Hagios Charalambos
A Minoan Burial Cave in Crete

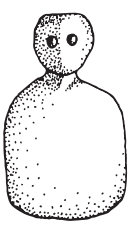
I. Excavation and Portable Objects



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PREHISTORY MONOGRAPHS 47

Hagios Charalambos

A Minoan Burial Cave in Crete

I. Excavation and Portable Objects

by

Philip P. Betancourt

with contributions by

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Tanya J. McCullough, James D. Muhly, Natalia Poulou-Papadimitriou,
Antonia Stamos, Eleni Stravopodi,
Maria Tsiboukaki, and Gayla M. Weng

edited by

Philip P. Betancourt, Costis Davaras, and Eleni Stravopodi



Published by
INSTAP Academic Press
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
2014

Design and Production
INSTAP Academic Press, Philadelphia, PA

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Betancourt, Philip P., 1936-
The Hagios Charalambos cave I : the excavation and the portable artifacts / by Philip P. Betancourt ; with contributions by Costis Davaras, Heidi M.C. Dierckx, Susan C. Ferrence, Panagiotis Karkanas, Tanya J. McCullough, James D. Muhly, Natalia Poulou-Papadimitriou, David S. Reese, Antonia Stamos, Eleni Stravopodi, Maria Tsiboukaki, Louise L. Langford-Verstegen, and Gayla M. Weng ; edited by Philip P. Betancourt, Costis Davaras, and Eleni Stravopodi.
pages cm. — (Prehistory monographs ; 47)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-931534-80-2
1. Crete (Greece)—Antiquities. 2. Hagios Charalambos (Greece)—Antiquities. 3. Caves—Greece—Hagios Charalambos. 4. Ossuaries—Greece—Hagios Charalambos. 5. Human remains (Archaeology)—Greece—Hagios Charalambos. 6. Grave goods—Greece—Hagios Charalambos. 7. Excavations (Archaeology)—Greece—Hagios Charalambos. 8. Minoans—Greece—Hagios Charalambos—Antiquities. 9. Bronze age—Greece—Hagios Charalambos. I. Davaras, Costis. II. Dierckx, Heidi. III. Title.
DF221.C8B5635 2014
939'.18—dc23
2014022231

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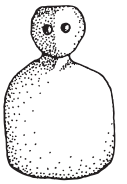


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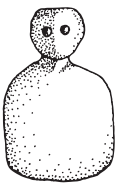
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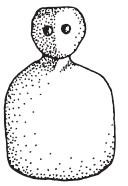
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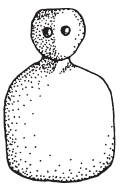
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Preface

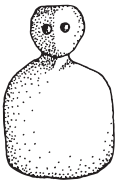
Costis Davaras first excavated the Hagios Charalambos Cave as a rescue excavation when the site was discovered in 1976 in the Lasithi Plain in the eastern part of Central Crete. The underground rooms were revealed as a result of blasting with dynamite to improve the road that encircles the upland plain. The dynamite created an opening in the ceiling of what would later be called Room 1, so the cave could be entered even though the original mouth was not visible at the time. The situation was extremely dangerous because of the cracked and shattered bedrock, and little work was possible before the front of the cave was removed by power machinery in 1982. Short excavation seasons were conducted in 1982 and 1983, and Davaras then made an important and far-sighted decision that would preserve the cave's information and allow it to make a unique and lasting contribution to the history of Bronze Age Crete. Realizing that he had too few financial and technical resources available to make a proper excavation, he left one room untouched and sealed the front of the cave with a locked iron gate covered by a wall of stone and concrete, to await a future generation with the resources to excavate the site properly.

In spite of these precautions and the proximity of the site to a well-traveled highway, looters broke into the cave in the winter of 2000. They were not apprehended, but they were only able to enter the cave briefly before it was resealed. The danger to the cave was obvious. I was then approached and asked if I could organize a new project. Convincing arguments were made by three different people: my friend and colleague, Costis, the Chief Conservator for the 24th Ephorate, Alekos Nikakis, and the Ephorate's Director, the late Nikos Papadakis, all said the cave was too important to allow it to be destroyed by inaction that would eventually lead to its destruction by clandestine looters.

The science of archaeology had developed enormously between 1983 and the early 21st century, both in the world as a whole and especially in Crete. Computers had

revolutionized the recording and management of information. Electronic total station survey instruments could provide accurate measurements, including of underground chambers. Water separation machines capable of retrieving microscopic evidence were now routine parts of American projects in eastern Crete. The INSTAP Study Center of East Crete in Pacheia Ammos had been built, and it provided technical support in photography, conservation, library study, technical drawing, the storage and study of anthropological material, analysis by laser-induced breakdown spectroscopy (LIBS), ceramic petrography, and other areas. With all this in mind, a team of international scholars was assembled, and we tried to retrieve the maximum amount of knowledge we could within the parameters of the two six-week excavation seasons made possible by the available government permit (in 2002 and 2003, a law that was later repealed limited foreign excavations to six-weeks per year).

Philip P. Betancourt
Philadelphia, 2010



Acknowledgments

Excavations were conducted at Hagios Chalambos in 1976, 1982, and 1983 under the direction of Costis Davaras, in 2002 under the direction of Philip P. Betancourt and Costis Davaras, and in 2003 under the direction of Philip P. Betancourt, Costis Davaras, and Eleni Stravopodi.

The excavations of 1976 to 1983 were supported by the Greek Ministry of Culture. The Temple University Excavations of 2002 and 2003 were supported financially by the Institute for Aegean Prehistory, Temple University, the University of Pennsylvania, and private donors. Thanks are expressed to Steven Tracey, who was then Director of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, for support and assistance with permits. Special thanks go to Vili Apostolakou, who was then Director of the 24th Ephorate, and to Alekos Nikakis, who was then the Chief Conservator for the Ephorate, for assistance of many types with this project over the course of several years.

Valuable support was given by the staff members of the INSTAP Study Center for East Crete: Thomas M. Brogan, Director; Elizabeth B. Shank, Administrative Coordinator; Eleanor J. Huffman, Assistant to the Director; Stephania N. Chlouveraki, Chief Conservator; Michel Roggenbucke and Kathy Hall, Senior Conservators; Étienne Baxter, Conservator; Erietta Attali (2002) and Chronis Papanikolopoulos (2003), Chief Photographers; Doug Faulmann, Chief Artist; Eleni Nodarou, Ceramic Petrographer; Georgos Serepetsis, Maintenance; and Maria R. Koinakis, Custodian.

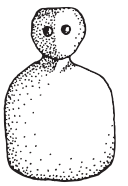
The representative from the Palaeoanthropology and Speliology Ephorate in 2002 was Eleni Stravopodi, and Angeliki Kaznesi was the representative in 2003.

In addition to the co-directors and the personnel from the INSTAP Study Center mentioned above, the following persons were members of the Hagios Charalambos team (years of membership are listed after each name): James D. Muhly, field director and metallurgy specialist (2002–2009); Albert Leonard Jr., field director (2002, 2003);

Mary A. Betancourt, registrar (2002–2009); Mary H. Leonard, assistant registrar (2002, 2003); Photeini J.P. McGeorge, physical anthropologist (2002–2009); Alekos Nikakis, conservator and technitis (2002, 2003, 2005); Stephania N. Chlouveraki, conservator (2002–2005); Maria Giannakaki, conservation intern (2002, 2003); Linda Meiberg, assistant to the conservator (2002); Susan Nalezyty, computer specialist (2002); Andrew Koh, instrument survey team supervisor (2002); Tamryn L. McDermott, instrument survey team member (2002); Gayla M. Weng, trench supervisor, assistant to the photographer, residue sorting, and assistant pottery specialist (2002–2005); Antonia Stamos, trench supervisor (2002); Susan C. Ferrence, trench supervisor and pottery specialist (2002–2009); Louise C. Langford-Verstegen, trench supervisor, instrument survey team member, and pottery specialist (2002–2009); Maria Tsiboukaki, assistant trench supervisor (2002, 2003); Alison Cox, palaeobotanist (2002); Panagiotis Karkanas, geologist (2002, 2003); Jane Hickman, assistant to the physical anthropologist (2003–2006); Michael Furlong, assistant to the physical anthropologist (2003, 2004); Alexis Boutin, assistant to the physical anthropologist (2003); Étienne Baxter, assistant to the physical anthropologist and conservator (2003–2006); Tanya J. McCullough, trench supervisor, residue sorting, and pottery assistant (2003, 2004); David S. Reese, faunal remains specialist (2004, 2006–2009); Heidi M.C. Dierckx, stone tools specialist (2004, 2005); Michael Ionakis, conservator (2005); Judith Papit, assistant pottery specialist (2005).

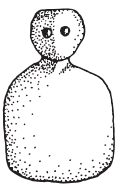
Thanks are expressed to many other individuals for help with this project. The authors are grateful to Walter Müller and Ingo Pini and the Corpus of Minoan and Mycenaean Seals, in Marburg, founded by Frederich Matz, for photographs and drawings of the seals excavated between 1976 and 1983.

All the members of the team would like to thank: Costas and Galatia Manussakis, our hosts at the Hotel Dionysos in Magoulas; Manolis Yerakakis, our host at the Hotel Zeus in Psychro; and all of our many friends in Lasithi for their wonderful hospitality during the years of excavation; and Yannis, Aristidis, and Maria Chalkiadakis, our hosts at the Hotel Tholos Beach in Kavousi, for their hospitality during the study seasons.



List of Abbreviations

Ch.	Chapter
cm	centimeters
d.	diameter
dim.	dimension
EDM	electronic distance measuring device
EM	Early Minoan
FTIR	Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy
g	grams
HNM	Archaeological Museum, Hagios Nikolaos
h.	height
kg	kilograms
km	kilometers
LIBS	laser-induced breakdown spectroscopy
LM	Late Minoan
m	meter(s)
m asl	meters above sea level
max.	maximum
mm	millimeters
MM	Middle Minoan
pres.	preserved
rest.	restored
th.	thickness
w.	width
wt.	weight



Part I

Excavation