

POTTERY AND RITUAL ACTIVITY  
AT PROTOPALATIAL HAGIA TRIADA:  
*A FOUNDATION DEPOSIT AND A SET OF BROKEN RHYTA FROM THE SACELLO*

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the Protopalatial levels uncovered under the LM IIIA so-called Sacello, located in the SE part of the settlement of Hagia Triada. The systematic investigation of these levels, carried out by La Rosa in 1978, brought about the identification of the remains of some Protopalatial rooms, which were originally part of a terraced quarter oriented with the slope. The assessment of the stratigraphy and the study of the related pottery groups has allowed the Author to identify two ceramic assemblages in room a, which can be interpreted as the remains of two different forms of ritual activity. The first assemblage, partly discovered by La Rosa and partly by Banti during her 1958 sounding, was located just N of room  $\alpha$ , and consists of 5 bowls, dated to MM IIA, which had been voluntarily deposited on the virgin soil and arranged in three groups: an inverted bowl, and two pairs of opposing pots. On the basis of the comparison with similar depositions found at the nearby site of Phaistos, it is argued that the assemblage found at Hagia Triada represents a foundation deposit, which seemingly bears witness to a ritual that involved the consumption or deposition of food before the building of a new floor. The second assemblage comprises 4 animal heads belonging to rhyta of the bull-shaped figural type, which were found in a closed stratum found between the two earliest stucco floors of room a. As the only remaining part of the four rhyta, all MM IB in date, is the head, it is suggested that they originally formed a set and that after their use in a ceremonial setting, they had been voluntarily broken in the same point, as part of the ritual.

In despite of the lack of a complete picture of the contexts against which frame the ceremonies detected, on the basis of the vessels examined, they both seem to be linked to some kind of building activity.