syria.[107] One wonders whether the EIA Oriental motifs looked familiar to the EIA Knossians or, on the contrary, whether the Minoan motifs seemed as exotic as the LBA and EIA Near Eastern ones. Both Oriental and Minoan motifs differ from the ornaments of the Atticizing Geometric style introduced to Knossos from the Greek mainland.

Apart from the four-sided stand from Khaniale Teke tomb just discussed, there is also the case of three bronze stands, known as rod tripods. The first tripod was discovered in Tomb 100, at the Medical Faculty site.[108] The second tripod was found in Tomb Fortetsa XI, next to a bronze cauldron[109] (**fig. 5**), and the third[110] in Tomb 3 at the Kephala ridge.[111] Tomb 100 is a chamber tomb with a long *dromos*, discovered disturbed at the Medical Faculty site, with four inurned cremations, dating from the EPG to the EG period. Apart from the tripod, in Tomb 100 archaeologists also found faience beads from Phoenicia, faience disc-beads, a dentalium shell, a faience base of a couchant lion vase from Phoenicia[112] and a bronze lotus-handled jug from Egypt or Phoenicia.[113] At least two iron *obeloi* from Cyprus were found in the same tomb.[114] Tomb XI at Fortetsa is also a rich tomb. It is located in the middle of the north cluster of the Fortetsa burial site. Apart from the tripod, a lead lion, carnelian beads, an ivory pendant, a necklace composed of blue paste beads, and *obeloi* were

107. Coldstream 2006, 590-592.

108. Coldstream, Catling 1996c, 132.

109. Brock 1957, 18.

110. Hogarth 1899-1900, 82-85; Coldstream 2002, 206.

111. There is another tripod from a tomb at the area of Ambelokipoi, formerly known as Teke (Hoffman 1997, 97). This tripod is not included in the present discussion, for the tomb is unpublished.

112. Webb 1996, 600, 606.

113. Catling 1984, 87; Matthäus 1985, 252; Catling 1996b, 563, 568-569; Hoffman 1997, 97.

114. Coldstream, Catling 1996c, 136-137.

found. The tomb, discovered undisturbed, contained four PG burials. Lastly, Hogarth[115] excavated Tomb 3 at Kephala and Coldstream re-examined the finds.[116] This tomb dates to the PGB-EO periods.[117] At the Kephala ridge cemetery the amount of evidence is very limited. Most tombs in the area are of LBA construction. Three out of seven tombs at this site used in the EIA contained at least one EIA Near Eastern import.

According to Catling, the bronze tripods found in EIA Knossian cemeteries were of LBA date and of Cypriot manufacture.[118] Matthäus argued for an EIA Cretan production of these stands (tenth to seventh century BC).[119] He supported that the bronze rod tripods found in EIA contexts are Cretan products.[120] He also maintained that in the SM period relations between Cyprus and Crete were much stronger than the archaeological evidence reveals.[121] Papasavvas claims that the rod tripods found in EIA tombs at Knossos are local imitations of at least two different workshops, produced, based on contextual dating, from the tenth to the eighth century BC.[122] While it is almost certain nowadays that bronze rod tripods belong to Cretan workshops, it is beyond doubt that they are faithful EIA copies of Cypriot tripods reflecting a LBA tradition.

There is another category of objects discovered in EIA Knossian tombs, which is related to the Homeric warriors and their banquets. These are *obeloi* (spits) and fire-dogs (metal stands). *Obeloi* placed on two fire-dogs were essential for roasting the meat over charcoal. There are at least sixty iron *obeloi* and fifteen fire-dogs recovered in fragments from Knossos. Most of the *obeloi* were found at the Medical Faculty site, in Tombs 24, 75, 100, 107, 218, 219, 283 and 285; less were found at Fortetsa (Tombs XI and P). They were placed in the tombs in groups of six, normally close to fire-dogs.[123] Most of them date from

115. Hogarth 1899-1900, 82-85.

116. Coldstream 2002.

117. Coldstream 2002.

118. Catling 1996c, 647-649.

119. Matthäus 1988.

120. Matthäus 1998, 129.

121. Matthäus 1998, 140-141.

122. Papasavvas 2001, 158-163, 195 table 5.

123. Snodgrass 1996, 590-592.

the eighth to the seventh centuries BC. Some earlier examples from the tenth century, like those found in Tomb XI, might be close copies of LBA Cypriot *obeloi* (type C) or actual imports from Cyprus.[124] *Obeloi* and fire-dogs have been discovered in other Cretan cemeteries as well, namely Eleutherna[125] and Eltyna.[126]

Establishing connections with the past: towards an object's fictive "biography"

Of the 166 fully published tombs discovered in Knossos, forty-eight contained Near Eastern imports.[127] As discussed above, of these forty-eight tombs only two contained genuine antique oriental imports. In the remaining forty-six most of the Near Eastern imports date from the early ninth to the late seventh century BC.[128] The majority of the tombs that contained Near Eastern imports, whether antique or not, seem to be richer than tombs that did not contain any imports. This is manifested by the size of the tomb, the number of burials housed in each tomb, and the total number of objects discovered in them.[129] In fact, twenty-nine of the richest EIA Knossian tombs contained most of the Near Eastern imports (75%). Furthermore, twelve of the richest tombs contained the great majority of the faithful imitations of those imports. Most of the Phoenician and Cypriot ceramic vessels (65%) were also found in the richest tombs. Lastly, the ten richest EIA Knossian tombs contained at least one Near Eastern import (**graph 1**).[130] It must be underlined, however, that Near Eastern objects represent only about 7% of the total number of objects in all the cemeteries (based on the 166 fully published tombs) of Knossos.[131] This could also indicate that the use of imports was restricted to certain members of the society.

124. Karageorghis 1974, 170; *contra* Hoffman 1997, 146.

125. Stampolidis 2004, 284.

126. Rethemiotakis, Englezou, 2010, 176.

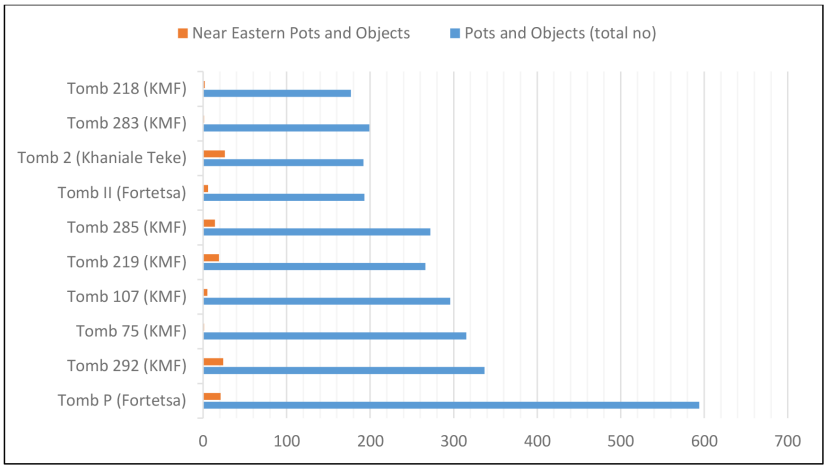
127. Antoniadis 2017, 40.

128. Antoniadis 2017, 96.

129. Antoniadis 2017, 46.

130. Antoniadis 2017, 116-117, table 18, for a statistical analysis of tombs and imports from Knossos.

131. Antoniadis 2017, 115.



Graph 1. The ten more richly furnished tombs across all the EIA Knossian cemeteries (after: Antoniadis 2017, 119 graph 15). "Pots" in the graph represent the total amount of ceramic vessels discovered in these tombs and "objects" all other portable finds.

It was the wealthiest Knossians, who, from the beginning of the EIA, used the Near Eastern, both antique and contemporary, imports and their local imitations in their funerary rituals.[132] The moment they placed the bronze stand of Tomb 200-202 in the funeral pyre, they set a paradigm for future funerals. According to Catling, these prestige objects belonged to Cretan warriors, who,

132. One should also consider religious affinities between the Aegean and the Near East. According to Arrington (2016), Near Eastern scarabs and small finds discovered in EIA graves at Lefkandi could have functioned as trinkets and amulets for those who buried in a cemetery not necessarily reserved for the local elite (Arrington 2016, 23). He suggests that "it was a burial ground for multiple families marked by immigration and marriage across cultural divides and holding varying views of death and burial ritual" (Arrington 2016, 23). At mid eleventh-century BC Knossos and a few decades later at Lefkandi cemeteries were created having a central burial as a reference point; both communities were rather cosmopolitan in comparison to most of the "Dark Ages" – Aegean sites. In the case of EIA Knossos, there are few burials in individual graves with Near Eastern amulets, especially scarabs (Antoniadis 2012, 144-145; 2017, 98), but it is here argued that the EIA Knossian cemeteries were reserved for the elite.

like the Homeric heroes, returned to Knossos after their wanderings in the East.[133] These "heroes", at the time of their funeral, had with them their most valuable possessions,[134] their *keimelia.*[135]

Most of these objects were ritually destroyed by fire, an action that brings to mind the Homeric funerals, where public display of luxury objects played an important role.[136] Apart from the bronze stand from Tomb 200-202, the other four-sided stand discovered in Khaniale Teke Tomb was also found in fragments. Of the rod tripods, only the rod tripod from Fortetsa (Tomb XI) was intact at the time of its discovery, whereas the other two (Tomb 100, Medical Faculty Tomb 3 at Kephala ridge) were found in fragments. Both Cypriot and Cretan stands had the same funerary and cultic functions.[137]

Apart from imported antique objects and their EIA local imitations, in the EIA Knossian tombs were discovered antiques that belonged to the local Cretan and the Greek mainland traditions. A celebrated example is the boar's tusks, again from Tomb 200-202, that belonged to a LBA helmet.[138] As already said in the introduction, ancient people might have perceived authenticity in a different way than modern societies. At the same time, the persistence of depositing antique and antique-like objects in their graves suggests that certain societies perceived these objects as something special. In the case of EIA Knossos, locally made, imported genuine and "fake" antique objects were discovered in the same tombs. This could mean that certain members of the Knossian elite appreciated all these antique and antique-like objects in the same manner, regardless of their "true provenance" or "true age".

With the use of these items, Knossians wanted to establish connections with the past. As already mentioned, they did this by depositing fragments of LM *larnakes* in their tombs and even by reusing BA tombs. A similar case can be seen in Post-Palatial Tiryns. There, people also used LBA Cypriot imports, in order to control collective memory. The bronze rod tripod discovered in

133. Catling 1996c, 647-649.

134. Catling 1996c, 647-649.

135. Whitley 2013, 400 is sceptical about Catling's "heroes' return" concept and the direct interpretation of graves containing arms as warrior graves.

136. Hom. *Il.* 23.249-260.

137. Papasavvas 2012, 129.

138. Coldstream, Catling 1996c, 191-195; Whitley 2013, 405.

the Post-Palatial hoard of Tiryns was such an object.[139] The finds discovered inside a large bronze cauldron date from the Early Mycenaean period to the LH IIIB or LH IIIC.[140] They range from golden pendants of earrings and drinking vessels to amber beads and bronze and iron sickles related to the "realm of symbols of authority" and the Homeric *keimelia*[141] of the Post-Palatial period. The tripod discovered leaning against the cauldron is a LBA Cypriot import.[142] This Cypriot tripod was contemporary with the deposition of the treasure. Its association with local genuine antique objects in the same context strongly suggests that the people of Tiryns perceived it as a genuine antique object.

One wonders how problematic the use of a copy of a prestigious object by the Knossians might have been: for example, the genuine Cypriot four-sided stand from Tomb 200-202 predates the local imitation of the same type of stand found at Khaniale Teke Tomb by three centuries. Apparently, it was not. Antique imports might have been difficult to obtain in the ninth century BC when demand for them rose and "Minoan nostalgia", to use Coldstream's formulation,[143] became much stronger. In the same period, Knossians reused Minoan tholos tombs for their burials. For this reason, in the eighth century BC Knossians could use contemporary Cretan rod tripods of Cypriot type and recently imported bronze bowls as if they were heirlooms that belonged to invented mythical ancestors or as "biographical" objects with extended life cycles.

However, a contemporary object/imitation of a bronze tripod or a bowl lacked a complex "biography", such as the biography of Achilles' crater mentioned above. Therefore, Knossian elite members had to invent "biographies" for these objects and convert them into antiques. One could name these "biographies" fictive. In EIA Knossos an object need not be antique, it just had to look that way. The Cretan imitations of Cypriot bronze stands, *obeloi* and fire-dogs are such examples.

Furthermore, from a practical point of view, it must have been very hard for Knossians to differentiate between workshops and provenances in the way modern experts do. This is supported by another category of imports, the

139. Arvanitopoulos 1915, 201-236.

140. Maran 2006, 130 nn. 11, 12.

141. Maran 2006, 141.

142. Catling 1964, 192-199; Matthäus 1985, 307-308; Papasavvas 2001, 80-81.

143. Coldstream 2006, 588-589.

Cypriot Black on Red (BoR) juglets and their Cretan imitations. These Cypriot perfume containers that also reflect a distant Phoenician tradition[144] were also discovered in EIA Knossian tombs.[145] In fact, the vast majority of imported Cypriot pots are BoR I and BoR II juglets.[146] To be more precise, 71% of the Cypriot pots are of BoR I and II styles, and BoR II juglets are the most widely represented (26% and 45%, respectively). The proposed absolute dating for BoR I ranges from 850 to 750 BC (Cypro-Geometric III/ Cretan LPG to MG/LG). For BoR II it ranges from 750 BC to 600 BC (Cretan MG to EO).[147] Cypriot and local potters created exact copies of the same juglets in Crete from the LG to the MG period and looser imitations/hybrids from the LG to the EO period.[148]

As Kotsonas notes,[149] there were BoR copies so faithful to the prototype that even Humfry Payne thought they were imports from Cyprus.[150] Most of the original BoR juglets were discovered in the same tombs as their exact copies and their looser imitations.[151] For example, in Tomb 107 at the Medical Faculty site there was a juglet from Cyprus (BoR II) and eight juglets of Creto-Cypriot class E (III) (LG to EO).[152] The same stands for Tomb 219 and the BoR I and BoR II juglets found near a local imitation of a BoR juglet (MG). In Tomb 292, Phoenician and Cypriot juglets were found associated with local imitations and hybrids of BoR juglets and trefoil-lipped jugs.[153] Tomb P at Fortetsa contained Cypriot BoR imports and many local imitations.[154] The fact that similar, almost identical, shapes and styles were placed in the same tombs and were possibly used for the same burial may signify that the Knossians

144. Schreiber 2003, 234-239, 308-309; Bourogiannis 2012, 187; Kotsonas 2012, 158.

145. Coldstream 1984, 122-137.

146. Antoniadis 2017, 95.

147. See Gjerstad's (1948) modified chronology proposed by Demetriou 1978, 12-25 and Coldstream 1979; 1984, 136. Schreiber 2003, 234-239 proposes much higher dates.

148. Brock 1957, 154-157; Coldstream 1979, 258-263; 1984, 122-137; 1996, 353-355; Kotsonas 2011, 139-144; Antoniadis 2017, 160-163.

149. Kotsonas 2012, 159.

150. Kotsonas 2012, 159; Payne 1927-1928, 256 nos. 119-122.

151. Antoniadis 2017, 101-137.

152. Coldstream, Catling 1996c, 148.

153. Coldstream, Catling 1996c, 219-225.

154. Brock 1957, 101.

treated them as if they were the same class of objects. This means that, with pottery at least, Knossians were more than happy to use copies, if indeed they were aware that these were copies.

Conclusion

Luxury and/or prestige items, antiques and/or heirlooms, LBA imports or EIA imitations, no matter how one may call them, what is undeniable is the context of these items as grave goods. According to the context provided by the 166 fully published tombs dating from the SM to the EO period, these objects were found in the most lavishly furnished and probably richest tombs of EIA Knossos. In Cyprus items such as bronze four-sided stands and rod tripods were found in deposits dating from the thirteenth to tenth century BC.[155] In Knossian cemeteries, the same types of objects were found in tombs dating from the eleventh to the eighth century BC. The fact that certain members of the Knossian elite continued to manufacture, to use and to deposit these items in tombs for such a long period indicates that they perceived them as objects of great importance for their activities.

It has taken over fifty years for scholars to determine whether the bronze tripods discovered at Knossos were LBA genuine Cypriot imports or Cretan imitations manufactured between the tenth and the eighth century BC. Comparable problems over a series of ceramic vessels confused even the keen eye of Payne in the 1920s. I have argued that –like, sometimes, modern scholars–, ancient Knossians could not distinguish imports from local imitations of imports, or antique from recently manufactured objects, which were in some cases almost identical. For the local elite bronze bowls and rod stands were objects of great value with an extended "biography" even if they were local imitations. Only the four-sided bronze stand (Tomb 200-202) and the inscribed bowl (Teke J Tomb) were genuine Near Eastern antiques and could have allegedly been perceived as heirlooms at the time of their deposition.

The discovery of Cypriot BoR juglets in the same context as their imitations signifies that Knossians were not obsessed with the "authenticity" of these ceramic vessels. They were more interested in the function and appearance of these objects. For this reason, in their graves apart from antique objects they also used local imitations with fictive "biographies". Be they imports or local

155. Papasavvas 2012, 131.

imitations, "genuine" or "fakes" –i.e. to the eyes of the Knossians–, heirlooms were used by the local elite in order to maintain authority or, in the case of opposing groups, to establish a new order.

During the SM period Knossians used Near Eastern imports, mostly from Cyprus, related to the equipment of warriors[156] (bronze stands, arrowheads, fire-dogs and *obeloi*) or, as Catling would call them, "Homeric heroes".[157] After the LPG period and especially in the ninth century BC (LPG-PGB), they kept using and ritually destroying bronze stands and *obeloi*, now local imitations, but they were more interested in a reimagined version of the Minoan past. After all, they resided by the remnants of the abandoned BA palace and they buried their dead near (and sometimes inside) Minoan tholos tombs. The Minoan "horns of consecration" and the LBA bronze four-sided stand found at the Khaniale Teke Tholos Tomb function as an amalgam of notions and artistic motifs of Minoan and Near Eastern traditions. This is also demonstrated by the presence of Minoan *larnakes* and Egyptian steatite scarabs in the same tombs.[158] It seems that Near Eastern imports and their Cretan imitations aided Knossians to create multiple versions of reimagined pasts.

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156. Antoniadis 2017, 137.

157. Catling 1996c, 647-649.

158. Antoniadis 2017, 138; Crowe 2019, 486.

Summary

During the Early Iron Age, Knossos was one of the most important cities of the Aegean. In addition to objects from elsewhere in the Aegean, a wide range of Cypriot, Phoenician and North Syrian imports has been discovered in the Early Iron Age Knossian cemeteries. In certain cases, these grave goods predate their funerary context by a century. This paper examines the stylistic and contextual dating of these imports, in an attempt to associate, from a contextual point of view, these items with the funerary practices of the Knossians. Grave goods deposited in the same cemeteries also included Early Iron Age local imitations of Late Bronze Age Near Eastern imports. I suggest that members of the Early Iron Age Knossian elite treated certain contemporary objects, which belonged stylistically either to the Late Bronze Age Cypriot, Phoenician or North Syrian traditions, on the one hand, or to the local Minoan tradition, on the other hand, as if they were antiques and/or heirlooms. In this way, that is, by appropriating the ancestral past of the community, the elite could establish and maintain their authority. For this reason, "fake" *keimelia* and heirlooms had to acquire new complex "biographies".

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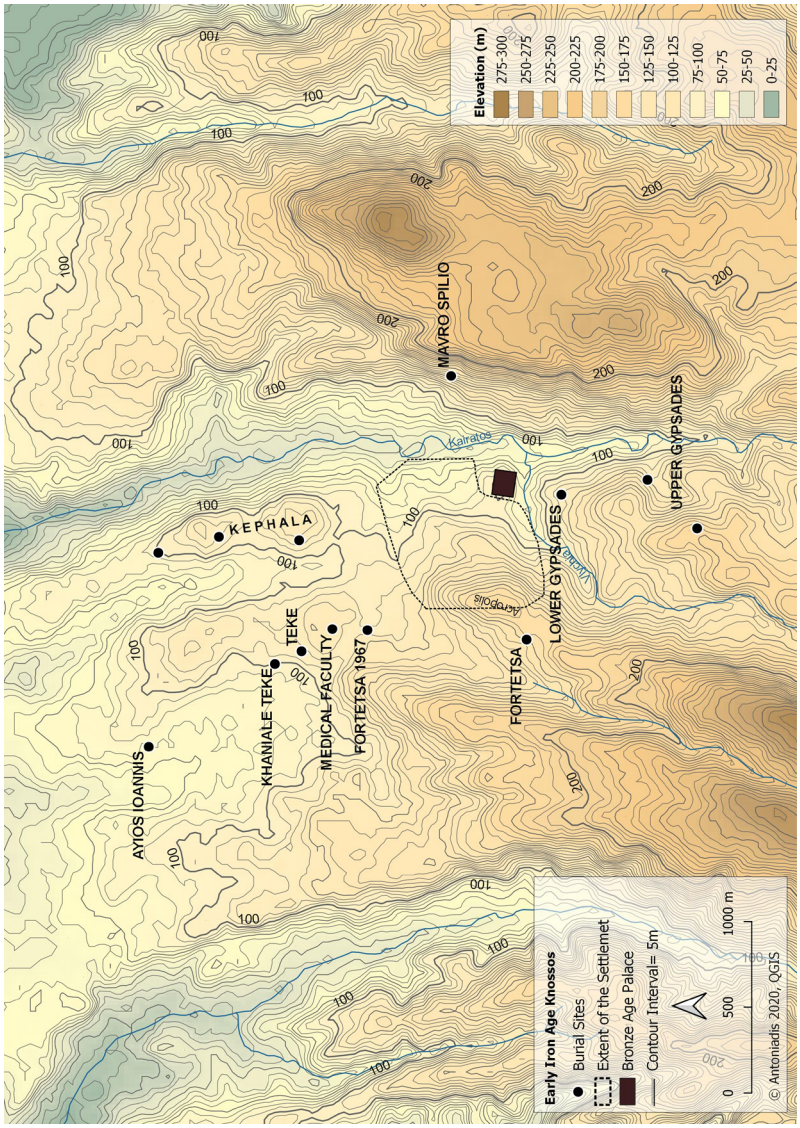

Map 1. Burial sites at Knossos during the Early Iron Age. The outline of the city's extent follows Kotsonas 2019, 7, fig. 6. ©Vyron Antoniadis 2020.

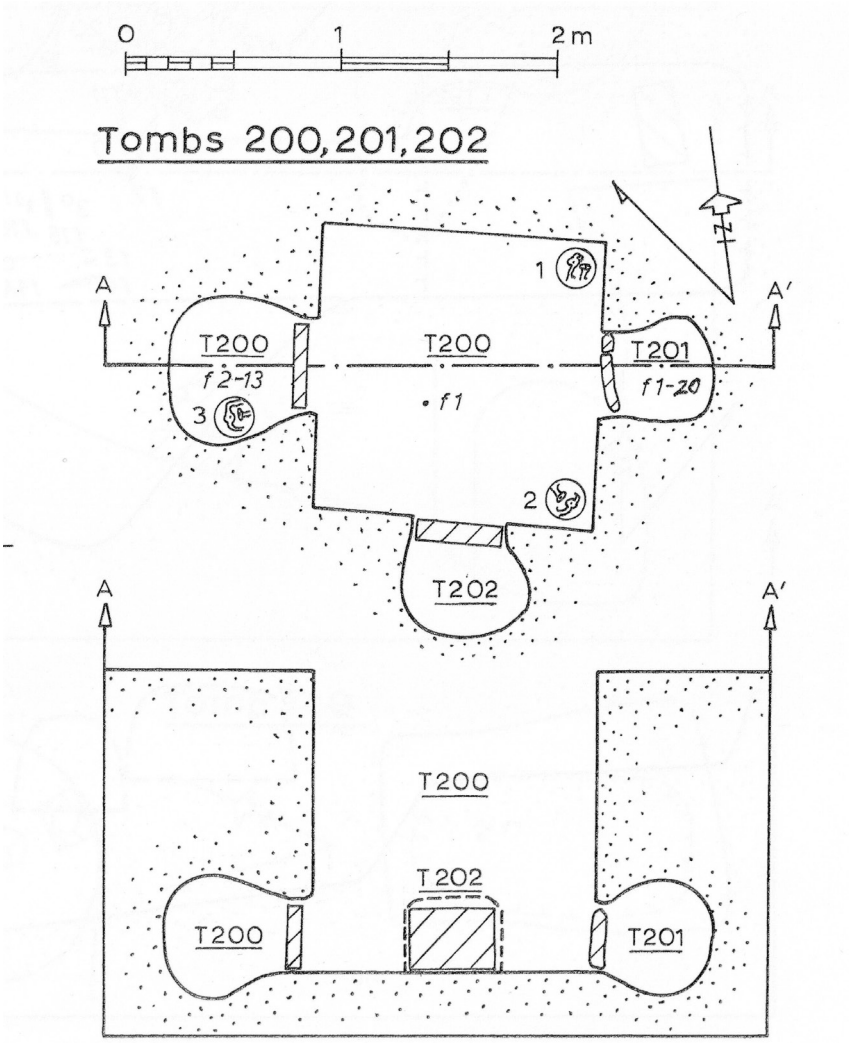

Fig. 1. Plan and section of pit-cave Tomb 200-202 at the site of Knossos Medical Faculty (after: Coldstream, Catling 1996e, fig. 43). Reproduced with permission of the British School at Athens.

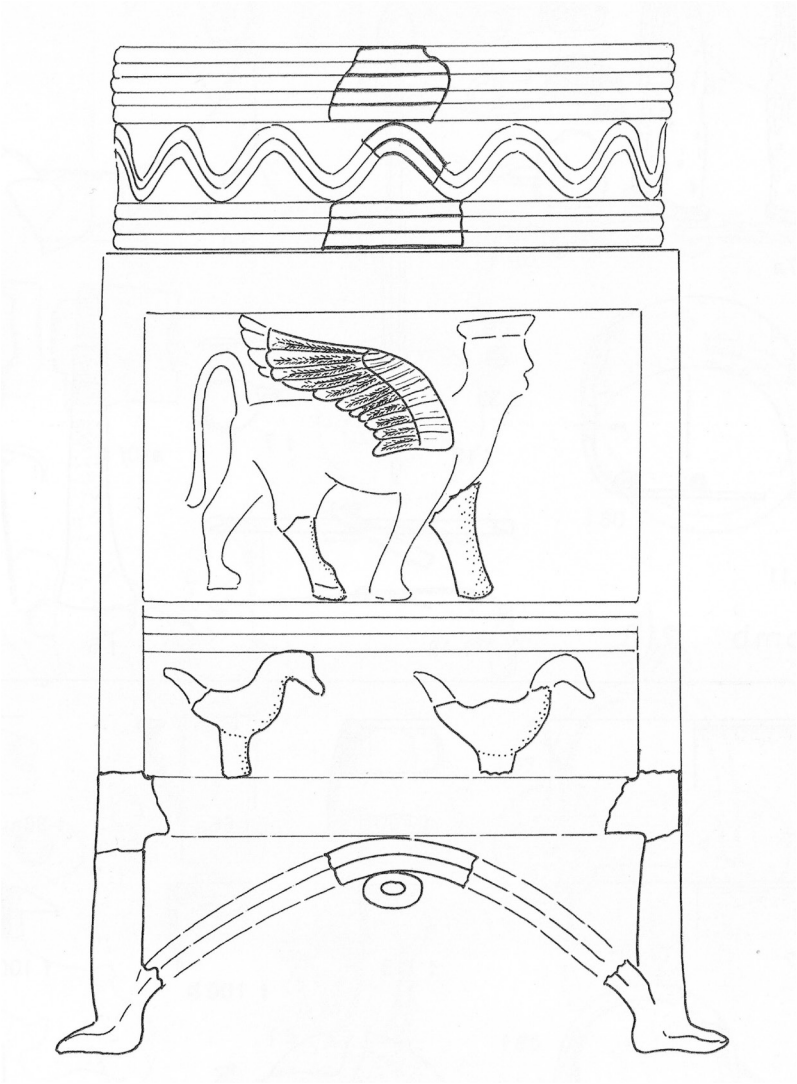

Fig. 2. The Cypriot four-sided bronze stand discovered in fragments in Tomb 200-202 at the site of Knossos Medical Faculty. Estimated original dimensions: H. 24 cm, w. 14.5 cm (after: Coldstream, Catling 1996e, fig. 166). Reproduced with permission of the British School at Athens.

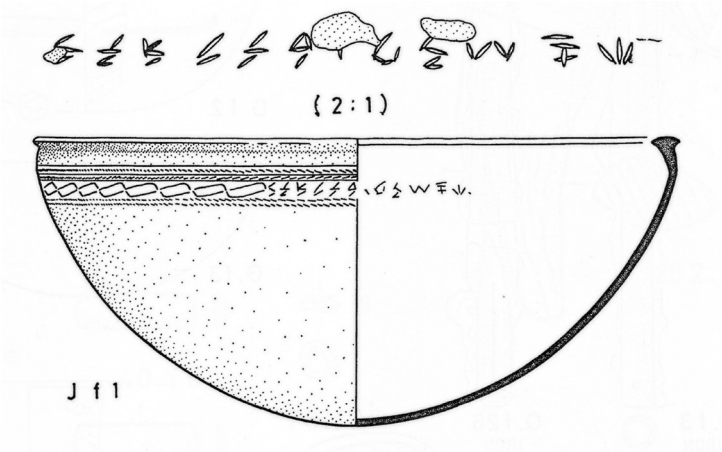

Fig. 3. The inscribed Phoenician bronze bowl from Tomb J at the site of Teke. Dimensions: H. 6.7 cm, d. 15 cm (after: Coldstream, Catling 1996e, fig. 157). Reproduced with permission of the British School at Athens.

Fig. 4. The reused BA tholos tomb at the site of Khaniale Teke (after: Hutchinson, Boardman 1954, pl. 19a). Reproduced with permission of the British School at Athens.

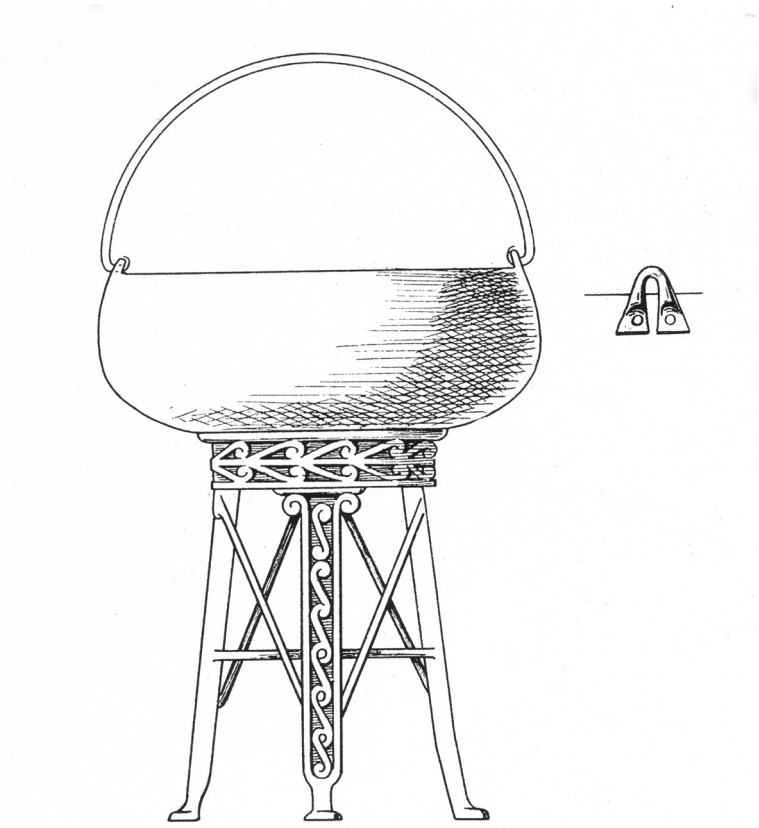

Fig. 5. Bronze rod tripod and cauldron from Tomb XI at Fortetsa. Tripod's dimensions: H. 17 cm, outer d. of the ring 11.5 cm (after: Brock 1957, pl. 138). Reproduced with permission of the British School at Athens.