

# HAGHIA TRIADA NEL PERIODO MEDIO MINOICO

FILIPPO CARINCI

## ABSTRACT

After one hundred years of excavations and researches on the site, in spite of the relative shortage of data, it has been possible, above all due to the recent campaigns directed by V. La Rosa, to offer a more exhaustive picture of the situation in MM period. The MM IA represents a particularly delicate moment for its development. We know only scarce traces of the settlement, while the data from the cemetery appear much interesting. A massive use of the Tholos A and of its annexes is combined with an intense ceremonial activity in the area of the so called «camerette» South of the tomb, small rooms built in order to keep pottery and other items for ceremonial purpose. This area is connected to a space marked by the presence of two baetyls. Here, ceremonies related to the cult of the ancestors were celebrated, that can be intended as a form of social control in order to purchase manpower on behalf of elitist groups, perhaps involved in the foundation of the Palace at Phaestos. This activity appears to be reduced in MM IB and disappears at the beginnings of MM II, when even the Tholos A is no more used for graves. The smaller Tholos B probably built between the end of MM IA and the beginnings of MM IB, remained the only funerary building for the rest of the period. Between MM IB and MM II the disposition of the settlement along the western slope of the hill and in the terraces where afterwards the Royal Villa was built, is better defined, and Haghia Triada can be classified as a satellite centre of Phaestos.

During the MM II in the North-Eastern Sector recently excavated East of the so called Tomba degli Ori, a paved area, connected to a road layout with a ramp, marked a probably ceremonial space, with a *bema* or *bomòs*, to be intended as related to the area of the baetyls, still in use in this period. In MM II an extension of the settlement toward the northern slope of the hill may be supposed, while further down, beyond the road and toward the cemetery, the old ceremonial area continued to be used with new purposes. Apart from the scanty monumental remains this fact is indirectly testified by the pottery (mostly dumps or fillings, seldom stratified deposits). Among the abundant finds we can point out numerous ceremonial shapes similar to those from the Palace at Phaestos, very likely in use in the nearby area. Particularly important are the fragments of a group of figurines representing women worshipping the goddess or waiting for her epiphany.

At the end of MM IIB Haghia Triada was involved in the events that determined the destruction of the first palaces and to the difficult recovery that followed. Nevertheless the road layout of the north eastern sector was restored, and there are scarcely preserved rests of some structures of this period as well as a rather scarce amount of pottery. Only at the end of the MM

III period, with the foundation of the Villa, Haghia Triada emerges as new administrative political centre of south central Crete. A general evaluation of local handicraft, is based almost exclusively on pottery, since other activities (metallurgy, textile industry, seal engraving, carving of stone vases) are very scarcely documented. The MM pottery recovered from the site shows – within the different classes – exact parallels with Phaestos, an indication of the fact that, in many cases, the same workshops supplied both sites.

Therefore, in the MM period, Haghia Triada appears as the privileged partner of Phaestos, a kind of immediate offshoot of the palatial centre toward the coastal zone of the Mesara plain, in a better position to check the route that from the Lybian sea goes up toward the Palace and the final stretch of the course of the River Ieropotamos. Certainly helped by both the proximity to the main centre of the region and a long tradition of mutual relationship to it, our site was probably provided with its own cult centres, initially still rooted in a local tradition, then more decidedly aligned with the palatial rituals. Apparently we have no clear indication of a local administration, even if, in theory, resident officials, as well as priests or priestesses could exist on site.