The Alatzomouri Rock Shelter

An Early Minoan III Deposit in Eastern Crete





A selection of White-on-Dark Ware vessels from the Alatzomouri Rock Shelter. Watercolor by D. Faulmann.

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Front cover: watercolor by Douglas Faulmann of a selection of White-on-Dark Ware vessels from the Alatzomouri Rock Shelter.

Back cover: photo by Thomas Brogan from Alatzomouri Hill looking northeast across the Gulf of Mirabello to the island of Pseira; photos by Chronis Papanikolopoulos of three White-on-Dark Ware vessels from the Alatzomouri Rock Shelter.

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Preface

In January of 2007, a bulldozer operator was creating a parking area next to the Greek National Highway for a church near the village of Pacheia Ammos, in northeast Crete. He stopped immediately when his machine uncovered two Minoan clay jars and a human skull, and he immediately reported the discovery to the Greek Archaeological Service. Near this Minoan burial was a small artificial rock shelter dug into the soft bedrock. Vili Apostolakou, director of the 24th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, directed the rescue excavation of the small cave. Such artificial cavities in the soft rock, called rock shelters, are commonly used for burial by members of the Minoan culture of Bronze Age Crete.

The cave contained pottery, loomweights, and other items from a Minoan household that existed near the end of the Early Bronze Age, during the period called Early Minoan (EM) III. It contained no bones (the skull was outside the rock shelter), which raises important questions about the nature of the ancient context and the possible reasons for the absence of the defining item for a burial. The pottery from the assemblage is particularly important because it forms the largest and finest corpus of clay vases known from EM III.

The objects were excavated during 2007 with financial assistance provided jointly by the Institute for Aegean Prehistory (INSTAP) and the Greek Archaeological Service, and they were subsequently studied at the INSTAP Study Center for East Crete. Kostas Chalikias was the trench supervisor, assisted by Alekos Nikakis, Nearchos Nikakis, and Matina Papadaki. Conservation was done by Stephania Chlouveraki with the help of assistant conservators Matina Tzari and Cindy Lee Scott and techniti Matina Papadaki. The registrar was Mary Betancourt with the

help of Florence C.S. Hsu and Marie Nicole Pareja. Drawings were made by Kostas Chalikias, Doug Faulmann, Tanya McCullough, Susan C. Ferrence, Heather Hicks, Lily Bonga, and Philip P. Betancourt. Computer processing of illustrations was accomplished in the Tyler School of Art Digital Laboratory (Temple University) by Florence C.S. Hsu, Marie Nicole Pareja, and Amie Gluckman. Other studies were made by the authors of the relevant sections in this volume. Matina Papadaki conducted the processing of the soil samples, the sorting of the residues, and the organizing of the material for the next stages of analysis.

Field mapping and laboratory work for the geological study was accomplished with funding from INSTAP using facilities at the INSTAP Study Center for East Crete. Portions of this work were performed at the Wiener Laboratory of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (ASCSA) and at the University of Hawaii.



List of Abbreviations

ARS	Alatzomouri Rock Shelter
ASCSA	American School of Classical Studies at Athens
ca.	circa
CS	chipped stone
cm	centimeter(s)
CTR	Center for Textile Research, Copenhagen
d.	diameter
DAI	Deutsches Archäologisches Institut
dGPS	differential global positioning system
dim.	dimension
EDM	electronic distance measuring device
EM	Early Minoan
FN	Final Neolithic
g	gram(s)
GS	ground stone
GSS	Gournia survey site
h.	height
ha	hectare(s)
HM	Archaeological Museum, Herakleion
HNM	Archaeological Museum, Hagios Nikolaos
IFZ	Ierapetra Fault Zone
IGME	Institute for Geology and Mining Exploration, Greece
kg	kilogram(s)
km	kilometer(s)
LM	Late Minoan
m	meter(s)
m asl	meters above sea level
max.	maximum
mm	millimeter(s)
MM	Middle Minoan
MM	Modified Mercelli scale of relative earthquake damage (Ch. 2 only)
µm	micrometer(s)
MNI	minimum number of individuals
MNV	minimum number of vessels
Mw	moment magnitude of an earthquake
mybp	million years before present
PAR	Pacheia Ammos Rock Shelter (accession number written on the artifacts)
pres.	preserved

PT	possible tool
rest.	restored
SEM	scanning electron microscopy
th.	thickness
w.	width
WOD	White-on-Dark Ware
wt.	weight
yr	year