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HISTORY HIDDEN IN BROKEN POTS OR BROKEN POTS HIDDEN IN HISTORY? THE LATE ROMAN – EARLY BYZANTINE STRATIGRAPHY AT PRINIATIKOS PYRGOS (CRETE)

The overall aim of this article is to contribute to discussion of the value of archaeology for historical studies of the Late Roman and Byzantine periods and to underline the fact that studies of plain and fragmentary pottery not only can yield valuable typological, technological and chronological information but this kind of data can and should be used to help in the reconstruction of historical processes. Herein examples from some special Priniatikos Pyrgos contexts (the architectural complex of Byzantine Buildings 1 and 2) are used to illustrate the relationship between archaeology and history as a part of cross-disciplinary studies.

Early Byzantine period – Priniatikos Pyrgos – Crete – history and archaeology – Byzantine architecture – pottery

Historie ukrytá v rozbitých nádobách, nebo rozbité nádoby ukryté v historii? Stratigrafie pozdně římského a časně byzantského období na lokalitě Priniatikos Pyrgos na Krétě. Cílem této statě je přispět k diskusi na téma důležitosti archeologického bádání pro studium historie pozdní doby římské a časně byzantské periody a v neposlední řadě podtrhnout fakt, že studium běžné a fragmentární keramiky může poskytnout hodnotné informace použitelné při rekonstrukci historických událostí. V předkládané stati je na příkladu architektonického komplexu byzantských budov 1 a 2 na lokalitě Priniatikos Pyrgos na Krétě ilustrován vztah mezi archeologií a historií coby součástí interdisciplinárního přístupu k řešení historických otázek.

Časně byzantské období – Priniatikos Pyrgos – Kréta – historie a archeologie – byzantská architektura – keramika

1. Specifics of Byzantine studies

Detailed study of the archaeology of the Late Roman – Byzantine period in Greece began relatively late (*Bintliff 2012, 381; Klontza-Jaklova 2014a, 135; Klontza-Jaklová et al., in press a*). The need for medieval material studies

became obvious in the 1990's and since that decade Byzantine archaeology has developed in both the field and publication. Dimitris Tsougarakis in his book on Cretan post-Roman history could present only a few systematically excavated sites and almost none (with the notable exception of Gortyn) was fully published (*Tsougarakis 1988, 303–308*). He starts his history from the 5th century AD but other authors have placed the threshold of the Byzantine period from as early as the reign of Constantine the Great (306–337) to as late as the early 9th century AD. It should be underlined that there is a total lack of terminological and chronological consensus¹ (tab. 1). The variety of different terminological approaches mirrors the different interpretation schemes and understandings of continuity and identity in material culture. In practice this can and does lead to problems in synthesizing results (*Alcock 1993, 49*). Very often the criteria determining chronological and terminological choice depend on the researcher's viewpoint. Those who focus on the Roman period tend to conclude the Roman period halfway through the 7th century AD or even later, and understand the 8th century AD as encompassing the final destruction of Late Antiquity (*Armstrong 2009; Attoui 2011, II; Gallimore 2011*)². Archaeologists and historians who concentrate on the Middle Ages tend to start with the early 4th century AD and call that period the Early Byzantine. In either case, continuity of material culture, the presence of Christianity as a state religion and/or other general or regional historical data have been used as chronological signifiers.

Region	Chronology used	Author
Aegean region in general	Late Roman period: 400 – circa mid-7 th century AD Early Byzantine period: 650–842 AD	Bintliff 2012, 351, 383
Aegean region in general	Early Byzantine period: 700–900 AD	Vroom 2005
Aegean region in general	Late Roman period: up to 800 AD	Attoui 2011, II
Crete	Late Roman up to 9 th century AD	Harrison 1998, 130
Crete	Late Roman/Early Byzantine: 4 th century AD – circa 800 AD	Hayden et al. 2005, 57–79
Crete	Late Roman: 295 AD – 457 AD Late Antique: 457 AD – 732/3 AD First Period Byzantine: 732/3 AD – 827/8AD	Gallimore 2011, 34
Crete	Byzantine period starts in 5 th century AD	Tsougarakis 1988
Knossos	Late Antique: 5 th century – 827 AD	Sweetman 2004, 317
Eleuherna	Byzantine period: since 4 th century AD	Vogt 2000

¹ Mentioned also by other authors (*Gallimore 2011, 32–35; Bintliff 2012, 351*).

² Both the forums of Late Roman Course Wares and Late Roman Fine Wares accept contributions up to the 9th century AD due to the clear continuity in many aspects of material culture and social process.

Region	Chronology used	Author
Itanos	Early Christian period: 6 th century – 7 th century AD	Xanthopoulou 2004
Minnesota Messenia Project	Roman period: 146–330 AD Byzantine period: 330–900 AD	McDonald – Rapp 1972, 64, 96
Boetia survey	Late Roman period: 250–600 AD	Bintliff – Snodgrass 1985, 158, Tab. 7
Pylos Regional Archaeological Project	Late Roman period: 400–700 AD	Alcock et al. 2005, 152, Tab. 1
Eastern Corinthian Archaeological Survey	Late Roman period: 250–700 AD	Tartaron et al. 2006, 455, Tab. 1
Argolid	Late Roman period: 300–500 AD Late Antique: 5 th – 7 th century AD	Hjohlman 2005, 128

Tab. 1. Examples of chronological and terminological approaches to the period of 4th – 9th century AD.

Some authors suggest use of the term Late Antiquity for the period of the 5th to 7th centuries AD and interpret this period as transitional between Roman and medieval economic and social models (*Sweetman 2004; Gallimore 2011, 35*).

In Priniatikos Pyrgos we use the following chronological descriptions (tab. 2) but do so in the knowledge that our charts are merely tools, which greatly simplify the complexity of historical process, especially in the case of the period between the 4th and 9th century AD, when, both in the Eastern Mediterranean and elsewhere, Roman traditions and new elements, exhibiting both continuity and discontinuity, were dynamically creating a new face for the Old World. Our criteria are the development of material culture in the earlier phases and, for later periods, a combination of previous research findings and generally accepted historical milestones.

Late Roman period	4 th century – end of 6 th century AD
Early (or First) Byzantine period – phase 1	end of 6 th – mid 7 th century AD
Early (or First) Byzantine period – phase 2	mid 7 th – beginning of 9 th century AD
Period of Arabic occupation	beginning of 9 th century – 961 AD
Later ³ Byzantine (or Second Byzantine) period	961–1204 AD
Venetian period	1204–1669 AD
Ottoman period	1669 – end of 19 th century AD

Tab. 2. Chronological chart of Cretan Late Roman – Ottoman periods based on Priniatikos Pyrgos stratigraphies.

³ Cretan Later (Second) Byzantine period is approximately equivalent to Middle Byzantine period how it is usually used when speaking about whole empire.

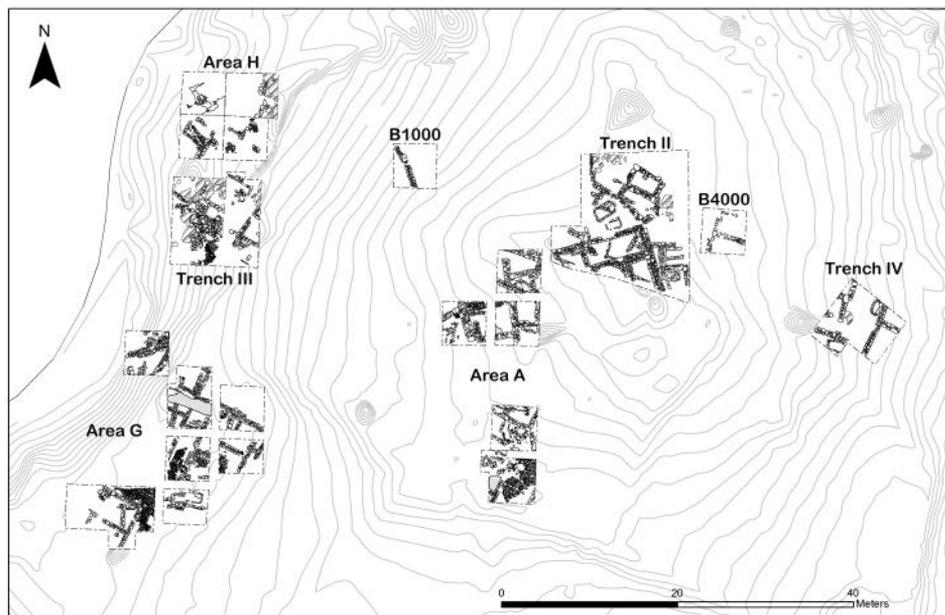


Fig. 1. Priniatikos Pyrgos, site plan (Courtesy of Priniatikos Pyrgos Project).

The difficulties we have experienced in trying to create a useful chronological and terminological chart do not only reflect the fact that our studies are still at an early stage but also arise from the range of approaches to the topic brought about largely by the relative lack of co-ordination among individual scholars and institutions in the past. This latter problem was finally addressed, literally within the last few years, when a number of special forums and conferences focused on the topic were organized⁴. However helpful such co-ordination may prove to be in establishing broad agreement on the framework, we cannot ignore the regionalism of historical processes (*Armstrong 2009, 175*).

The study of the archaeology of Medieval Greece came of age with the new millennium (*Athanassopoulos 2008*). In the last synthesis of the archaeology of medieval Europe, the archaeology of the Byzantine regions was left out as a special field, largely unknown to European medievalists (*Graham-Campbell – Valor 2007, 13*). Although excavations of some medieval sites had taken place a century before (Istanbul, Knossos, Corinth etc.), many of them were still awaiting publication and others remained isolated cases. “Byzantine”, as applied to archaeol-

⁴ E.g. First Amsterdam Meeting on Byzantine and Ottoman Archaeology, “Fact and fiction in medieval and post-medieval ceramics in the eastern Mediterranean. Are we on the right track?”, University of Amsterdam, October 2011. Workshop on the Byzantine pottery of Crete, INSTAP Study Center for East Crete, September 2013. ‘Byzantium without glamour. The “humble” objects and their use in the everyday life of the Byzantines’, Institute of historical studies, Athens, May 2014.

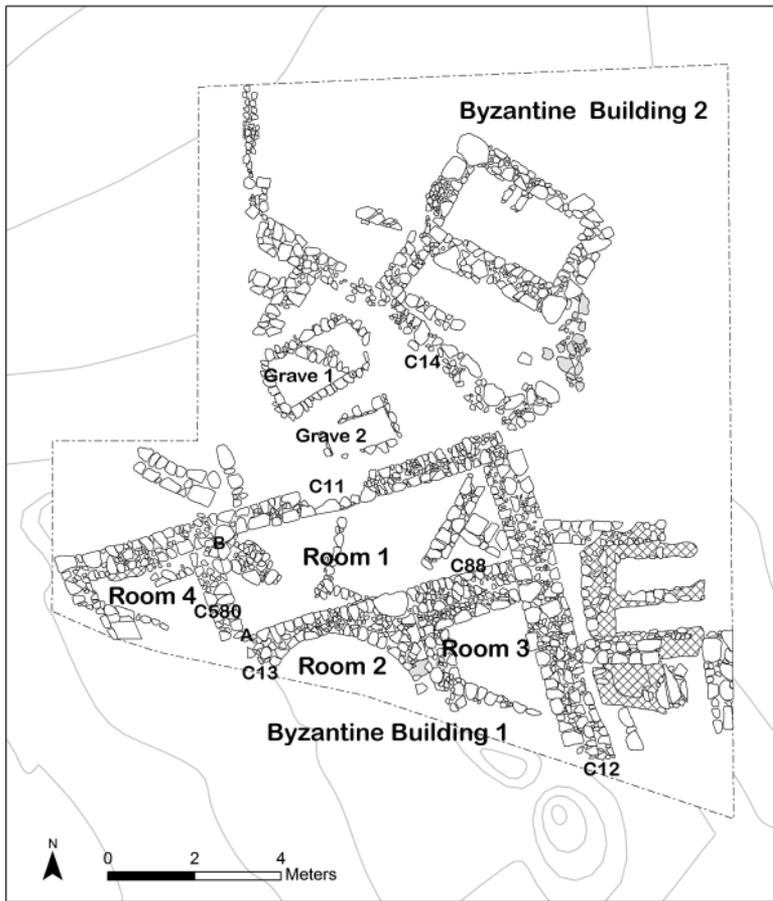


Fig. 2. Priniatikos Pyrgos, Byzantine Buildings 1 and 2
(Courtesy of Priniatikos Pyrgos Project).

ogy and chronology, has recently begun to be replaced by the term “Medieval” (Lock – Sanders 1996; Bintliff 2012, 381; Athanassopoulos 2008).

Furthermore, until only a few decades ago, plain pottery was generally not collected by excavators (Eiring – Lund 2004, 11; Klontza-Jaklova 2014a, 135). This archaeological “failure” is the main reason why some historians, even today, doubt the value of archaeological studies (Anagnostakis 2008, 95). However, surveys show that the network of Late Roman and Early Byzantine sites was dense and fully comparable with other periods, although the classification of the collected ceramic material is problematic due to the relative lack of excavated and published material⁵ (Gallimore 2011, 61–62; Armstrong 2009, 167).

⁵ There are only a few Cretan sites which are useful for comparanda (alphabetically; with the main titles related to them): Aghia Galini (Vogt 1994), Eleutherna (Themelis ed. 2000; Vogt

2. Byzantine Buildings 1 and 2 in Priniatikos Pyrgos: architecture and pottery

Nowadays nobody doubts that archaeological ceramic studies are in a position to provide a lot of data about chronology and about the regional and inter-regional contacts, diet, social status etc. of the communities studied⁶ (e.g. *Poblome – Malfitana – Lund 2014; Armstrong 2009*). In Priniatikos Pyrgos (fig. 1), after a few seasons of study, we were able to document different types and quantities of pottery fragments in different excavated areas and, in parallel with typological-chronological studies, we have started to research the question of how the pottery became part of each context (*Klontza-Jaklova 2014a*). Pottery was not evenly spread and it was deposited in different ways and for different reasons.

The main bulk of the Priniatikos Pyrgos Byzantine pottery excavated and analysed to date came from floor constructions, terrain leveling, dumps and pits, habitation deposits, wall collapses, or grave fills⁷. Only a small percentage of the pottery was found in situ. It also needs to be borne in mind that the site was intensively occupied, at least from the beginning of the 7th century AD, with frequent rebuilding activities across the whole inhabited area. It means that we are working with very fragmentary and mixed material, with few joining sherds, and mainly with artifacts whose original function and role was lost by the time they were deposited. It becomes even more complicated: Priniatikos Pyrgos is a multicultural site with massive architecture and intricate stratigraphy, a site settled repeatedly since the Final Neolithic (*Hayden – Tsipopoulou 2012; Molloy – Duckworth eds. 2014*).

2000; *Yangaki 2005; Kalpaxis et al. 2008*; etc.), Gortyn (*DiVita ed. 1988; 2001; Vitale 2008*; etc.), Itanos (*Xanthopoulou 1995; 1996; 1997; 1998; 1999; 2000; 2001; 2004*), Knossos (*Hayes 2001; Sweetman 2004; 2005; 2010*), Pseira (*Albani – Poulou-Papademetriou 1990; Poulou-Papademetriou – Nodarou 2007*). For history of archaeological survey on Crete, see *Gkiasta 2008*.

- ⁶ Pottery is generally thought of as something common and ordinary, its presence documented in each social stratum. It has also been a common implicit assumption that each member of a past society shared this approach to ceramics, that it was easy to obtain ceramic vessels and that their “value” was, therefore, very low. Such assumptions cannot be universally applied across societies or time (*Sanders, in press*). Some kinds of pottery (e.g. glazed) could be part of very valuable properties and were even listed in testaments (*Konstantoudaki 1975, 35–36*). It seems that our approach to the pottery in the Byzantine period should be revised, as Guy Sanders (*in press*) suggests; he documents that even simple pottery was expensive, the number of ceramic vessels in each household was limited and they could be part of tax payments. When looked at from this point of view, the sites producing larger amount of pottery should be approached differently.
- ⁷ I have deliberately refrained from including any statistical record. The normal data, such as weight, number of sherds or reconstruction of number of original individual items (the latter being highly speculative in most contexts studied) are all highly dependent on the nature of the context and how it was formed. These data, used simplistically, can lead to bias in interpretation and conclusions. Each context must be evaluated separately after due consideration of its specially defined criteria (*Costa, in press* and personal communication).

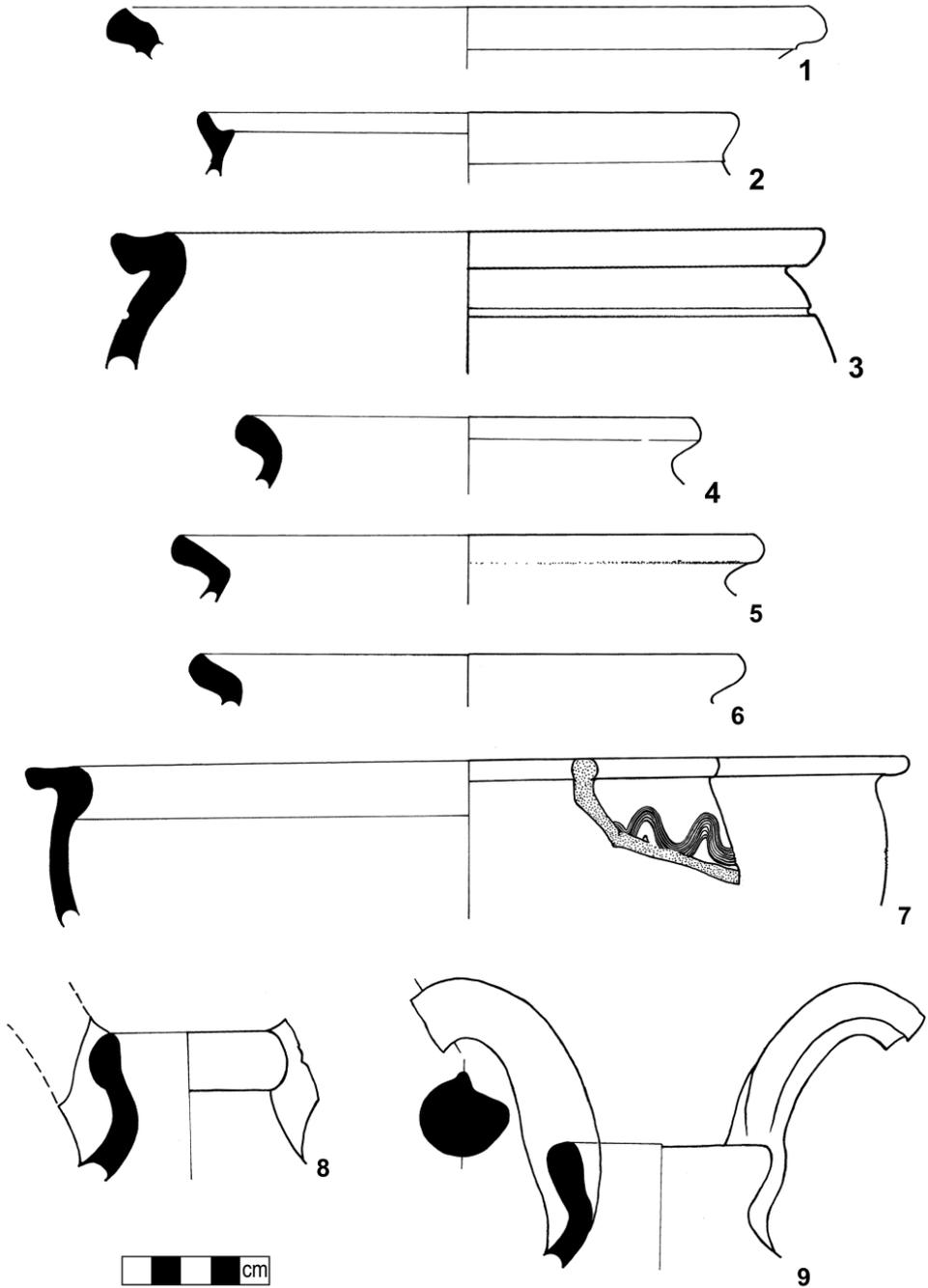


Fig. 3. Finds from Priniatikos Pyrgos: 1 – Phocian dish (Hayes 10C type) dating the earliest Early Byzantine wall C13 (Trench II, Byzantine Building 1) construction to the 1st third of 7th century AD; 2–7 – sample of pottery from the collapse filling Room 2 (end of 4th century – 8th century AD); 8–9 – pottery of the 13th century AD (C9). Illustration by author.



Fig. 4. Priniatikos Pyrgos, Byzantine Building 1, Room 3: Pewter chalice (catalogue number 10-5803). Photo: Chronis Papanikolopoulos.

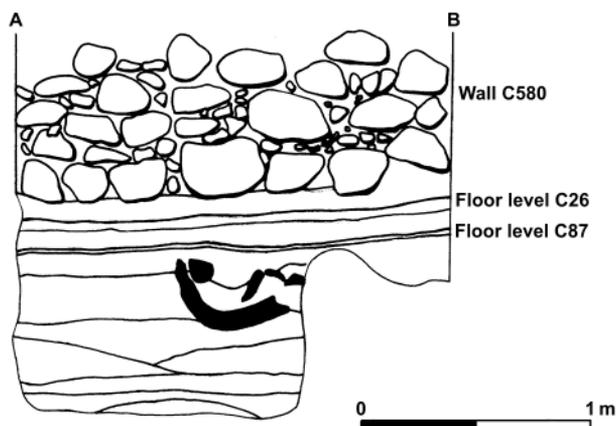


Fig. 5. Priniatikos Pyrgos, Byzantine Building 1, Room 1: Section of Room 1 floors, view from the east (cf. fig. 2) (Courtesy of Priniatikos Pyrgos Project).

In this paper I have focused on the contexts related to the most complex architectural remains, which we called Byzantine Buildings 1 and 2, in Trench II (fig. 1, 2). These produced a significant volume of pottery and the strata ranged in date from the Late Roman period to the Late Middle Ages. Byzantine Building 1 was excavated in the south part of Trench II directly on the highest point of the current



Fig. 6. Priniatikos Pyrgos: Byzantine Building 1, Room 1: Pottery of C87 (the earliest floor of Room 1). Photo: author.

Priniatikos Pyrgos peninsula. The building could not be excavated completely due to the fact that the largest part lies within privately owned land. Four rooms (only one complete) of this large structure were recovered. The architecture, context and also the character of the artifacts, including the way they were deposited, have led us to identify it as an ecclesiastical building, possibly even a basilica. The building is part of a Byzantine agglomeration and more buildings were excavated around it and also spread over most of the Priniatikos Pyrgos peninsula. These buildings changed during the course of time, being built and rebuilt in several phases (*Klontza-Jaklova 2014a*). In this paper I wish to explain how these changes fit within their historical and environmental framework, to establish the reasons for the changes and to demonstrate the interpretative role which the plain pottery found in these building can play (tab. 3).

The earliest remnant⁸ surviving the later modification of Building 1 is wall C13. It is a massive wall, curved on the interior, which was probably part of an apse or conch (Room 2). This room had a cemented floor but the building was empty at the moment of its collapse. There was only one floor level, probably original but repeatedly cleaned and thus kept at the same level throughout the period when that space was in use. It was constructed directly on Iron Age strata.

⁸ Across whole peninsula there are spread fragments of earlier periods: LRA1, Roman red slip ware C identifying habitation activities dated in 5th – mid-7th centuries AD (e.g. fig. 3: 2). This pottery appears in fills and sediments as earlier intrusions and still today they were not identified architectural remnants which can be dated to those earlier horizons.

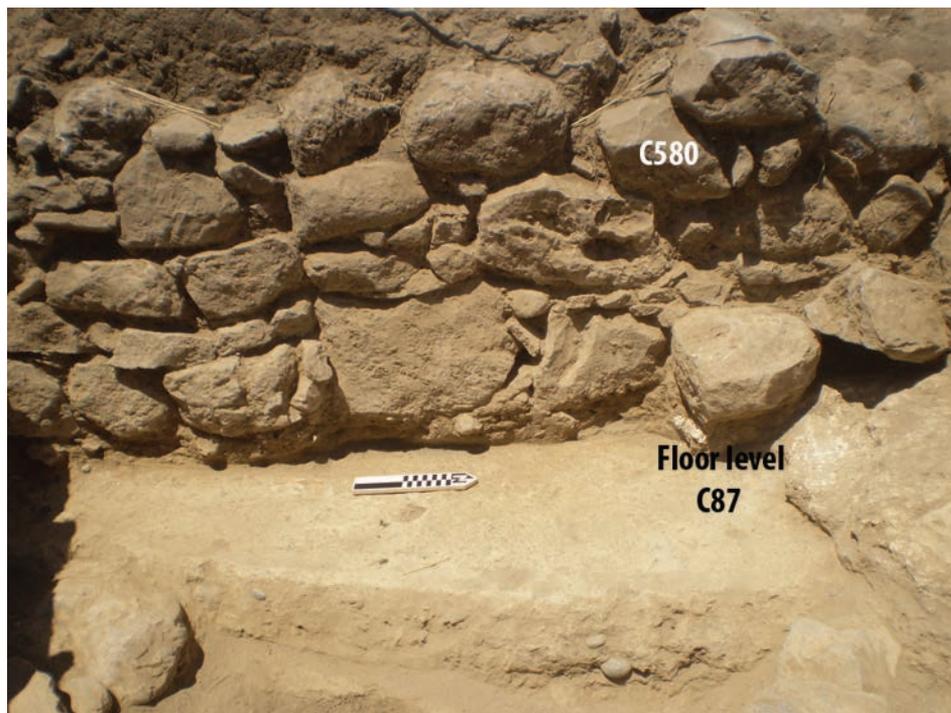


Fig. 7. Priniatikos Pyrgos, Byzantine Building 1, Wall C580, sealing Room 1 on its western side, and the stratigraphy of related floors (Courtesy of Priniatikos Pyrgos Project).

The fill was not rich in pottery and what was found is very fragmentary. This filling sediment contained mainly collapse material: stones from the wall, roof tile fragments and some ceramic fragments. The wall was dated, by material found in its base (fig. 3: 1), to the first third of the 7th century AD (*Klontza-Jaklova 2014a, 136, 138, fig. 3*). It is only a very small part of a massive building judging from the thickness of the wall and the large, well dressed building stones. There were contemporary, or even earlier, pits around this wall containing pottery generally dated into the first half of the 7th century AD (*Klontza-Jaklova 2014c, 800–801, fig. 4–6, 8*). Interpretation of the original building is not entirely clear, but an ecclesiastical purpose is a possibility.

Through subsequent phases Byzantine Building 1 (wall C14) was rebuilt and its conception was completely changed. The apsidal wall was broken on its east side, giving access to another room (Room 3), which had been added to the east. The corner of walls C11 and C88 seems to respect the already extant Byzantine Building 2 which, in turn appears to have respected Grave 1 (wall C14 is curved in a manner which appears designed to avoid this feature). This change might be theoretically related to liturgical changes when the Church and its architects

were moving *diakonikon* and *prosthesis* rooms closer to the eastern parts of the basilicas (Krautheimer 1991, 365).

The dating of Room 2 is very problematic. The small amount of pottery from the floor was generally dated to the 7th century but it was smashed by massive wall collapse which also contained very fragmentary non-joining sherds. The earliest sherds are dated to 4th century AD and the latest fragments securely dated to the second half of the 8th century (Klontza-Jaklová 2014a, 140–142) (fig. 3: 2–7). The most interesting and historically important find is a pewter (lead + tin) chalice (fig. 4) (with parallels from the first half of the 7th century AD, Wamser ed. 2004, 114) hidden by digging through a floor level which was itself the top of a fill or habitation debris of Classical Greek period. This room was probably used for a considerable time with the original floor being cleaned repeatedly.

Subdivision of the second phase rectangular enclosure, bounded to the south by a long wall (C11) created Room 1. The first floor of this room was just a leveled and stepped floor at the surface of a substantial deposit (C87) (fig. 5–7). This floor level represented a big problem for both field archeologists and pottery experts. In different parts of the floor packing there were clusters of ceramic sherds dated to Early Bronze Age but it was clear that they belonged to one structure. Only a small amount of pottery from C87 is Early Byzantine. Finally the situation was explained as a terrain leveling before the construction of Room 1. Some of the previous features had been removed and material obtained from these activities had been spread to level the floor of the room. This is why this horizon contains only a tiny number of Early Byzantine sherds, dated again, generally, to the 7th century AD. Later, Room 1 was sealed on its west side (by wall C580; fig. 5, 7) and a new, more sophisticated, floor was created. The floor packing was made from fine, well sorted sandy soil mixed with deliberately smashed pottery fragments. This context (C26; fig. 5, 7) was very rich in pottery. One could describe the pottery as being effectively the “temper” of the floor packing. It is impressive that most of this “temper” consisted of small (up to 10 cm in length) fragments of amphorae and that sets of conjoining fragments contained no more than 5 fragments and, when reassembled, were in turn quite small. These “puzzles” were created from sherds coming from different parts of the room (fig. 8). We were lucky here: the deposit contained a silver coin of Leo III the Isaurian (717–741) (fig. 9) and the pottery, although fragmentary, corresponds with this date perfectly. We found mainly amphorae body sherds of highly fired vessels, with egg-shaped or globular bodies, often decorated with bands of ridges. The vessels are mostly of non-Cretan origin. Our pottery was compared with analogous material from Pseira (e.g. Albani – Poulou-Papademetriou 1990) and finds from Gortyn, which, together with personal consultations with Natalia Poulou-Papademetriou and with Stefano Costa, proved most helpful. Our material is absolutely comparable.

Room 1 was later filled by wall collapse (C9). Within this collapse is very interesting to observe the mechanical processes. First to fall was the plaster, then the roof and, finally, the massive walls. This debris is very poor in pottery and that which is present is very fragmentary. Most sherds date from the 8th century

but some fragments of later pottery (up to the 13th century AD) were also found within the collapse, mainly in its top layers. It looks to us as though the building collapse was gradual.

West of wall C580 there was another room, numbered Room 4, with stratigraphy similar to Room 1. A large amount of pottery dated to 7th and 8th century AD was found in it.

Almost all the building was covered by a layer containing 13th century pottery (fig. 3: 8, 9; fig. 10) which is probably not in situ, but was removed or spread around while clearing space for a Venetian chapel (now also collapsed), which was constructed on top of the peninsula (*Klontza-Jaklova 2014a; 2014c*).

All the stratigraphy of Building 1 is comparable with the stratigraphy of Area A (*Hayden – Tsipopoulou 2012*), which yielded very similar stratigraphical sequences, but the matching of these areas must be clarified by further excavation and studies.

Description of building/ rebuilding activity/action	Date	Possible reason
Building of wall C13	First half of 7 th century AD	Establishment of the center.
Construction of Byzantine Building 2. 1st rebuilding – enlargement. Wall C13 broken and room 2 and 3 built.	Mid – second half of 7 th century AD	Development of the center.
Re-construction of Building 2. Building 1: division of Room 3, creating of room 4.	First half of 8 th century AD	Earthquake? Arabian attack? Other violent intervention?
Abandonment and beginning of gradual collapse.	End of 8 th – first half of 9 th century AD	Actual Arabian danger (or lack of Constantinople protection).

Tab. 3. Chronological chart with possible interpretation of each Byzantine Buildings' 1 and 2 phase.

3. Priniatikos Pyrgos in the context of literary sources

In general the written sources about Crete are very poor especially for the Early Byzantine period and the period of Arab conquest. Information about east Crete almost doesn't exist, although the previous periods offer a considerable amount of information (for a summary of Hellenistic and Roman Crete see *Galimire 2011, 6–41*). The 5th century AD marks the beginning of an era of “silence and obscurity” (*Tsougarakis 1988, 20; Detorakis 1990, 128*), which lasted until the beginning of 13th century AD.

Up to the time of the Emperor Diocletian (284–305 AD), Crete and Cyrenai-ca constituted a single Roman province. Diocletian reformed the administrative system and after that Crete belonged to Asia Minor. Later Constantine the Great (306–337) linked Crete to the larger administrative unit of Illyricum. It seems



Fig. 8. Priniatikos Pyrgos, Byzantine Building 1: Sample of transport pottery (C26, the last floor level of Room 1). Photo: author.

that different local institutions existed up to the reign of Justinian I (527–565). The main source for this period – *Synekdemos*⁹ – written by Hierocles Grammaticos describes Crete as a self-governing province, ruled by a governor, bearing the title *consularis*. The administrative, military centre and the residence of the Cretan church was Gortyn. He mentioned 22 cities in Crete most of which cannot be located. Written sources on Crete in the 5th century AD mention only Gortyn and earthquakes (*Tsougarakis 1988, 104–105, 156; Detorakis 1994, 109–114*).

Among the very few artifacts we have from the period of 4th century AD till the second half of 6th century AD are coins of Constantine the Great and fragments of cooking vessels and amphorae (mainly LR1 and Carthage LRA2), but most were clearly in secondary deposition in later contexts. Thus far no archaeological contexts or architectural remains have been excavated at Priniatikos Pyrgos which can be clearly dated to this time. It is possible that in this period the south coast was the major focus of occupation (*Gallimore 2011, 468–476* and personal comm.).

⁹ It dates from the first years of reign of Justinian I, but almost certainly its sources were earlier, originating in the era of Theodosius II (402–450) (*Jones 1971, 504; Tsougarakis 1988, 105; Manimanis – Theodosiou – Dimitrijevic 2012, 29–30*).

The end of the 5th century AD is characterized by building activity which continued into the beginning of the 6th century AD. New churches were built all over Crete. Almost all known archaeological sites provide remnants datable to this chronological horizon and it is argued, according to the archaeological evidence, that it was a period of peace and prosperity for Crete (*Tsougarakis 1988, 21*).

Given this background, Priniatikos Pyrgos seems to be unusual. We have still not documented any significant building activity in this period but it is evident that the building activities at the beginning of the 7th century AD (mentioned above) took place on deliberately constructed terraces and modified areas and they covered Hellenistic and earlier remnants. It is hypothetically possible that the new, massive buildings of the 7th century AD, mentioned above, replaced buildings of 5th – 6th century AD date or that earlier structures were re-used. Some of the buildings appear to have been placed randomly, with no real respect for alignments, a phenomenon also observed in Gortyn¹⁰. This may be indicative of the demise of the elaborate Roman administrative system leading to a marked lack of rules and the institutions or personnel to impose them on the activities of the populace in either the public or private spheres.

That Priniatikos Pyrgos, in the late 6th and earliest 7th century AD, was already a relatively significant locale can be inferred from the elaborately constructed stone lined grave, wherein the initial burial was accompanied by a glass flask, a ceramic pitcher and, probably, gold item (earring fragment) (Grave 1; *Bridgford et al. 2014*). Although constructions (except Grave 1) from this period appear to be absent, the possibility remains that the architectural evidence was destroyed by the rebuilding activities of the beginning of 7th century AD, as implied by some isolated contexts and finds. Who these “builders” were, whether it was the Church, the State or local merchants who initiated such “radical” rebuilding and what the motivation for it was, are all questions which should be tested by excavation.

We have very little historical information about the economy either. The written sources speak about agricultural products from Crete and even the poems praised the fertility of Cretan soil (*Tsougarakis 1988, 21; Detorakis 1994, 131*). Here, the archaeological sources are absolutely crucial¹¹ and information which can be obtained from such sources as transport amphorae, Red-slipped wares and imported cooking vessels have historical value.

Amphorae from Priniatikos Pyrgos are usually non-Cretan, and came from all over the East Mediterranean, but it seems that the local transport vessels were made here as well (*Klontza-Jaklova 2014b, 167, Fig. 2; 2014c, 802*). Most date from the 8th century AD with some exceptions extending into the 9th century AD and others documenting some trade activities of 7th century AD. The harbour

¹⁰ According to P. Pitropakis of the 13th ephorate of Byzantine antiquities (personal consultation).

¹¹ As underlined by the conference Byzantine Trade, 4th–12th Centuries. The Archaeology of Local, Regional and International Exchange, St. John’s College, University of Oxford, March 2004 (*Mundell Mango ed. 2009*).

organize a fightback (*Louggis 1989, 159; Tsougarakis 1989, 27–28; Detorakis 1990, 131; Krautheimer 1991, 363; Avenarius 1992, 116–120*). Certainly during the 8th century AD Crete witnessed a strong military presence. We can be safely inferred by the number of seals belonging to military officials (*Tsougarakis 1988, 27*). Dimitris Tsougarakis mentions “a number of defensive constructions” from this period (*Tsougarakis 1988, 27*) but archaeologically we still cannot clearly declare it so definitively due of the current state of field work.

During the all Early Byzantine period Crete was afflicted by some earthquakes (Early Byzantine Tectonic Paroxysm, *McCoy 2009, 76*) described as catastrophic. A very strong earthquake destroyed Gortyn in 415. Another earthquake struck the same city in 448. We have information about two other serious earthquakes – 531 and 7th April 795 (*Tsougarakis 1988, 26–27*)¹².

It should in theory be possible to examine what impact the earthquake at the end of the 8th century AD had on Priniatikos Pyrgos but we cannot as yet definitively establish the date of the collapse of our buildings nor can we provide unequivocal evidence for the cause of the collapse or abandonment of the buildings and, even if the cause is established as earthquake damage, there could have been local earthquakes which were not mentioned in the surviving sources. However, there is a stratum in Byzantine Building 2, where material from a partial collapse was included in a new floor levelling and a related fresh subdivision of the space concerned, which is typical of activities following an earthquake. A similar scenario is visible in Byzantine Building 1 when one large room was divided into Rooms 1 and 4 by a wall (C580), which was placed on a floor levelling layer which included fallen plaster and cobbles from the walls around. It has been documented in Pompeii and in Bronze Age Knossos that, after earthquakes, the larger rooms were divided into smaller chambers and/or dangerous spaces were sealed off (*Driessen – Macdonald 1997, 44*).

In this period the plague seems to have afflicted the island frequently coinciding with famine and drought as The Life of St. Andreas informs us (*Bourbou 2010, 15*, overview of previous works and original sources: *footnote 14*). Even emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus (908–959) wrote “pestilent death fed on the entire world” in 746 (*Detorakis 1994, 132*). So this unfavorable context might fit the incidence of leprosy diagnosed from some osteological material found in Grave 1, which can also be dated to the 7th or 8th century AD (some bones were re-buried in the beginning of the 8th century AD) (*Bridgford et al. 2014*).

More information about Crete appears in the context of Arab attacks starting in the second half of the 7th century AD. From the mid-7th century AD the Arabs attacked the coastline. In 656 a major attack was launched by the Arab commander Abd Allah bn.Sa’d (Abdulah, son of Said). Christian sources describe other raids

¹² Earthquakes were very often blamed for building collapses or even collapses of civilizations (e.g. the Minoan civilization, destructions of the Mycenaean cities) but detailed interdisciplinary examination shows that even very severe earthquakes have relatively small coverage and the ability of surviving society to recover is almost “directly proportional” to the intensity of the catastrophe (*Klontza-Jaklová 2013, 240*).

in 671 and 674, when two Arab commanders wintered in Crete. At the beginning of the 8th century AD (the time of Caliph Walid) repeated raids are mentioned. These are described in the Life of St. Andrew of Crete. The Arab attacks were probably increasingly persistent until the time when they eventually took control of the entire island in about 824. There was a substantial military presence on Crete during the 8th century AD (*Tsougarakis 1988, 22–25*). Priniatikos Pyrgos was developing during this exact period and the possible explanation of this expansion in building, habitation and trade must be related to these new circumstances. The agglomeration was rebuilt and enlarged and the presence of officials is demonstrated by a lead seal of the 8th century AD coming probably from Constantinople. At the same time some other north coast settlements seem to have been almost abandoned, e.g. Itanos (*Xanthopoulou 2004, 1013*). Pamela Armstrong suggests that, especially in the 7th and 8th centuries AD, the Cypriot population and the Arabs co-operated in relative harmony and that the literary sources have been overvalued without proper historical criticism (*Armstrong 2009, 175*).

However, some dramatic event, probably resulting in a hasty abandonment, happened at Priniatikos Pyrgos in this period of frequent Arab attacks. The unretrieved chalice (fig. 4), left hidden below the floor, is visible proof of a hasty burial, which must have happened in the 8th century AD, probably in its second half or at its end (*Klontza-Jaklova 2014a, 141–142, Fig. 3*).

The history of Arab rule in Crete is very poorly documented. It is clear that the Arabs fully controlled the island and their presence there created considerable problems in the already turbulent East Mediterranean from the beginning of the 9th century AD. They organized a special kind of emirate on Crete which was quite independent of the other overseas Arab centres. Their economic oppression was based on piracy. Historical sources comment that Crete no longer had any relationship with the Byzantine Empire and many Cretans converted to Islam but we really don't have any information to assess the intensity of Arabian influence on the local population. New surveys suggest that this period should be reexamined radically because of the detection of significant habitation on the coastal zones during the 8th century AD: Priniatikos Pyrgos (*Klontza-Jaklova 2014a; 2014c*), Pseira (*Poulou-Papademetriou – Nodarou 2007*), Aegean in general (*Poulou-Papademetriou – Nodarou 2014*), Cyprus (*Armstrong 2009*). It is now almost certain that throughout the 8th century habitation was still present in coastal zones. Material from such sites has frequently been dated as no later than the 7th century AD by those influenced largely by the inference that the Arab attacks on the island in the following century precluded the presence of substantial coastal settlement, even though some of the finds (pottery and also coins) strongly suggested dating at least one century later (*Armstrong 2009, 164–170*). A new survey on Crete has discovered habitations of the late 8th and 9th centuries in the mountains, sometimes following the pattern of Late Minoan refuges and Hellenistic forts, where not only local but also imported pottery was recognized (including Constantinople White Ware). These sites are placed on strategic promontories, possessed of a fertile hinterland in adjacent valleys. They are close

to the coast, having a good overview of it and the roadways but are extremely difficult to access from the sea. All of the tested locations were covered by significant architecture including massive fortification, observation towers, residential houses, cisterns and roads (*Perna 2012; Klontza-Jaklova – Moody, in press; Klontza-Jaklova et al., in press a; in press b; Nowicki 2008, 66–67, 85–86*). The archaeological picture of the period between 7th and 10th centuries AD, which is slowly appearing, seems to document a situation unknown from (and to the authors of) the literary sources, which only say that until the beginning of the 10th century AD sporadic expeditions were organized by Byzantine Emperors to get back the island from Arab hands but each attempt ended in disaster (the last was in 912) (*Tsougarakis 1988, 41–58; Detorakis 1994, 121–123*).

Priniatikos Pyrgos in this period (in the late 8th – early 9th century AD) was either abandoned or the occupation was very minor. There are only isolated sherds which can be dated to this horizon (*Klontza-Jaklova 2014a; 2014c*). Clearly there were people on the island; literary sources don't mention any disappearance of or decrease in the population. Instead, Arabic sources mention economic activities, trade and exchange in cooperation with the local population (*Detorakis 1994, 126–129*). It looks as though the Arabs didn't create their own net of administrative centres, other than Heraklion, and the local population definitely left the coast. One part of our project is to look for the sites of this horizon. Although there is only one article about 9th – 12th century pottery of Crete published (*Poulou-Papademetriou 2003*) and it is about decorated pottery, which is unrepresentative of the more “ordinary” sites for which we are searching, our studies, research and surveys have already brought their first results and we have identified some new sites, of course in the mountains on very defensible spots. It should be emphasized that some are on very special locations, again sometimes on the same hills as Minoan Peak sanctuaries and LM IIIc defended sites (*Klontza-Jaklova et al., in press a; in press b; Klontza-Jaklova – Moody, in press*).

With the recovery of Crete by Nikephoros Phocas (961) and its return to the Byzantine Empire a new period of Cretan history starts. This period was 250 years long and ended with the capture of Crete by the Venetians at the beginning of 13th century (*Tsougarakis 1988, 74–90; Detorakis 1988, 153–165*).

The top priority of the Byzantines was the full restoration and consolidation of Byzantine power on the island. This meant that an effective defense against possible Arab attack had to be built but there was also a danger from Western Europe. Nikephoros Phocas fortified a large part of Heraklion. Historians calculate that there were more, similar, coastal fortifications but none has been excavated, or even found. Not one of the excavated Early Byzantine coastal settlements was settled again in this horizon, or at least in its first two centuries of the Second Byzantine period. Priniatikos Pyrgos had very sparse or no habitation up to the beginning of 12th century.

There is further information about the creation of a strong political base in this period. Nikephoros Phocas established settlements of war veterans after successful territorial campaigns in agriculturally fertile districts. Immediately after the

recovery of Crete by the Byzantine state, it was restored as a Byzantine administrative province with its own governor and we know some of those governors from written sources. The question is where are those centres? Why have the archaeologists not found them?

It is surprising that we have only limited information about this period given that Crete was part of the Byzantine Empire. By the early 12th century AD the Venetian merchants were already interested in the island; there is a document surviving from 1111 referring to trade in agricultural products and livestock (*Detorakis 1994, 156*).

Although we don't have any significant habitation in Priniatikos Pyrgos at these times, some single sherds can possibly be dated to the period of 10th – 12th century AD. There are also coins of Andronicos (*Sidiropoulos, forthcoming*). The character of the habitation is still unknown and needs further excavation.

In 1203 a prince named Alexios gave Crete to Boniface of Monferrat as a gift in order to secure his restoration to the Byzantine throne but “the pirate of Monferrat” immediately sold the island to the Doge of Venice, Enrico Dandolo (1192–1205). Crete became a Venetian dominion (i. e. *Detorakis 1994, 163–165; Tsougarakis 1988, 88–90*). It is also clear that in this period Priniatikos Pyrgos was an important port. The assemblage of imported, mainly glazed pottery is large and multifarious proving there was contact with other Greek and East Mediterranean regions. There are also fragments of amphorae, imported cooking wares and plenty of local pottery.

Although Venetian occupation lies beyond the frame of this publication and cannot thus be discussed in detail it is clear from the archaeology that Priniatikos Pyrgos also played a special role in this period, wherein, yet again, there is almost a complete lack of published material.

The site was still in use during the Ottoman period when we have evidence that iron was being processed at Priniatikos Pyrgos¹³.

4. Conclusions

The comparison of archaeological and historical evidence is a rather specialized topic, particularly in the case of Late Roman and Byzantine Crete. We must conclude that both sources, archaeological and literary, are not entirely representative of the time. In the case of archaeological data, a lot has been done in the 21st century and current research is very promising. Since we cannot bank on new literary sources coming to light in future years, archaeology appears to be our best tool to continue with the reconstruction of historical processes.

Each archaeological site must be studied as an individual case, as well as within a general framework. The limited quantity of sources still precludes generalization and abstraction.

¹³ Trenches A1000 and A2000 (Notebooks of 2005 and 2006 field seasons).

Even Priniatikos Pyrgos evokes more questions than answers:

- 1) Is Priniatikos Pyrgos a typical site or an exception?¹⁴
- 2) Why was Priniatikos Pyrgos founded in 6/7th century AD and who initiated that foundation? Locals or a central power?
- 3) What position had the complex at Priniatikos Pyrgos within the empire, or in Crete and within the process described above?
- 4) Was Priniatikos Pyrgos one of the sites included among the strategic points supported by Leo's III and Constance's V policy?
- 5) What happened there at the end of the 8th century AD and where did the people go?
- 6) How to explain the presence of pottery dated to 9th – 11th century AD?
- 7) Why, when and how did occupation resume in the 12/13th century AD?

It is clear that these and many other – both more detailed and more general – questions can be construed as evidence that archaeology (which gives weight to the traces of every kind of human activity) is a crucial historical discipline in this case. Every human activity was historically conditioned and dependent. Garbage, plain pottery, small, non-elite, or nameless communities all played their role in the historical process. Their study is a contribution to general historical study.

The study of the Byzantine archaeology of Crete is at a much earlier stage than that of Cretan prehistory, for which more than 100 years of intensive research, many excavated sites, publications, expertise and considerable financial investment successfully balances the lack of written information. Today we cannot conclude that the silence of literary sources excludes the possibility of further information and understanding. We face the challenge of investigating Late Roman and Byzantine Crete equipped with new methods, options and approaches.

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¹⁴ If exception, then the literary sources are right about the abandonment of Cretan coast in mid-7th century AD, if rule then the literary sources or archaeology are wrong in their descriptions and assumptions.

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HISTORIE UKRYTÁ V ROZBITÝCH NÁDOBÁCH, NEBO ROZBITÉ NÁDOBY UKRYTÉ V HISTORII? STRATIGRAFIE POZDNĚ ŘÍMSKÉHO A ČASNĚ BYZANTSKÉHO OBDOBÍ NA LOKALITĚ PRINIATIKOS PYRGOS NA KRÉTĚ

Archeologie pozdně římského a časně byzantského období v Řecku je relativně pozdního data (*Bintliff 2012, 381; Klontza-Jaklova 2014a, 135*), nutnost studovat pozdně antickou a středověkou hmotnou kulturu vykristalizovala až v 90. letech 20. století. Dimitris Tsougarakis (*1988, 303–308*) v jediné syntéze o krétské raně středověké historii mohl prezentovat pouze několik prozkoumaných lokalit tohoto období, jejichž identifikace s aglomeracemi uváděnými v písemných pramenech je kromě metropole Gortyny nemožná. Mezi archeology i historiky je dodnes nejednotnost v používání chronologické terminologie (tab. 1). Na základě stratigrafií na lokalitě Priniatikos Pyrgos byla vygenerována sekvence chronologických termínů, která kombinuje archeologický a historický přístup (tab. 2).

Ještě před několika desítkami let byla nezdobená a fragmentární keramika skartována a při vyhodnocování výzkumů nebyla prakticky brána v úvahu (*Eiring – Lund 2004, 11; Klontza-Jaklova 2014a, 135*). I dnes někteří historikové pochybují o tom, že by archeologický materiál mohl nějakým způsobem přispět k poznání historie raného středověku v Řecku (*Anagnostakis 2006, 95*).

V současnosti přibývá archeologických výzkumů i jejich detailních publikací, i když prozatím produkují více otázek než odpovědí, které právě vyvěrají ze snahy porovnat obraz, který vytvořilo dosavadní bádání prakticky výhradně na základě historických pramenů, s novými archeologickými daty. Dnes však již žádný z archeologů nepochybuje o tom, že studium keramiky má značný potenciál přispět k řešení historických otázek.

Analýza keramiky z lokality Priniatikos Pyrgos (fig. 1) započala předpokladem, že je nejprve třeba dešifrovat, jak se keramický materiál dostal do jednotlivých kontextů; následně byly zvoleny takové metody zkoumání těchto souborů, abychom získali co nejvíce konkrétních informací překračujících rámec běžné chronologie a typologie (*Klontza-Jaklova 2014a*).

Studovaná keramika pochází hlavně z konstrukcí podlah, z planýrek a vyrovnávek terénu, odpadních jam, sídlištních vrstev, destrukcí staveb a výplní hrobů. Jen málo keramiky bylo nalezeno in situ, v místě jejího uložení v době, kdy byla ještě součástí živé kultury. Je třeba mít na paměti, že lokalita byla opuštěna chvatně, ale s patrnou snahou obytné prostory vyklidit. Některé budovy (např. budova 1) pravděpodobně nebyly keramikou vybaveny vůbec. Po opuštění lokality se na ni lidé patrně opakovaně vraceli a hledali v ruinách domů použitelné předměty. Lokalita byla velmi intenzivně osídlena od konce 6. století n. l. a nejméně do poloviny 8. století byla několikrát přestavěna a reorganizována. Pracujeme tedy se značně pomíchaným a fragmentárním materiálem.

Připočteme-li fakt, že na poloostřvku Priniatikos Pyrgos se sídlilo od závěru neolitu (*Hayden – Tsipopoulos 2012; Molloy – Duckworth eds. 2014*), je vyhodnocování keramického materiálu velmi náročné.

Jedním z cílů předkládané práce je představit pozůstatky byzantských budov 1 a 2 (obr. 1, 2), ze kterých pochází keramický materiál datovatelný od pozdně římského období do vrcholného středověku. Budova 1 byla postavena na samotném vrcholku poloostrova. Vzhledem k vlastnickým poměrům půdy na lokalitě nebylo možné prozkoumat stavbu celou. Prozatím byly odkryty čtyři místnosti; jak z povrchového průzkumu, tak z výzkumných aktivit v sousedním areálu i ze samotné architektonické dispozice a horizontální stratigrafie je zřejmé, že se jedná o malou část poměrně rozsáhlého komplexu, patrně sakrální stavby. Budova 2 byla postavena na sever od budovy 1 a patrně sloužila jako sklad potravin a kuchyně. Obě budovy prošly několika stavebními fázemi (tab. 3; *Klontza-Jaklova 2014a*).

Obecně písemné prameny zmiňující Krétu pozdně římského a raného byzantského období jsou velmi omezené, zmínky o východní Krétě absentují úplně. Situace se mění až na počátku 13. století s příchodem benátské správy.

Do vlády císaře Diokleciána (284–305) tvořily Kréta a Kyrenaika jednu provincii s hlavním městem Gortyna. Dioklecián reformoval správní systém a Kréta byla přiřazena k provincii Asia Minor. Konstantin Veliký následně přiřadil tento ostrov k thématu Illyricum. Administrativní instituce přežívaly z doby římské až do vlády Justinianovy. Z období jeho vlády pochází geografický spis zv. *Synekdemos*, jehož autorem je Hierocles Grammatikus. Kréta je v něm popisována jako oblast s relativně autonomní správou, v jejímž cele stojí tzv. *consularis*. V *Synekdemu* je jmenováno 22 měst, z nichž většinu není možné lokalizovat (*Tsougarakis 1988, 104–105; Detorakis 1994, 109–114*). Prameny 5. století zmiňují pouze Gortynu a případně zeměřesení. Z tohoto období nebyla na lokalitě Priniatikos Pyrgos nalezena žádná architektura; keramika datovatelná do této periody je fragmentární, v sekundární poloze, nicméně dokládá kontakty s mimokrétskými regiony. V této době byla těžištem osídlení patrně spíše jižní část ostrova (*Gallimore 2011, 468–476*).

Od 5. do 6. století prožívalo vzestup křesťanství, které se definitivně proměnilo ve státní ideologii. I na Krétě dochází k organizovanému budování kostelů (*Tsougarakis 1988, 21*). Priniatikos Pyrgos však patrně představoval určitou výjimku, neboť do počátku 7. století nejsme schopni doložit žádné stopy osídlení. Stavby z počátku 7. století stojí na troskách helénistického města, v některých případech využívají teras vybudovaných v době bronzové. Již tyto první raně středověké domy jsou masivní, stavěné z opracovaného kamene a opatřené mramorovými kamenickými články. Také mobilní hmotná kultura dokládá význam lokality a přítomnost příslušníků elity (sklo, keramické importy).

V raně byzantském období byla Kréta zasažena několika zeměřeseními (*Tsougarakis 1988, 26–27*) a v současnosti se intenzivně zkoumá, zda zřícení budov 1 a 2 na konci 7. století, respektive opuštění lokality na konci 8. století mohly mít souvislost se zeměřesením.

Od poloviny 7. století je Kréta zmiňována v souvislosti s útoky Arabů. Křesťanské prameny tyto útoky tendenčně přeceňují. Naše znalosti o tom, jak vypadal život na Krétě a působení samotných Arabů od poloviny 7. do počátku 9. století i v období, kdy Kréta patřila ke kalifátu (do 961), jsou velmi kusé. Právě archeologie může přinést mnoho klíčových informací. Priniatikos Pyrgos se právě v 7. a 8. století rozrůstal, doložena je přítomnost osob napojených přímo na císařský dvůr (olověné korespondenční pečeti, stříbrná mince Leona III., viz obr. 9). To je v rozporu s dosavadními závěry, že již od poloviny 7. století bylo krétské pobřeží vyliďněno. I některé další výzkumy potvrzují snahu ostrov udržet v rámci Byzantské říše a bránit právě pobřežní pásmo (Pseira). Na druhou stranu některé lokality byly skutečně vysídleny již v polovině 7. století, např. Itanos (*Xanthopoulos 2004, 1013*).

Priniatikos Pyrgos byl opuštěn v období, které je možné spojit s arabskými aktivitami. Dramatičnost událostí dokládá mj. pohár vyrobený ze slitiny olova a stříbra (obr. 4), spěšně zahraňaný do podlahy místnosti 2 v budově 1. Na základě archeologického materiálu není možné říci, že by lokalita byla v období arabské okupace zcela nevyužívána. V destrukčních vrstvách byly

dokumentovány jakési průkopy, pomocí nichž byl zřejmě hledán použitelný materiál. Pochází z nich fragmentární keramika z 9. a 10. století.

Ke opětovnému připojení Kréty k Byzanci došlo sice v roce 961, ale zintenzivnění osídlení na lokalitě Priniatikos Pyrgos můžeme sledovat až od tzv. benátského období (přelom 12. a 13. století), i když do 10.–12. století lze datovat některé z nalezených mincí.

Archeologické prameny, které máme dosud k dispozici, nejsou ve shodě s písemnými prameny referujícími o Krétě v 5.–9. století. Zintenzivnění archeologického bádání a revize dosavadních historických interpretací představují aktuální úkoly byzantských studií na Krétě.

Obr. 1. Priniatikos Pyrgos, plán lokality (archiv projektu Priniatikos Pyrgos).

Obr. 2. Priniatikos Pyrgos, byzantské budovy 1 a 2 (archiv projektu Priniatikos Pyrgos).

Obr. 3. Priniatikos Pyrgos: 1 – fokájský talíř (typ Hayes 10C) datující založení zdi C13 (sonda II, byzantská budova 1) do 1. třetiny 7. století; 2–7 – příklady keramiky z destrukce vyplňující místnost 3 (konec 4. – 1. polovina 8. století); 8–9 – keramika ze 13. století pocházející z destrukce byzantské budovy 1 (C9). Kresby autorka.

Obr. 4. Priniatikos Pyrgos, byzantská budova 1, místnost 3: pohár ze slitiny cínu a olova (inv. č. 10-5803). Foto Chronis Papanikolopoulos.

Obr. 5. Priniatikos Pyrgos, byzantská budova 1, místnost 1: stratigrafie výplně a podlah, pohled z východu (srov. obr. 2) (archiv projektu Priniatikos Pyrgos).

Obr. 6. Priniatikos Pyrgos, byzantská budova 1, místnost 1: keramika z kontextu C87 (první podlaha místnosti 1). Foto autorka.

Obr. 7. Priniatikos Pyrgos, byzantská budova 1, zeď C580 oddělující místnosti 1 a 4, vyznačeny jsou související podlahové úrovně (archiv projektu Priniatikos Pyrgos).

Obr. 8. Priniatikos Pyrgos, byzantská budova 1: příklady transportní keramiky (kontext C26, poslední podlaha místnosti 1). Foto autorka.

Obr. 9. Priniatikos Pyrgos, byzantská budova 1: stříbrná miliareuse Leona III. (717–741), průměr 14 mm, inv. č. 08-5190 (archiv projektu Priniatikos Pyrgos).

Obr. 10. Priniatikos Pyrgos, kontext C9 – destrukce byzantské budovy 1: zlomek mísy typu champ-levé, import z Korintu (počátek 13. století). Foto Chronis Papanikolopoulos.

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