THE 4TH STUDENTS’ AND YOUNG RESEARCHERS’
CONFERENCE IN AEGEAN ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeological Museum in Poznań, Poland
April 7th (Students' Session) and 8th (Young Researchers’ Session) 2016

Book of Abstracts
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Students’ Session

Book of Abstracts

Archaeological Museum in Poznań, Poland
April 7th, 2016

Organized by:
Prof. Janusz Czebreszuk
Dr Paulina Suchowska-Ducke
&
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Cremations VS Inhumations in LH IIIC

Burials of the post-palatial period have widely been discussed in the last decade. Especially cremation burials have raised a lot of new questions and opened a vast spectrum of problems, pertaining to social, political and economic aspects. Cremations gained particular significance in Aegean Late Bronze Age archaeological research because of their rarity, unknown origins and sudden increase in the Early Iron Age (Protogeometric Period), which will be discussed (among others) in this paper. Who was actually cremated? What consequences can these insights have on our conception of social situation in that period of Aegean history? These questions may be approached via a contextual analysis of the cremations, an overview of known examples and a comparison of cremation contexts with each other but also with contemporaneous inhumations.

The focus of the paper will be on specific manifestations of cremations. The following aspects will be discussed: the position of cremated remains among inhumations (referring to an actual context, a single tomb and/or a necropolis), possible burial offerings, presence and type of urn. How does the information contribute to reconstructions of burial rites in LH IIIC?

The necropolis of Perati will be presented as a case study of my particular research. Specific attention will be given to the examination of inhumation and cremation burials, which occur side by side in this necropolis. Such contexts will be examined with a focus to the range and type of burial gifts and the spatial relationship of inhumated and cremated human remains. The first statistical results will be presented, which may help to clarify social status and cultural affiliations of cremated individuals.
Tarcze w eposach Homera. Przekazy poety a znaleziska archeologiczne

Dzieła Homera od zawsze budziły ogromne kontrowersje, szczególnie w gronie naukowców. Mimo, iż prawdziwość przekazów poety jest kwestionowana, niewątpliwie stanowiły one jednak ogromną inspirację dla XIX-wiecznych badaczy. Mowa m.in. o Heinrichu Schliemannie, który w oparciu o Iliadę zidentyfikował wzgórze Hisarlik i dowiódł prawdziwości istnienia legendarnej Troi.

Niniejsza prezentacja będzie próbą ukazania pewnych relacji pomiędzy homerycką wizją tarcz a pozostałościami archeologicznymi. Liczne zabytki ikonograficzne pozwalają na śmiełą stwierdzenie, iż opisy te można uznać za wiarygodne. W tym celu dokonam analizy dzieł Homera, w szczególności Iliady, a następnie zaprezentuję zabytki archeologiczne, przedstawiające tarcze używane w XVI – VIII w. p.Chr. na obszarze Egei. Poruszone zostaną również zagadnienia związane z problemem anachronizmów i interpolacji, jakie występują w dziełach Homera.

Referat ma na celu przybliżenie słuchaczom zagadnienia tarcz, omówienie ich typologii oraz wskazanie zachodzących w czasie zmian w ich budowie/konstrukcji. Skupimy się tu głównie na tzw. tarczach ósemkowatych i wieżowatych, występujących w kulturze minojskiej i mykeńskiej.
Homer's epics have always been very controversial, especially among the scientists. Although the historic truth of homeric remittances is questioned, there is no doubt that they were a great inspiration for the nineteenth-century scholars. For instance to Heinrich Schliemann, who thanks to the Iliad identified Hisarlik Hill and proved the historic existence of the legendary Troy.

This paper is an attempt to show some relationship between the Homeric vision of shields and its archaeological remains. Numerous iconographic evidence allow us to claim that these descriptions can be considered as credible. For this purpose I will make an analysis of Homer epics, particularly the Iliad, and then I am going to present an archaeological examples of shields used during XVIth-VIIIth century B.C. in Aegean. I will explain as well the issues related to the problem of anachronisms and interpolation found in the works of Homer.

The paper aims to introduce students with issues of shields, discuss their typology and identify innovation in their construction that occurred over time. I will focus here mostly on so called tower an figure-of-eight shields known from the Minoan and Mycenaean culture.
Marcin Kosowicz
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

Stan badań nad metalurgią Centralnej Macedonii
na przełomie epoki brązu i żelaza (1400-1000 r. p.n.e.)

W dotychczasowych pracach poruszających kwestię późnej epoki brązu i wczesnej epoki żelaza w Centralnej Macedonii, zagadnienie metalurgii odgrywało marginalną rolę. Brak kontextu grobowego oraz bogatych zwartych depozytów, czyni badania nad tą problematyką nieattrakcyjnymi dla wielu archeologów. Wśród zaledwie kilku publikacji traktujących o omawianej problematyce, wyłącznie artykuł małżeństwa Wardle stara się podejść do tematu holistycznie. W związku z brakiem ogólnego podsumowania, podjąłem pracę, która ma na celu systematyzację dostępnej wiedzy na temat wytwórstwa metalurgicznego w Północnej Grecji przełomu II i I tys. p.n.e.

Celem niniejszego referatu, który jest zwięźłym streszczeniem mojej pracy magisterskiej, jest próba rekonstrukcji metalurgii Centralnej Macedonii na podstawie materiałów źródłowych. Najważniejszą częścią jest skatalogowanie dostępnego w literaturze materiału archeologicznego. Jednakże równie istotne jest odpowiedzenie na pytania, czy znaleziska archeologiczne są w stanie powiedzieć nam coś o hierarchii poszczególnych stanowisk w regionie oraz specjalizacji produkcji, która się na nich odbywała, co sugerują badacze zajmujący się tą tematyką. Dzięki analizom typo-chronologicznym artefaktów metalowych i kamiennych form odlewniczych, możliwe jest także prześledzenie wpływów poszczególnych społeczności na kulturę materialną Centralnej Macedonii.
Marcin Kosowicz
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

The state of research on Central Macedonian’s metallurgy
in transition from Bronze Age to Iron Age (1400-1000 BC)

In the current literature about Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age in Central Macedonia problem of metallurgy plays secondary role. Lack of burial context and rich homogeneous deposits make such research unattractive for many archaeologists. Among a few publications that deal with this issues only Diana and Ken Wardle’s papers look at this problem in holistic way. I have undertaken my studies on metallurgy because of the lack of an overall summary and my main goal is to systematize available knowledge about Central Macedonia’s metal crafting in second and first millennium BC.

The main goal of this paper, which is a summary of my MA thesis, is reconstruction of Macedonian’s metallurgy based on available literature. The main part of this work is to catalogue metal artifacts known from existing publications. Equally important is to answer the question whether archaeological finds can say something about hierarchy of settlements in the region and specialization of crafting practices, as is suggested by many researchers. Typo-chronological analyses of metal artifacts and stone molds provide an information that allow us to track an impact of outer societies on Macedonian’s material culture.
Archaeometric Studies of Mycanean Pottery

Pottery during many years of archaeological research was studied only through its decoration, paint, relief, or carvings. New methods provided to modern science by chemistry or biology help to understand more. Some old questions, for example of provenance, are now easily answered by microscopic expertise. Some features seen by the naked eye, such as lustrous paint, might be explained by scientific gear. Interdisciplinary cooperation proved to be essential for leading an archaeological research. In the case of studying the Mycenaean pottery such approach is indispensable. One of the most important questions asked by this paper are how to set issues as: where do the ceramics come from? And not only the special forms, but from the beginning, where is the production center? From where potters obtained clay, and how did it vary from different workshops?

At the beginning author gives short lecture about history and typology of Mycanean pottery. Then it is said about certain methods and they application to samples from Eastern Mediterranean. Methods used more often are those using level of concentration of each element, such as Neutron Activation Analysis (NAA), Wavelength Dispersive X-ray Fluorescence (WD-XRF), Inductively Coupled Plasma Emission or Mass Spectroscopy (ICP-ES, -MS). These are the main procedures and scientific projects that focus on establishing provenance. Scientists have many ways to investigate it (apart from excavation and traditional archaeology): petrography, chemical analyses, NAA (and INAA), WD-XRF, ICP-ES, -MS, and AAS. They can help with indicating the location of the workshop, or the stop on the way to the place of unloading, since pottery analysis serves also as an investigation of trade.

Since the biggest number of Late Bronze pottery, especially Mycenaean, is found in Cyprus (except Egypt) the paper focuses mostly on the Island and lands surrounding it. Almost every archaeological site from that period, let it be tomb, industrial area or settlements, is filled with such marked pottery.
The inhabitants of Crete in Egypt during the XVIII dynasty

Ancient civilizations do not exist in isolation but as part of a complex cultural networks. Such interaction can be seen between Minoan Crete and Pharaonic Egypt, which results in physical signs indicating that probably the people of Crete went to Egypt. Physical evidence of contacts are present in Egyptian art, for example in the decoration of private tombs from Theban necropolis of the New Kingdom's XVIII dynasty, especially in the tombs of Rekhmire and Senenmut and other dignitaries, which date from the mid-XV century BC. In these tombs are probably depicted the inhabitants of the Aegean world to pay a tribute to pharaoh. It is easy to identify those people by a specific dress, skin color, and the objects they bring with them, which have a different forms and decoration than traditional Egyptian vessels. An important element of these paintings are hieroglyphic inscriptions, where appears the most common word used to describe the inhabitants of the Aegean world probably Cretans – Keftiu. Although it is not entirely clear if it really means Minoan. Another important place were the depictions of those people are present is Tel el-Dab'a (Avaris) located in the north of Egypt, the former state capital of Egypt during the reign of the Hyksos. A significant in relation to this theme are frescoes in the Minoans style dated to the XVIII century BC, discovered in the palace of Tuthmosis III by an Austrian archaeologist M. Bietak. It is possible that this frescoes come from the end of the reign of the Hyksos (end of XVII dynasty), perhaps from the time when Khamose and his troops attacked Avaris. Chronology of this depictions is not entirely clear. Among these paintings a very characteristic scenes are visible, such as bull-leaping. The bull-leaping scene is one of the most important depiction of the inhabitants of Crete that appeared in Egypt. It is also a testimony to the existence of international relations and cultural exchange between the societies inhabiting the eastern part of the Mediterranean basin.
Beata Schoenradt
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

Evidences of Mycenaean feasts from Nestor’s Palace at Pylos: pottery, Linear B tablets and frescoes

In recent years, archaeologists have made new attempts to describe the rituals of the Aegean world and to indicate artifacts associated with them. It is likely that the various rituals were closely linked with feasting held in the main courtyard or in the corridors in the palace complex. Feasting can be understood as a social activity during which people are sharing together a meal. Moreover it also has been defined as a formal practice of ceremonial character which could affirms other status distinctions. Social activities of this kind can be described by analyses of pottery, Linear B ideograms and frescoes from the palaces.

Drinking vessels, such as kylixes and cups were important for the activities organized in the Mycenaean palaces. Those activities were probably a various kinds of meetings of both a religious and social character, for example processions, libations, feast or symposions. Important informations regarding their functions provides us detailed classification of ceramics from this period, as well as appeal to analogies and comparative research vessels known from the classical period in Greece.

Linear B tablets except of the list of products manufactured by palace craftsmen and goods delivered to the palace, include also ideograms of vessels. Their diversity may indicate the way Mycanaeans described and cataloged their pots and suggest their mass production. Linear B tablets also provide information about ability of communities to sponsor events like symposions as well as lists of goods collected for that purpose and suggest religious activities.

Use of the kylixes in the context of feasts is known, in addition to the frescoes, and appear primarily in the context of the sacrifices and feasts, probably ritual. Since the palace is closely linked with the elites, on the basis of the findings of drinking vessels and their representations in art and texts, it is possible to analyse those kind of social activities during the Late Bronze Age.
Mycenaean economy has been a subject of numerous analysis, focusing mostly on various aspects of palatial redistribution, exchange and control system. The idea of the “palace”, which was supposed to be dominant in Mycenaean social and economic landscape, still constitutes the foundations of our thinking about the processes taking place in the Late Bronze Age Aegean. But in the meantime, many scholars have pointed out a clear duality in Mycenaean economy. It consisted of the “palatial” section, visible thanks to the archives of Linear B tablets, as well as "non-palatial” section, noticeable only by the archaeological remains and sporadically appearing in the archives.

Within the broad subject of Mycenaean economy I would like to focus only on one particular aspect of pottery production and acquisition strategies in the palace of Pylos, narrowing the analysis only to the last period of its existence. The duality of Mycenaean economic system mentioned above, can be clearly seen and presented within that subject. The period LH III B, dated roughly to the 13th century BC, is the climax of Mycenaean palatial civilization, containing most of available archeological remains. The palace at Pylos, after 300 years of development was by that time a complex, bureaucratic, administrative and industrialized structure. It's organization and ways of controlling the society and economy were the subject of numerous papers and analyzes, approaching this extremely wide subject with different perspectives and propositions.

I would like to propose a combined model based on earlier papers. The strategy of palatial pottery acquisition system will be presented as, an again two-dimensional system, with two main pillars. Firstly, the pottery industry has been affected with the designation of the “royal” potter, who probably together with his co-workers or competitors listed on tablets, had become high-rank and specialized producers, cooperating with the palace, supporting the wanax in fulfilling his duties and enjoying special privileges. The second pillar of the pottery acquisition strategy was obtaining all the other needed vessels through a taxation of various local workshop, existing in the town of Pylos and the internal part of the Hither Province of the state. The analysis will contain a brief description of palatial pottery assemblage, usage of the breakthrough chemical analysis based on Messenian and palatial pottery undertaken in the
1990s by Michael Galaty, and a discussion about a few but significant Linear B tablets from the Pylian archives, referring to the pottery and potters. The topic will be presented with the references to the recent and vital discussions in the Aegean archeology, mainly the craft specialization research.
Sylwia Anna Żyłka
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznń

**Nietypowe zabytki bursztynowe w świecie Egejskim**

Wyjątkowy charakter bursztynu dostrzegany był przez człowieka już w paleolicie, gdzie stosowany był zarówno, jako amulet chroniący od zła oraz wszelkich nieszczęść, jak również, jako przedmiot dekoracyjny. W czasach antycznych zaś pojawiły się pierwsze próby określenia jego cech, właściwości oraz proveniencji. Naukowe teorie o jego pochodzeniu poprzedzały mity i legendy, które nierazdko wpływały na poszukiwanie złóż tego surowca.

Bursztyn w świecie egejskim miał także szczególny charakter, sama jego obróbka wskazywała na odmienne jego traktowanie, w porównaniu do innych surowców. Właściwości fizyczne jak i chemiczne bursztynu pobudzały wyobraźnie oraz sprawiały, że był on silnym czynnikiem społecznym. Ważnym elementem, przy omawianiu bursztynu jest również kultura, w której się znajduje. Wyjątkowość bursztynu egejskiego w epoce brązu może być wynikiem cech tejże kultury. Fenomen pałaców, wykształcenie się elit, rozwój myśli ekonomicznej oraz przestrzennej - miał swój początek w tym elitarnym surowcu. Specyficzne warunki geograficzne oraz wyjątkowy charakter rozwoju świata egejskiego przyczyniły się do powstania nietypowych form bursztynowych. Do najbardziej spektakularnych znalezisk można zaliczyć pektorały. Ich bogactwo oraz wysoki poziom wykonania do dziś podziwiany jest, zarówno przez naukowców, jak i miłośników archeologii.

Warto podkreślić, że bursztyn od początków swojego funkcjonowania w świecie człowieka budził jego zainteresowanie oraz był wyznacznikiem piękna, statusu społecznego, miał też zapewne wartość magiczną. Właściwości te mogły przyczynić się do różnych nietypowych form bursztynu, znajdowanych w ramach poszczególnych społeczności, które związane były z tym surowcem.
The unusual amber finds in Aegean world

The unique character of amber was recognized by a man already in the Paleolithic Period, when it was used both as an amulet to protect from evil and any misfortune, as well as a decorative object. In Ancient times the first attempts to determine features, characteristics and origin of amber occurred. Scientific theories about its origin were preceded by myths and legends, which often influenced the exploration of this raw material.

Amber in the Aegean world also had a special character, the way of its processing suggests a different treatment of amber in comparison with other raw materials. Its physical and chemical properties stimulated the imagination and made amber a strong social factor. While studying amber, it is also important to take in account the culture/society in which it existed. The uniqueness of the Greek amber finds in the Bronze Age can be a result of a peculiar characteristics of the Aegean culture. The phenomenon of the palace, the formation of elite, the development of economic and spatial notions- have its origin in that exclusive raw material. The specific geographical conditions and the unique character of the development of the Aegean world resulted in the appearance of atypical amber forms. The most spectacular finds may include the pectorals made of amber. Their wealth and high implementation level to this day is admired by both scholars and fans of archeology.

It is worth emphasizing that amber from the beginning attracted humans' attention, and was a determinant of beauty, social status, and possibly had a magic value. These properties may have contributed to its many unusual forms found in different cultures, which got to know amber.
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April 7th and 8th, 2016

Organized by:
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Knossos, Pylos, Mycenae:
Changes in Palatial Architecture from a Comparative Perspective

As Pascal Darcque stated, “ce que nous appelons monde mycénien ou Grèce mycénienne offre donc un mosaïque de situations”. Gradually, this diversity has been assessed by more scholars dealing with archaeology and Linear B texts. These differences can be explained as the result of divergent historical developments. The development of palatial architecture and the arrangement of the palatial buildings, apparently very similar, when examined in detail, also offer interesting differences depending on the palatial centre studied. For this proposal, the architectural evolution of Pylos, Mycenae and Knossos will be examined during the final stage of the administrations bases in these places. The reason for choosing the last moments of the palaces is that, at some point, all Mycenaean polities collapsed. However, the process that led to that result and the consequences were different in each place, recalling the diversity that can be observed in the Mycenaean world, as it has been stated before.

The setting of the space could bring us some insight into the inner administrative and economical operations that took place within these structures, but also into social practices and ideology. For example, in Pylos during LH IIIB major architectural changes took place, probably due to an economic reorganization. In Mycenae, in the same period, although the palatial building itself is not very well known because of the bad preservation, some buildings directly connected with palatial operations also reveal a changing environment.

Knossos presents a totally different outlook. First of all, the final Mycenaean palatial phase is earlier in the island than in Mainland Greece: this is not LH IIIB, like in Pylos and Mycenae, but LM II-IIIA1. For this reason, the context in which any change took place was different. Secondly, and although Knossos was ruled by Mycenaean Greeks in that moment, Minoan inheritance was undeniable in many aspects and, of course, the arrangement of palatial architecture is one of them. The changes in Knossian palatial architecture during this phase will be compared with what we have in Pylos and Mycenae. Therefore, the peculiarities and evolution of each place will be underlined, as well as the reasons behind the changes observed during the final stages of the Mycenaean palatial administrations.
Dr Stephanie Aulsebrook
Independent Researcher

Crisis at the Cult Centre: Evidence from the Megaron Basements

Rarely does the archaeological record present an opportunity to investigate the direct response of past peoples to sudden catastrophes. Therefore, the evidence of earthquake damage at the Cult Centre at Mycenae offers a unique insight into the actions undertaken by the inhabitants of the city immediately after such an event. The re-examination of a key structure within the Cult Centre, the Megaron, in preparation for its final publication has brought to light new data that can add to our understanding of the last few decades of the Palatial Period and the role of ‘crisis architecture’.

The Cult Centre at Mycenae, named by Mylonas, was constructed on the southwest slope of the citadel, an area later enclosed by the Cyclopean circuit wall. It comprised four groupings of buildings: the Megaron, the Temple, Tsountas House, and the Room with the Fresco Complex. Excavation dates back to the 19th century, although the chief campaign which uncovered the majority of the site was a Helleno-British project that ran from 1959 to 1974. The latter revealed that the Cult Centre had been badly affected by two separate earthquakes. The second, at the end of LH IIIB2, completely destroyed the entire complex and buried it under layers of debris. However, although the first earthquake at the end of LH IIIB1 did cause widespread damage to many of the buildings, the majority of them were left still standing and accessible. Evidence for the immediate response to this event can be seen across the Cult Centre.

The Megaron is one of the least well-known buildings within this complex. Built at the beginning of LH IIIB1, it was positioned on the highest terrace used for the Cult Centre. Very little of the building remains except the principal ground floor room with central hearth, which gave the structure its name, and several basement rooms. It is the architectural and material culture evidence from these basement rooms which has revealed the actions taken by Mycenaeans to repair and rebuild, to abandon and re-designate areas within the Megaron in response to the LH IIIB1 earthquake. By interpreting this data within the framework of ‘crisis architecture’, it is possible to investigate the decisions made in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, and the priorities that governed these choices.
Mycenaean Gold Funeral Masks in the Context of Balkan Gold Funeral Masks

Gold funeral masks discovered in grave circles A and B are the oldest gold funeral masks discovered in the Balkans. Though we are impressed with the quality of the craftsmanship it is not always clear how should these objects be interpreted. Some centuries after the end of the Late Bronze Age the inhabitants of the Balkans again began burying their dead with gold masks. This custom was especially popular in some regions in the 6th and 4th century BC. The vast majority of the masks are made entirely from gold, however the presentation of the facial features as well as the details of the burial rite vary in different areas and also between different burials.

Quite often when encountering objects, that seem familiar, one is tempted to interpret them in a similar manner or to attribute them to the same tradition. However, it needs to be considered, whether such an approach is well founded. The paper will present some of the better preserved gold masks discovered in the Balkan peninsula from the Late Bronze Age through to the Hellenistic Period. By comparing the iconography of the burial masks as well as their archaeological context it aims to establish whether we can speak of a common Balkan tradition of burying the dead with gold masks. Moreover an attempt of interpretation of this custom will be undertaken.
Central Macedonia is a borderland, both geographically and culturally. Presently located in northern Greece, in the last century it has served as an essential reference point for archaeologists and historians. Recently, as a result of this interest, the understanding of the region somewhat changed. Central Macedonia’s geographic position as a borderland between northern and southern Europe, became emphasized as an essential ground for communication between the communities living in the Aegean and the Balkans.

During the Bronze Age (3400-1050 BC) Central Macedonia was interacted between two dynamically functioning and significantly different centers. This feature becomes especially visible in the second millennium BC, with an increase of contacts between the Aegean and the Balkans. Presently, there is hardly any evidence for regarding Central Macedonia as a part of the so-called "Mycenaeans koine" – a region highly influenced by the Mycenaean civilization. As a result, the main discussion focuses on the recognition of the region characteristic more "northern" or "southern". The third possibility is that it developed into a more independent region, characterized by a unique features briefly affected by foreign influences.

In order to recognition the role of Central Macedonia in the Bronze Age, the presentation will focus on the ceramic evidence from this time. Presented finds were collected during several surveys conducted over the last century in the area. It is necessary to stress that the research was often conducted by international groups of researchers, with different backgrounds and aims. The long period during which the collection was established, together with different methodologies visible in the documentation, e.g. drawings, descriptions, analyses, are in a way responsible for the complicated perception of pottery studies in the area.

Based on the pottery assemblage, there is possible to differentiate certain patterns of connections between societies and identify them in Central Macedonia within Bronze Age. The assemblage consists of published, as well as of unpublished, pottery evidences stored at the Cast Museum of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Ceramics will be analyzed and
recognized within spatial and chronological frames. The author is going also to present most important results of archaeological researches conducted in Central Macedonia, compare them in order to make an attempt at drawing conclusions about interregional contacts and links of the Northern Aegean in the Bronze Age.
The Dog and His Warrior. A Brief History of Dogs in Mycenaean Rituals

Friends, companions and guards. Popular motif in art, from palace frescoes to glyptic. But also sacrificial animals, bloody grave deposits and very mysterious elements of rituals and beliefs. What was the actual role of dogs in Mycenaean ritual sphere? Besides horses, dogs were the animals most frequently buried in the graves of the Mycenaean. The remains of dogs can be found together with rather simple, modest burials but also in relations to rich tholos tombs.

A particularly interesting example of such human-animal burial came from the LHIIIB/C tholos tomb in Galatas, Argolid. There, among the grave offerings for the dead, skeletons of two dogs were discovered, together with remains of a few different animals. It has been postulated that the dogs buried in this grave were somehow connected with the role of the deceased as a “hunter-ruler” and a symbolic gift which underlined his position on this and the other world. Yet, there are some disturbing details about this burial which can lead to a bit different conclusion.

Looking for the answer about the role of dogs in cultic practices in the Bronze Age Greece we will skip to the future, to Classical Greece. On the other hand, we shall also search for hints in the Bronze Age Anatolia, in certain rites performed by Hittites.
Animist Notions in Minoan Crete – the Evidence from Bird Depictions

Since the works of Arthur Evans and Martin P. Nilsson, most studies of Minoan religion have focused on the identification of deities and adorants in the iconographical record. Such attempts are usually based on polytheistic models derived from neighbouring (e.g. Egypt) or later cultures (e.g. Classical Greece). Animals and other natural phenomena that frequently appear in ritual imagery, e.g. birds, snakes, boulders or trees, have consequently been seen as indicating the supernatural realm, either as divine attributes or manifestations of deities.

However, theistic interpretations usually ignore the difficulties which are regularly encountered when trying to identify the rather elusive Minoan divinities. For example, the supposed deities differ from humans neither in their clothing nor by possessing fixed attributes. Therefore, some scholars have started to rethink the ontological models theistic interpretations are based on. Vesa-Pekka Herva, for example, has argued that Minoan cult scenes reveal tendencies which are indicative of an animist framework.

In my presentation I will explore the animist hypothesis further, based on my study of bird depictions in Minoan art. In order to do this, I will first take a look at the characteristics of the various ontologies - naturalism, analogism, totemism and animism - as they have been identified by the French anthropologist Philippe Descola. In order to deduce from the characteristics of the bird imagery which ontology was prevalent during the Minoan time I will also describe the characteristics of naturalist, analogical, totemic and animist imagery.

This theoretical part will be followed by three case studies. Firstly, Minoan “nature scenes” will be analysed with regard to the accuracy of the depicted behaviour and habitat of the respective birds. Secondly, some scenes involving both humans and birds, e.g. those on the Minoan gold rings, will be studied to see what they can tell us about the specific form of human-bird relationships. Finally, hybrids such as the bird-ladies on Minoan seals or the fantastic combinations on the Zakros sealings will be discussed. The results from these case studies suggest that animist notions might indeed have contributed to the unique Minoan iconography.
Observations on the Phenomenon of Multiple Burials in Northern Greece

The paper presents a case of mortuary behaviors in Northern Greece during the Bronze Age. The analysis is focused on burials dating from the Middle and Late Bronze Age, into the Early Iron Age, when the practice of communal burial in that region had become more popular. The sites taken into consideration were those in central and western Macedonia, including Goules, Koilada, Korinos, Tourla, Spathes, Agios Dimitrios Olimpus, Treis Elies, Makrygialos and Olimpus Tumuli. The group of analyzed graves was rather inconsiderable – approximately 5 - 7% of the total excavated number. However, it must be noted that none of the cemeteries which are the subject of the study has been fully excavated yet. In addition, some of the findings have not been fully published yet, which makes it impossible to estimate the actual proportion of multiple burials.

The questions focused on the nature of particular graves, as well as on their significance in further studies of society in Bronze Age Macedonia, with a possible connotation for the studies of local elites’ formation processes.

Initially, the analysis concentrated on attempts to determine the possible chronology of graves and to estimate their nature (in comparison with a typical single burial mortuary practice). All of the graves with more than one burial were categorized as multiple (when the burials were articulated in grave) or as secondary (when the burials were not articulated and the skeletal remains had been swept aside). The point of the analysis was to find any correlations between multiple and secondary burials to any additional forms of graves that were marked (for example using a ground marker or assembling valuable offerings).

The analysis will be followed by an attempt to interpret the phenomenon of multiple burials in a broader social context, especially in terms of tradition and communal identity. The aim of this paper is to present the purpose of acts: adding, proving and highlighting the connections between successive burials as well as between the deceased and the living. The interpretations should be connected with the perception of a burial ground as a site for local community interactions, as well as a site of memorable actions. The significance of blood ties in a community and the role of a family as the basic social unit should be highlighted, as this
in turn emphasizes the acquisition of personal identity, helping people to define their origin and themselves as members of a larger group.

The presentation will also propose questions for further studies.
Evidences of Warfare in the Cyclades During Early Bronze Age

The aim of our proposal is to follow the clues that could permit us to talk about hostilities or warfare in the Cyclades during Early Bronze Age, and the impact of these supposed conflicts in the development of the Cycladic culture. Although it is not our goal to introduce a model of explanation about the decline of the Cycladic preeminence at the end of EBA based on the armed conflict, perhaps this factor has been underrated by the Aegean studies.

The evidences for the presence of warfare during the Final Neolithic period -traces of defensive works, flint and obsidian spearheads- have been widely discussed but it is assumed that the proofs of warfare appear with certainty in the Aegean during the Third Millennium BC. The production of bronze daggers is attested in the Cyclades at least during EBA 2 with regional variations and different patterns of deposition. Although these daggers could have two functions - as weapons and as tools - the production of knives in this archipelago associates the purpose of the dagger with the hand to hand conflict. Furthermore, the Cycladic settlements were progressively fortified and reinforced with horseshoe-shaped bastions. This horizon of fortification has been associated with the particularities of the historiographical construction around the 'Kastri group'. The traditional hypothesis about a possible migration (maybe invasion) of peoples from Anatolia has been abandoned but the effort of fortifying at this moment could be the symptom of a latent danger. The fast development of the Minoan culture and society at the end of EBA, and the introduction of the sailboats in the Aegean could be one of the incentives for this initiative of the Cycladic settlements -some of which present a destruction horizon at the end of the period-. Nevertheless, we cannot underestimate the role of an intra-Cycladic competence judging by the economic model developed in these islands. Our intention is to take all this factors in consideration in order to follow the trail of the possible conflicts that took place in the Cyclades at this period of time.
Michael Hirschler, MA
PhD candidate, University of Graz

Wine for Snakes?
Animal Names in Linear B-Texts and Their Possible Cultic Interpretation

In the early 1990’s around 238 fragments of clay tablets inscribed with Linear B-signs were found in the archive of the palace at Thebes (Boeotia). The content of these documents includes numerous terms, mostly names and titles, to whom were allocated small amounts of commodities, such as wine, olives or barley. The editors of those Linear B-texts have interpreted the recipients as participants of a cultic feast. However, within the recipients there is a special group of terms whose syllabic writing indicates that these words can be read as names of animals, such as birds (o-ni-si), cranes (ke-re-na-i), dogs (ku-nelku-nolku-si), geese (ka-nolk-si), mules (e-mi-jo-no-i) and snakes (e-pe-to-i). Furthermore, syllabic terms that have been interpreted as names of animals were also found in the Mycenaean palatial centres of Mycenae and Pylos, like bull (qo-we) or horse (i-go). The contextual meaning of those syllabic writings is still under discussion. Since all of these assumed animal names appear in a religious context as recipients of offerings, some scholars consider them to be “divine” or “sacred” animals. This assumption, however, leads to further questions: Could animals in Mycenaean Greece function as anything else than sacrificial animals? Why should they receive various kinds of commodities? Was there an animal cult in Mycenaean Greece as we know it from Ancient Egypt?

In order to tackle these questions, a wide range of evidence has to be considered. In this paper I will discuss the animal names and reconsider their possible context and meaning based on an archaeological, linguistic and a religious historical survey. Especially the archaeological evidence of the Late Bronze Age Aegean shows that these mentioned animals can be found in cultic contexts, such as companions or attributes of persons that can be assigned to a divine-cultic sphere (e. g. deities or priests).
Craft Specializations, Their Gender Differentiation in the Mycenaean Civilization and Their Degrees of Dependence on Palace Centers

The basis for the inquiry is provided by linguistic data (linear B script) collected in Greece and archaeological finds contemporary with clay tablets. The aim is to verify and develop the present state of knowledge on craft specialization of the Mycenaean society, identification of labor differentiation on the basis of gender and to define their dependence on the vicinity of the central administrative center. Research on the linear B script usually focuses on the frequency of male/female names (with the assumption that the people mentioned by name were more important than those mentioned in groups), means of rewarding individuals for particular activities and studying the economic dependence of women on the “palace”. For this particular work, the main analytical tool was the critical discourse analysis with an emphasis on the quantifying technique of contents analysis. This method allows to compare the number of times a particular word/ideogram (e.g. name of the profession, male/female names) is stated with their placement in the textual field. A vital trait for this analysis is the size of the symbols, as well as the structure of texts (Does the name precede or follow the profession? Who is mentioned first and who is mentioned last? Is there a relationship between the sequence of males and females?). The data gathered from the inscriptions were compared with the available database of archaeological sources, mainly finished products (e.g. weapons, ornaments, local products) and their depictions (iconography).

Preliminary results have shown that many specializations mentioned in the Mycenaean tablets are either unclear or unknown to modern societies (e.g. “honey inspector”, “fig overseer”, “stirrer”). It is necessary to mention that certain objects produced by craftsmen were absent in the linear B script, e.g. greaves, which lack a specific word or ideogram. Iconographic sources (frescos) suggest that they were an enduring element of the Mycenaean warrior’s equipment, which is surprisingly absent in written sources. Perhaps they were produced by craftsmen independent from the “palace”, or they were only a part of an armor depicted with the ideogram ARM *163. Until now, research provided a multi-faceted dependence of craftsmen on the center, which were based on fixed relations between them.
(e.g. “ta-ra-si-ja” system and “o-no”), as well as the high probability that the distance from the “palace” did not affect the degree of control over workers.
Heracles, Teshub, Enlil, Ninurta, Gilgamesh, Zeus...
– just the many faces of the Liminal Hero?

The Aegean iconography remains a cryptic puzzle where no definitive answers can be given. Due to the absence of any written mythology that could have helped us to interpret images, the Aegean pantheon of deities is populated exclusively by “analogons”. Some gods show affinities with the corresponding Greek counterparts, others resemble their Near Eastern relatives. Aegean artists, unlike their Greek descendants, did not have a habit of labelling the characters depicted. It seems that in this case many types of deities might have numerous identities in Greek mythology or other traditions. It is not even sure that they are in fact gods and not priests or mythical heroes. (In case of Zeus- for instance- an interpretation has been built almost exclusively on similarities between the later Greek and Near Eastern traditions).

Moreover, iconography applying the rules of meaning of its own, usually diverges from written narrations even if such exist. The figure often described as the naked or nude hero, together with the related armed hero, originates from the Sumerian pantheon, but his characteristic appearance persists over centuries in various incarnations and, similarly as the analogies of the Greek deities in the Aegean world, can have more than one justified interpretation.

It happens that we see Gilgamesh, some other time Enlil and sometimes a minor spirit or deified king displaying an array of features belonging to the liminal hero: a belt, a very slim waist, and a muscular body. This character, easily recognisable in the Near East in general, can be met in Sumerian, Akkadian, Mesopotamian, Hurrian (or Hittite) and Anatolian visual cultures, to name only a few, and only later some of his features had been recovered in the Aegean Greece. It is perplexing: “Why does he seem so universal”?- in none of these cultures his silhouette became an icon even if it is somehow present in each of them. Neither it had been bound to one mythical person. In archaic Greece we meet also other analogies: Potnia Theron, the Master of Animals and Heracles with two serpents in hands. Clearly, the pictures of mythical characters travelled together with spoken tales on the back of itinerant artisans and immigrants. They lead distinct, independent lives and happened to change beyond recognition, but sometimes they let us understand the mentality of the ancient
travellers and can even point the routes they used to take. My presentation will point to affinities between depictions of protective spirits, Sumerian and Mesopotamian heroes, Aegean “analogous gods” and their Greek (echoing) counterparts. Certain conclusions may be surprising but perhaps they could help to shed a light on some complex heterogeneous phenomena in the pre-mythological youth of Greece.
Maria Elena Masano, MA
Independent Researcher

**Dynamics of Contact During the Bronze Age: the Aegean and the Near East**

The concepts of exchange and trade are prominent topics in the study of prehistoric human interactions, because the movement of goods is accompanied by the displacement of people. That enables additional interactions such as the sharing of technology or the spread of ideas and beliefs, so it became clear that these contacts greatly influence the socio-political development of a community. This situation is particularly evident in the Bronze Age Aegean, where the prolonged and intense relationships between different civilizations have led to the adoption of a common language.

In this paper we want to talk about the relationship between the Aegean and the Near East, because we can find many similarities, which can be seen as proofs of the existence of a networks of exchange and influence. In particular, we want to analyse the case of the architectural techniques and the wall decorations: the latter is particularly interesting because the style and the iconography of some the Levantine and the Near Eastern frescoes are very close to those genuine Aegean fresco paintings, and very far from anything else known from Levant and Egypt. Another important thing is that the use of fresco technique represents an isolated and short-lived phenomenon in the Levant, so that these similarities cannot be explained without a direct Minoan influence.

To sum up, we cannot deny that the Minoans have exerted a great influence on the Near East, so this work aims to present only some examples of these dynamics of contacts, but also we want to stress that further discoveries may strengthen the framework outlined here or give a completely reverse perspective.
The Aegean, c. 1450 BC. At this time, the Minoan civilization on Crete suffers from a series of destruction: every palace, except for Knossos, finds the way to its end. While the origin is still a matter of dispute, the relating weakening of the Minoan power causes several changes – one of those concerning the relationship to the Mycenaean Greek Mainland: how far did it find a change and what happened on the Mainland after these occurrences? This main question of the lecture will be applied to two main regions of Mycenaean Greece, the Argolid and Messenia. While the LH IIB-IIIA:1 transitional phase will represent the main point of view there will also be done an examination of the time before the destructions (LH IIA, c. 1500 – 1450 BC) and a prospect into the following period LH IIIA:2 (c. 1375 – 1315 BC). For both regions, two important sites will be chosen: Mycenae and Asine – Pylos and Nichoria.

To give a brief impression of the content the following might be mentioned. During LH IIA, the time of the tholos tombs, it appears that several important sites are existent as ones which just rule over a smaller, local area. While there is almost no trace of rulers’ buildings certain findings and structures (like tholos tombs) might indicate the presence of a (local) aristocracy. Furthermore, there is a well-visible Minoan influence, to be recognized in art and architecture.

In the following transitional phase LH IIB – IIIA:1, i.e. the time after the big destructions on Crete the picture starts to change. Certainly, there is more evidence for the existence of leading individuals or groups, different developments regarding the forms and frequency of monumental architecture and the occurrence of ceramic shapes and decorations. Connected with these changes but also with older ideas and habits which keep to be used, is a certain growth of wealth – observable in different aspects. But also other changes are to be recognized.

Which character do such changes in styles of art, in architecture and in other aspects show and to what extent are they observable? How far and in which form is the existence of a ruling individual or class detectable? Is there a certain relationship between the examined sites
and, if so, is there also a visible change in the course of time to be seen? How far does the development between the Mycenaean Greek Mainland and Minoan Crete change and how are different other changes on the Mainland to be explained? And finally: what happened during the following LH IIIA:2 phase?

To try to give answers to those – but also further – questions will pose the aim of the lecture.
Giulia Muti, MA
Independent Researcher

Apart from Tools.
Investigating the Symbolic Values of Textile Tools in Bronze Age Cyprus

Textile tools are highly evident within past and present material cultures. While they have practical/technical functions, they can also act as vehicles in the self-representation as well as ideological affiliation of a community. The aim of this study is to trace back and investigate the symbolic values held by textile-tools and their representations in Bronze Age Cyprus. The significant occurrence of textile tools in domestic and working areas has been related to the important role they played in the textiles chaîne opératoire. At the same time, textile tools found in burial contexts have yielded different symbolic values. The traditional scholar debate have stressed the symbolic significance of spindle whorls as gender marker, but other key values (e.g. ethnicity, community affiliation, magic/ritual, prestige and economic value) can be tentatively identified. References to other textile activities, such as textile dyeing, and their social and economic importance are found into two very peculiar burial contexts, T. 231 at Erimi Laonin tou Porakou (late EC/ early MC) and T. 23 at Hala Sultan Tekke (LC IIIA). However, symbolic significances are sometimes visible also in non-burial contexts, such as the case of the spindle-whorls’ MC deposit in the workshop complex at Erimi Laonin tou Porakou. The final part of this paper will explore the possible significances of the textile tools representation in the figurative art of BA Cyprus. In particular, the two clay models of spindle from Vounous and the so-called ‘comb shaped’ representations will be analysed.
Jakub Niebieszczański, MA
PhD Candidate, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

Geomorphological and Environmental Changes in Relation to Neolithic/Bronze Age Site of Nea Raidestos in the Anthemous Valley

The presentation gives an insight into Mid-Holocene environmental conditions around the prehistoric site of Nea Raidestos. The research was conducted in 2015 during the Anthemous Valley Archaeological Project II.

The toumba of Nea Raidestos is located in the central part of the Anthemous Valley in Central Macedonia (Northern Greece). It is one of the largest tell sites in the Valley of more than 15 meters high. According to the results of extensive survey of D. H. French in 60's the site was occupied during the Bronze Age. Recently, during the Anthemous Valley Archaeological Project some insights of a Late Neolithic occupation were detected on surface around the mound.

In 2015 a joint Polish-Greek team of scientists conducted geomorphological investigations around the site, that confirmed the Neolithic presence below the toumba foundations. The aim of drillings was to recognize the sedimentary environments in relation to the site in the past and to reconstruct the habitation landscape.

Three several meters cores were obtained in close proximity to the site, basing on the electro-resistivity tomography. Afterwards the stratigraphical and lithological descriptions were made by the grain-size analysis and macroscopic observations. Moreover it was possible to conduct palynological and diatom analysis.

In effect, three different sedimentary environments were recorded in close proximity to the Nea Raidestos site – fluvial, terrestrial and anthropogenic sedimentation. Series of C14 datings and typochronological analysis of pottery inside the cores, provided a chronological framework for the changes in the landscape during the prehistoric occupation.

The effects of the geomorphological investigations in the area shows great potential of an interdisciplinary approaches towards both environmental and archaeological studies and to understand relations between the former landscapes and habitation patterns in the past.
Miloš Roháček, MA
PhD Candidate, Charles University in Prague

Between Crete and Anatolia.
The Metallurgy of the so Called Lower Interface in the LBA

This paper aims at typologically analyzing collected bronze objects from the area of the lower part of East Aegean-West Anatolian Interface in the Late Bronze Age and compare them to the contemporary finds on Crete. The concept of the Interface, defined by Penelope Mountjoy in 1998, was based on ceramics, settlements and funeral activities and argued that the territory differs from the neighboring power centers such as the island of Crete, Greek Mainland and Central Anatolia. In this paper, only the lower part of the Interface will be discussed, which includes Dodecanese islands and the adjacent Anatolian coast, up to Miletus. Metallurgy of 2nd Millennium B.C. in the whole Interface was not sufficiently dealt yet with. At first, the typology of metal finds such as swords, daggers, razors and similar will be briefly defined for Crete. In the second step the character of the Lower Interface finds will be represented and in the final step, the two sets will be compared.

In the Lower interface, swords seem to be in many cases more or less same as in Crete. However, same Dodecanese swords of type B appear more likely to be a „transitional” type between Karo’s type B and Sandars’ type C. The only really unique type is Sandars’ type H or the so called Siana group, which seems to occur only along the Interface and represents interesting mixture of Aegean and near eastern influences. As for knives, the situation might be the same, only unique type could be the type also called in this work Siana, based on same long tang on haft for fixation of pommel, as the Siana swords have. Types of spears follow the same typology as those from Crete, although the same might appear to be locally produced, especially in the Dodecanese area. The same situation could be for razors, where some of them show slightly typological differences.

The character of bronze items differs in Lower Interface with stronger Minoan-Mycenaean influence from items in Upper Interface which seems to be following more Anatolian features.
Through recent research, miniatures have begun to renew their role as holders of hidden knowledge and symbolisms, which, if untangled, could certainly reveal important information about their makers. The proposed research project will focus on investigating, defining, contextualising and conceptualising the meanings and the beliefs which lie behind the phenomenon of miniaturisation in LBA Aegean society (16th-11th BC). By taking a fresh interpretative approach, I will investigate all categories of Mycenaean diminutive objects (including vessels, tools, models, figurines) in order to shed light on whether Mycenaean people intentionally imbued miniatures with ideological powers and messages and if so, on which ways and through which contexts this might have been achieved. Therefore, these artefacts will be contextualised within the socio-cultural frame that designed and conceived them, in order to understand patterns and purposes of their making. More importantly, this project will develop a new theoretical framework on how archaeologists can interpret such concealed messages conveyed by past cultures through miniaturised objects.

Since the dawn of Aegean Archaeology, the study of miniatures as a distinct and important aspect of LBA material culture has been largely neglected with the notable exception of diminutive clay figurines. The scope of this work is to undertake a ‘holistic’ archaeological approach to Mycenaean downscaled artefacts by defining, contextualising and conceptualising them (character, use and value, production and craftsmanship, distribution). Thence, by adopting an anthropological approach, it will be possible to infer the symbolisms and the ideological meanings which lie behind the miniatures, attempting to shed light on the different ways in which Mycenaean people expressed their perceptions of themselves, of sacred, of life and death.

The aims will be achieved by:
-wider contextual study on current approaches and understanding of the phenomenon of miniaturisation in past and modern cultures;
-creation of a theoretical framework for the examination, interpretation and presentation of miniatures;
- literature review of previous research on Aegean miniatures; study and evaluation of excavation reports; record of LBA miniatures according to type, material and context; interpretation of Mycenaean findings by comparison to other cultures; investigation for preserved fingerprints on BA clay miniatures, and re-creation of clay miniatures replicas via experimental archaeology to determine possible levels of specialisation and issues of gender and/or age associated with the LBA makers of miniatures; visits to archaeological museums and libraries in the UK and Greece.

The study of miniaturization in LBA Aegean culture covers a considerable gap in Mycenaean and Mediterranean Archaeology and opens new avenues in the study of downsized art in past and modern cultures in a global context.
Recent progress in textile archaeology has been combined with complex, if incomplete, evidence of textiles and textile production in Bronze Age Greece. As a result, the key role of the textile craft and the high socio-economic value of textiles in the Bronze Age Aegean have been acknowledged clearly, and a series of important publications focused on textile archaeology has been published, making textiles a new ‘big theme’ also in the field of the Aegean archaeology.

This paper aims to present an overview of the said progressive studies in order to outline emerging prospects and new research perspectives on Aegean textile archaeology and to highlight their impact on our understanding of socio-economic life in the Bronze Age past. It briefly discusses the complexity of the available archaeological, iconographic and textual evidence underlining the need for an integrated approach to studying it, and it outlines a number of complementary approaches to textile technology, such as the concept of chaîne opératoire, production organisation models, its specialisation levels or cross-craft interactions. Special attention is paid to the non-discursive aspects of textile technology, referred to as ‘embodied’ or ‘tacit’ knowledge which refer to the skill, body knowledge and their transfers, working efforts, as well as to experimental/experience archaeology perceived as a potential tool for conducting research.
Old and New Evidence for the Tholos-Type Chamber Tombs
from Thapsos in South-Eastern Sicily

Thapsos is an Italian prehistoric site located on the Peninsula of Magnisi in south-eastern Sicily and is eponymous for the Middle Bronze Age (ca.1450-1200 BC) cultural horizon of the southern part of the island. The settlement played an important role in the Italian-Aegean interrelations and is known especially as an interface for long-distance trade connections with Central and Eastern Mediterranean. Aegean, Cypriot and Maltese imports have been found both in the residential quarters and funerary area, while Mycenaean influence was traced in the construction of some of the rock-cut chamber tombs spread over a vast territory in different points of the Peninsula.

The necropolis of Thapsos underwent several archeological investigations since the last quarter of the 19th century. However, except for Orsi’s wide-scaled excavation campaign, archaeological activity in the funerary area has been merely mentioned in preliminary reports and a final publication is still missing. Most of the information available for the Aegean-type funerary architecture is limited to short communications and too few tomb plans. Hitherto no detailed map of the necropolis was provided. The present state of publication impedes any analyses of spatial relations between the foreign model and the rest of grave units in the necropolis in order to make assumptions about the meaning of the adapted form from its social context.

The aim of this paper is to present the results of a recent field survey effectuated in the funerary area of Thapsos. The research was designed to reconstruct the funerary landscape of prehistoric Thapsos: to register the location of tombs and create a detailed map of the necropolis; as well as to carry out an on-site identification of the rock-cut tholoi-like chamber tombs briefly mentioned in the existing publications. The unveiling of their position in space and spatial relations with other chamber tombs allowed to speculate about the application and appreciation of the foreign form within the cemetery. The value and social function of the Aegean model was evaluated on the basis of tombs’ location and vicinity to other funerary structures. The exotic nature of the tholos model can be perceived as an additional asset.
followed by restrictions in use to limited groups of people or clans and can thus state a tool reflecting the hierarchical diversification within the community in its funerary area.