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From antiquity to postmodernity

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CHAPTER 4. SECONDARY USE AND REUSE OF ANCIENT CRETAN PITHOI

In this Chapter, I draw upon both literature on EIA and Archaic Cretan societies and from the actual evidence on secondary uses of Cretan pithoi to explore two more different aspects of their consumption: first, I discuss the practice of writing on ancient pithoi to assess proposals for the particularities and their agency; secondly, I overview the evidence of the reuse of Cretan pithoi in later contexts to discuss their heirloom-ability as items intrinsically tied to Cretan households.

4.1. Writing on Cretan pithoi

In the last years, a small number of inscribed pithoi dated from the time of the earliest appearance of alphabetical writing in the 8th to the 6th c. BC, have attracted scholarly attention. These few specimens, which come from the areas of Phaistos, Prinias, Kommos, Azoria and Arkalochori, have recently been used to support arguments for the traditional and establishmentarian character of Cretan literacy, as well as for the significance of ancient Cretan pithoi and their consumption within this specific ideology. To assess these claims, I first cover some of the main issues regarding Cretan inscriptions. I then proceed to assess and further examine the evidence for inscribed pithoi from Crete and beyond.

4.1.1. Laws, literacy and social hierarchy in Archaic Crete

Crete preserves the earliest surviving example of Greek law overall, inscribed on the temple walls of ancient Dreros (7th c. BC) (Demargne and van Effenterre 1937; 1938). Moreover, more than any other region in ancient Greece, Crete has a great quantity of public and legal inscriptions. The most recent comprehensive study on Cretan legal inscriptions from 650 to 400 BC by Gagarin and Perlman (2016) reveals the extent of the evidence: almost all major Archaic sites have produced a remarkable number of legal and public inscriptions carved on stone: Axos, Datala (Aphrati?), Dreros, Eleutherna, Eltynia, Gortyn, Knossos, Lyktos, Phaistos, Prinias have yielded no less than 200 stone inscriptions, all of which are concerned with public affairs, civil rights and obligations, legal procedures, fines, agro-pastoral rights etc. In addition, with the early appearance of legal inscriptions come explicit mentions of regulations to do with specifically Cretan constitutional elements such as the *andreia*, the *kosmoi*, the *hetairiai*, and the *agelai,* as well as to socio-political

divisions amongst populations, such as the citizens, the *apetairoi* (literally meaning those not belonging to the *hetereia*), the foreigners, the serfs and the slaves[150]. Another distinctive feature of Cretan inscriptions is their architectural context and the generally large size of the lettering. Rather than on free-standing monuments, the overwhelming majority of official writing was carved in large letters on the walls of buildings with a public function, thus making inscriptions visible to and readily accessible to a wide population[151]. For example, most of the civil law inscriptions of Gortyn were inscribed on the walls of the temple of Apollo Pythios, perhaps as early as the mid-7th c. BC (Willets 1967). In Dreros, the inscriptions carved on thirteen 1.74m long blocks of grey schist constituted part of the temple of Apollo Delphinios. Not only were these laws visible to the worshipers of the temple, but they could also be seen from the adjacent open terrace which may have served as a space for public meetings (van Effenterre and Demargne 1937). The importance of writing as an official duty to serve the public is famously attested in the Spensithios decree (for which, see discussion in Chapter 3.1.2.). The inscription, which makes special note to the privileges and obligations of Spensithios as a participant of the *andreion*, specifically describes him as the scribe and recorder of sacred and secular public affairs of the '*Dataleis'*, who are tentatively identified with the occupants of the ancient site of Aphrati.

Against this backdrop of rich evidence for public inscriptions, Crete presents a seemingly paradoxical epigraphic phenomenon: the island has produced only scant examples of personal *graffiti*, many of which are out of context and/or not securely dated. Paula Perlman's list of Cretan private inscriptions from the 8th to the early 5th c. BC includes only 42 inscriptions from Aphrati, Eleutherna, Gortyn, Itanos, Knossos, Praisos, Prinias, Phaistos and elsewhere (Perlman 2002, 218-225). Not one of these came from the sites with otherwise numerous public inscriptions, namely Axos, Dreros, Eltynia or Lyktos, and only four came from the wider vicinity of Gortyn. Since Perlman's publication, the inscriptions from Azoria and some minor finds from central and east Crete have only slightly raised the number of what could be

[150] Overviews and discussions on Cretan institutions from inscriptions can be found in Perlman 1992; Chaniotis 2005. For discussions of inscriptions, institutions and social hierarchy in Archaic Crete, see Mandalaki 2004, and Gagarin and Perlman 2016.
[151] On the architectural context of Cretan Archaic laws, see Perlman 2002, 2004b; Gagarin and Perlman 2016, 44-45.

considered as private or unofficial inscriptions; personal names and private types of writing remain rare (Gagarin and Perlman 2016, 169). Most concisely, this reversed relationship between public and personal inscriptions has been described by Chaniotis: '[t]he decline of Crete as a cultural pioneer in the Greek world goes hand in hand with the rise of its fame as a model of law and order. The Cretans did not any longer produce impressive works of art, but they produced more legal inscriptions than the rest of Greece taken together' (Chaniotis 2005, 175).

Because the aforementioned distinctive elements of Cretan epigraphy overlap with the 'Archaic gap', inscriptions of the Archaic period have been the focus of two interrelated lines of inquiry. One set of questions regards whether inscriptional attestations and ancient written evidence can be jointly used as reliable evidence for the island's socio-political structure, and if so, to what degree this evidence represents a reliable picture of a Cretan constitution or variations on a political theme that simultaneously operated across Crete[152]. By extension, these inquiries fall under the wider archaeological discussion which regards the character of Cretan communities and the ideologies formed during the Archaic period. These discussions include the practice of writing on Cretan pithoi.

4.1.2. Pithoi as inscribed media

In a series of papers, Whitley has discussed the contrasting pattern between the wealth of public inscriptions in Archaic Crete and the low archaeological visibility of the archaeology of Crete during the Archaic period (Stoddart and Whitley 1988; Whitley 1997; 1998a; 2001, 250-252; 2017). He argues that the inscriptional habits of the Cretans reflect their distinctly conventional ideology based on conservatism and traditional values of moderation, regulation and austerity, adopted to promote socio-political stability. However, his approach has not met with general consensus amongst scholars. In any case, Cretan inscribed pithoi have loomed large in relevant discussions.

In the earliest of his papers, Whitley presented a statistical analysis of inscriptions from Crete and Attica from 700 to 450 BC and classified them according to type and content (table 8). His analysis demonstrated some very pronounced

[152] See, for example, discussions in Perlman 1992; Chaniotis 2005; Mandalaki 2004, 18-28; Erickson 2011, esp. 383.

differences between the two regions both with regard to the relative frequency and the types of inscriptions: Cretan inscriptions are predominately of legal character, whereas *graffiti*, dedicatory and funerary inscriptions are extremely rare. By contrast, Attica, already from the 7th century BC, preserves numerous inscriptions of personal type such as dedicatory and onomastic *graffiti* and *dipinti*; conversely, legal texts of any kind were exceptionally few and they all date from 550 BC onwards. For Whitley, this was indicative of two distinct modes of literacy. On the one hand, particularly from the 5th c., the habit of writing in Attica was widespread and integrated with a general, social literacy that was not restricted to a few professional writers. On the other hand, the sheer amount of public inscriptions from Crete and the simultaneous rarity of personal ones demonstrated a limited access to writing as a profession, one reserved for a special, 'scribal class', represented by Spensithios and his descendants. These patterns, stated Whitley, are strongly tied to differences in socio-political organization: in Athens, the wide use of literacy went hand in hand with the rise of democracy. However, in Crete, despite the large number of public law inscriptions, democracy was never established and writing was largely practised towards authoritarian rather than innovatory purposes. In other words, writing was a means to preserve a stable political system and a static political order, thus echoing aspects of a cultural conservatism based on traditional, ancestral values (ibid. 771).

One decade after his first publication, Whitley (1997; 1998a) returned to the connection between Cretan ideologies and epigraphic texts by elaborating on laws and literacy[153], in the context of a Cretan political formation. Updating his previous evidence by adding the then newest inscriptions from Attica, Sparta and Crete, he interpreted regional epigraphic patterns as reflecting cultural and social differences (Whitley 1997, 641-642, 646, 649, tables 1-6). Again, particular emphasis was placed on the epigraphic disparities between Attica and Crete: writing in Archaic Athenian inscriptions was used for a wide variety of reasons which include poetic, personal and narrative expressions. For example, the famous after-firing *graffito* of the Dipylon oinochoe, one of the earliest known examples of the Greek alphabet (ca 740 – 730

[153] The meaning and use of the term *literacy* have been much debated matters. Relative issues have been addressed by Harris (1989) who distinguished three main categories of population: literate, illiterate and semi-literate. To cut through the confusion Whitley (1997, 639) defined literacy and its use as 'the ability to read and write short texts'; this, however, does not necessarily imply one's ability to comprehend long and complex texts.

BC), is a text largely written in a hexameter, the standard verse metre of the Homeric epics[154]. Moreover, Attic inscriptions allow for the personal expression of individuals: owner's names are far from few, and in the late Archaic period (late 6th c.), some painters and potters signed their works[155]. In addition, numerous dedications and inscribed funerary monuments survive (ibid. 642, 645, table 2). What is more, especially from 650 BC onward, there are quite a few Attic vases which incorporate function with epigraphic and literary texts, in a fashion otherwise known as 'collective representations'. This connection between '*Bild und Lied'*, as first coined by Carl Robert (1881) and later treated by Snodgrass (1988) and Sorvinou-Inwood (1991), is attested in many cases of *dipinti* on some decorated Attic vases, where texts act as labels for the clarification of the depicted visual imagery or for the accentuation of the narrative scenes. These three features of Attic inscriptions – namely the poetic, the onomastic, and the narrative – pointed to widespread literacy amongst the Athenian population and to diversity in the use of the Greek alphabet, most commonly employed for the personal expression of individuals. In short, by Whitley's analysis, literacy in Attica was 'above all else personal' and in unison with the 'oral, narrative and visual culture of the time (ibid. 644). On the contrary, Crete of the same period presented a greatly dissimilar epigraphic picture. Private or unofficial inscriptions occur in the early period of the alphabet between 750-600 BC, but they almost disappear during 600-450BC. Moreover, inscriptions with a narrative role are almost completely absent. Conversely, legal inscriptions rise exponentially in the 6th c. 'It is a remarkable fact', Whitley wrote, 'that the heyday of public, written law in Archaic Crete – the sixth century – coincides with the virtual absence of all other forms of writing. This is exactly what we would expect in a situation where few were literate, perhaps because literacy was the preserve of a scribal class' (ibid. 655).

This contrasting pattern between Attic and Cretan inscriptions led Whitley to ponder the following question: if literacy reached the wider Athenian population,

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[154] '*δς νυν όρχηστών πάντων άταλώτατα παίζει'*, variously translated as 'whoever of all the dancers now frolics most friskily/delicately'. It is assumed that marked the vessel as a prize in a dancing competition. See Powell 1988, esp. 83-86 for the various readings proposed from 1880 to 1983. For a more recent review of the inscription on the Dipylon oinochoe, see Binek 2017. Whitley's proposal for the main use of writing in Attica fits with past theories that favour the original adoption of the alphabet for the transmission of Homeric poetry (e.g. Powell 1991) or for its use within sympotic contexts (e.g. Murray 1994).

[155] For the latest detailed list of signatures of painters and potters on Attic vases from the early 6th to the mid-4th c. BC, see Bolmarcich and Muskett 2017.

what does the absence of personal inscriptions and dedications means for the case of Crete? And what is the purpose of publically displayed laws in an island where democracy never emerged, and with a population which was, for the most part, illiterate? His answer to this question was laws on stone should be viewed first as monuments and then as texts: monumental inscriptions reveal Cretan civic ideologies pertaining to the Cretan *polis*, which, unlike Attica, were composed of oligarchs who rejected conspicuous aristocratic display of their material culture. In Archaic Crete, the aristocracy either failed or did not need to entrench themselves, and the general populace conformed to a particularly traditional, establishmentarian socio-political system (ibid. 659). The same modes of conservatism and traditionalism, Whitley believes, underlie the public display of Cretan laws: cut into monumental structures, they carried a sense of continuity and stability, they were publicly displayed as symbols of the Cretan *politeia* and they acted as the sturdy unambiguous testimony to this traditional and conservative character (Whitley 2001, 525). The laws were, therefore, an implicit or explicit declaration of an ideology that promoted austerity in favour of communal stability. This suggests that, unlike Athens, Cretan communities did not engage in inter-class conflict; rather, they were found upon strong bonding customs and tradition for the benefit of a literary elite and social cohesion. As such, Cretan laws served as much a practical as a symbolic purpose. Intelligible only to the small group of persons from the ruling families of the elite, the monumental inscriptions largely acted as restrictions on potential inter-aristocratic competition. To the wider population, they were also the visible testaments and the reminders of a sense of community, continuity and belonging.

The argument for the traditional character of Cretan communities finds some support in some of the ancient sources[156], but in modern scholarship, this has received substantial criticism. Whereas Kotsonas (2002, 55), for example, supports the idea that legal texts suggest a general agreement between members of the elite, acting as a form of self-regulating mechanism rather than for preventive or suppressive causes, others disagree with the hypothesis for limited literate population on Crete. For

[156] Adherence to tradition built upon mythical connections of the islanders with their past, particularly in matters of law, is implied by Plato (*Laws* 1.624), in a segment where the Cretan politician and lawgiver from Knossos, Clinias, says that his people ascribe the authorship of their legal arrangements to Zeus and to the legendary lawgiver of Crete, Minos. Aristotle (*Pol.* 2.1271b) confirms the connection of Cretans to their mythical past in writing that 'even now [Cretans] use these laws in the same manner, in the belief that Minos first instituted this code of Laws'.

example, Erickson (2010a, 305, fn. 163) believes that the comparison between the Athenian and Cretan inscriptions is not particularly relevant, since the ideological message of Archaic Cretan laws differed considerably from the democratic ideals of Classical Athens. He also rejects the idea that the great number of monumental laws attests to a self-regulation by an elite to tone down their ostentatious display of wealth and status. Instead, Erickson argues that 'the codification for legal procedures can equally serve as a justification for aristocratic rule since the rise of political institutions need not represent a threat to the elite classes' (ibid. 305).

Paula Perlman (2004b) adhered to the idea that the monumentality of the inscribed walls served the purpose of attracting readers, but argued that the literate population was actually not as small as Whitley assumed. By examining the similarities between the law inscriptions from Gortyn, Axos and Dreros she proposed that there is, in fact, a relationship between literacy and public inscriptions (ibid. 187-188). She based this conclusion on the arrangement of the writings on single lines and their clear paragraphing (as elements aimed at facilitating the reading and the understanding of the inscribed text), as well as from the increased number of private inscriptions from the 6th c BC. Zinon Papakonstantinou (2002) agrees with Perlman that the population of Crete was much more literate than generally assumed, but challenged the monumental character of publicly displayed laws and situated them in a context of inter-aristocratic strife. His proposal was based on the fact that the socio-political context of written and publicly displayed laws necessitated if not the literacy, at least the public awareness of legislations and decisions made by the *demos*, which finds further support in the few commercial and personal graffiti found on Crete. For Papakonstantinou, the lack of evidence for private inscriptions does not indicate their absence; rather it is related to the poor survival of the materials onto which such private inscriptions were carved. Similarly, the wealth of official, public writings should be attributed to the durability of the engraved materials, such as limestone. He further believes that the number of Classical and Hellenistic *graffiti* found outside Crete but produced by Cretan mercenaries (the so-called '*cartes de visite*' inscribed on the walls and columns of temples throughout Egypt) are indirect testimonies to the

fact that 'common Cretans attained during the course of their lifetime at least some modest reading and writing skills' (ibid. 138)[157].

More recently and partly as a response to these criticisms, Whitley (2017) returned to his original thesis and revisited his tabulated evidence by adding more, new inscriptional evidence from Crete, as known in 2013 (table 9)[158]. The annotated table now raised the number of early and late Archaic non-legal Cretan inscriptions, chiefly of *graffiti* and dedications, but Whitley does not use this to repudiate his main argument on the character of Cretan literacy. The addition of the 74 inscribed *graffiti* from Kommos (late 8-early 7th c. BC) and of the 17 personal inscriptions from Azoria (late 6th or early 5th c. BC) certainly raise the sum of personal inscriptions; however, they do not radically change the overall picture. Not all of the newest epigraphic evidence is particularly informative, and in their entirety, the character of inscriptions shows that literacy was mostly practised for public purposes, whereas individual expression was somehow suppressed or at least discouraged. For example, at Kommos, with the exception of two fragments[159], the majority of inscriptions are either on imports or pots written in non-Cretan alphabet (mainly in the epichoric alphabets of Central Greece and in Boeotian script) and this includes one inscription with the owner's name and two inscriptions with names in genitive (Csapo et al. 2000, 102-103, nos. 7 and 22, 27 respectively). Votive inscriptions also remain rare. From 650 to 600 BC, only a total of 15 dedications survive and from these, only two are written in the standard '*anetheke'* formula [Whitley 2017, table 4.3, dedications (a)][160], whereas the rest do not conform to this dedicatory style. And, while the inscriptions on the armour of Aphrati contain names of individuals and indeed represent a case of what Chaniotis (2013, 9) has described as 'boasting' with a certain character of individualism, they are not dedicatory in the strictest sense. The proud

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[157] For criticism on Whitley's ideas, see also Johnston 2013, esp. 433 and, more recently, Gagarin and Perlman 2016, 56-62.

[158] The revised table includes the addition to private inscriptions added by Perlman (2002, 218-225), inscriptions from Eltyna, Kommos, Azoria, and Praisos, and a votive inscription written in the '*anetheke'* formula on a bronze cauldron from the Idean cave (ca. 550 BC) (Whitley 2017, 91, fn. 92-93)

[159] Only two of the early graffiti from Kommos have been identified as local, judging by the letter form of the texts. These include a post-firing inscription on a black-glazed early 7th c. cup and the pithos sherd discussed in detail further below (Csapo et al. 2000, 105; 112, n. 8 and 118, n. 30).

[160] Dedicatory inscriptions in the '*anetheke* formula' (as included in Whitley's statistical analysis) include: a stone base from Aphrati, presumably dedicated to Artemis, and a bronze cauldron from Panormos dedicated to Apollo by a certain Thalios (or Tharios), dated to ca. 500 BC, but written in Aeginetan script. See Whitley 1997, 650-651, fn. 92, 94; 2017, 318, fn. 35.

writers of the inscriptions are individual-warriors who are dedicated to the service of the *polis*, reflecting a primary militaristic function. It has been argued that the inscribed bronzes belonged to a public ambiance, displayed as *spolia* on the walls of a 7th c. public building, such as an *andreion* or a hearth-temple (Viviers 1994, 248).

Likewise, there is an extreme rarity of inscribed gravestones, with only five surviving from the periods between 650 – 450 BC[161]; and of the three inscribed tombstones from Kydonia (end of 6th – beginning of 5th c.), only two follow the typical commemoration formula (έμι=I am of) and they are written in an Aeginetan script[162]. A note should also be made on ceramics associated with Cretan banqueting. Contrary to the Athenian repertoire, pottery associated with venues of Cretan commensality is said to be restricted to the type of the basic, high-necked cup, and their overwhelming majority is neither inscribed nor decorated[163]. The latter, as Erickson (2010a, esp. 325-326) pointed out, shows a divergence from the competitive, ostentatious and lavish nature of the Greek *symposion* and partly verifies the pattern of a Cretan comprehensively austere style which Whitley has called elsewhere an 'ostentatiously plain' pottery production (Whitley 2004, 434).

In this latest review of the epigraphic evidence, Whitley adhered to his main thesis, namely that Cretan public inscriptions were both monumental and impersonal and that literacy was restricted for public purposes. In support of this line of arguing, he places special attention on a small body of inscribed Cretan pithoi and pithos fragments dated between the earliest appearances of writing, in the 8th c., to the 6th c. BC. This evidence has been taken to comprise another testimony for Crete's socio-political hierarchy and austere ideology. The Cretan pithos, he claims, 'is one of the few Cretan objects that is regularly inscribed' (Whitley 2017, 94). Elsewhere, he also

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[161] Prinias (Lebessi 1976, 21-22, 103, pls. 32-33), Kydonia (*IC* 10.7, 10.10 and 10.13), and a single epigram found at Chersonessos (*LSAG2* 314 n. 20).

[162] Αύτομέ//δεός ἐμι (IC II 10.7), Σᾶμα Μελισσί//δος ἐμί (IC II 10.13). Their dating roughly coincided with the attested colonization of Kydonia by the Aiginetans who overpowered and enslaved the Samians as mentioned by Herodotus (Hdt 3.59). Therefore, these are probably commemorations of deceased Aiginetan residents and not of Cretans (Erickson 2010a, 392).

[163] Next to the pithos from Phaistos discussed below, which may or may not be related to banqueting, we ought to add at least one case of an owner's inscription on the rim of large lekane from Azoria. The lekane was recovered from the Archaic deposit in trench B2200/2300, just outside a kitchen area of the Service Building of the putative a*ndreion* (Haggis et al. 2007b, 290-291, fig. 37, fn. 112; 313-314). The completely preserved name ΤΙΜΑΣ may be a proper name of the owner or, if in the genitive form (meaning 'of honour'), the name of the individual honoured. West (2015, 153) hypothesised that it may also be read as ΤΧΜΑΣ, in a consonant cluster that is reminiscent of Eteocretan script, and in a manner similar to the inscriptions on the handles of a pithos discussed below.

highlighted the differences of Cretan pithoi with their counterparts from other regions, specifically with those from the Cyclades. Unlike Cycladic pithoi, which were never inscribed, Cretan pithoi were regularly inscribed in a region 'where the practice of inscribing anything at all seems to have been very restricted' (Whitley 2018a, 78). Special mention is made of the so-called 'Erpetidamos pithos', which was found at the Hellenistic destruction horizon at Phaistos, but carries an inscription that dates to the late 8th or early 7th c. BC. Currently, this is the oldest known alphabetic inscription on Crete which reads as 'Ερπετιδαμοπαιδοπιλαζοδε'. Experts read this as '[this is the pithos/property of] Erpetidamos (son?) of Paidopila'. This wording, says Whitley, 'avoids the first person, a choice that is perhaps augury of things to come' (Whitley 2017, 94). In the light of Whitley's claims and in the context of issues pertaining to the epigraphic habits of ancient Cretans described so far, the evidence on inscriptions on Cretan pithoi and pithos fragments deserve further scrutiny as two main questions arise: firstly, is there enough evidence to justify proposals for their special treatment in Archaic Crete? And secondly, are inscriptions on Cretan pithoi informative about modes of literacy and social hierarchy? In the following sections, I draw from Whitley's main thesis to examine these two aspects.

4.1.3. Inscriptions on Archaic Greek pithoi

In order to determine the validity of Whitley's claim, namely that a) Cretan pithoi are regularly inscribed and b) that in this respect they differ from storage jars produced elsewhere in Greece, I review and compare the inscribed pithoi from Crete and from other areas of the Greek world during the Archaic-early Classical period. Both lists are complemented with evidence from the Hellenistic period, as well as with some ethnographic observations. This evidence is then collectively used to explore aspects of the consumption of Cretan pithoi, particularly with regards to modes of Cretan literacy and to the monumental value of pithoi as inscribed media.

4.1.3.1. Inscribed pithoi from Crete

Three complete pithoi, one large pithos neck fragment, one pithos body fragment and two pithos handles comprise some of the few examples of inscribed Cretan pottery. Based mostly on letter-forms and their archaeological context, the inscriptions and the pithoi have been dated from the very early stages of alphabetic

writing until the late Archaic period, namely between the 8th c. to the late 6th c. – beginning of the 5th c. BC. Below, I provide an overview of the individual specimens and their excavation contexts and I discuss the inscriptions and their readings by epigraphists. These are presented in chronological order (from the earliest to the latest).

Phaistos

The earliest known example of inscribed pithos is the inscription on a complete pithos found at Phaistos. Based strictly on typology, this pithos must be dated to the Geometric period (see Chapter 3.2.) and accordingly the inscription has been dated by most scholars to the 8th c. BC (Levi 1969a, 176; Catalano 1979; Woodard 2014, 16) (fig. 43, 73). Both the pot and its inscription are exceptional in a number of ways. Firstly, not only does this specimen represent the first inscribed piece of its kind, but it is also the earliest attestation of the Cretan alphabet and one of the earliest datable inscriptions in the Greek world overall (Masson 1976; Jeffery 1990, 469). Another distinctive element of the vessel, to which I return in section 5.2., regards its discovery in a Hellenistic context, which attests to the long preservation and subsequent reuse of pithoi.

The Phaistos pithos was found on the Hellenistic destruction layer (*vano l*), close to the Theatral area northeast of the Minoan Palace of Phaistos. It was in one of the rooms of a large edifice built west of a large square (known as *Piazzale I*), which has been conventionally called a *megaron* after its resemblance to the Minoan *megaron* (Levi 1969a).The pithos was accompanied by another, smaller Hellenistic pithos and an olpe. The 0.50m long inscription is carved in retrograde along the side of the shoulder just below the neck of the vessel:

Ερπετιδᾱμō Παιδοφιλᾱμ οδε

Erpetidamo Paidophila(s?) ode[164]

The final letter of the second name (*Παιδοπιλα*) seems slightly corrupted, causing confusion and, consequently, different interpretations of the inscription. The earliest of these interpretations, such as those proposed by Levi (1969a), Masson (1976) and Gallavotti (1979, 81-82), asserted that this is a pre-firing *graffito* and that

[164] *SEG* 26.1050; in literature, the second word is found in transliterations of the Greek *ph* and *p*, namely Paido*ph*ilas and Paido*p*ilas.

the final letter of the second word is an 'M'. This favours the identification of the inscription as one that stresses the familial line of the owner, by citing a second name (in the genitive) that originates from the adjective *paidopila*, meaning the lover of boys or the paedophile. This allows for two readings: 'This [is the pithos] of Paidopila, [the wife?] of Erpetidamos' or 'This [is the pithos] of Erpetidamos [the son?] of Paidopila'. Similarly, Guarducci (1974, 331-332) read two proper names and interpreted the inscription as a type of 'possession formula' which indicates the ownership of two spouses. An almost completely different (but less accepted) meaning of the text was ascribed by Koumanoudis (1983) who excluded the possibility of the genitive form and the metronym, and instead suggested that *paidophilas* is a noun which refers to the large size of the pithos. He therefore translated the text as an indication of the owner's (Erpetidamos'), great appreciation for his possession. Also, Catalano (1971) suggested the reading of 'This [is the pithos] of Erpetidamos, the son of the lover of boys', assuming that the fourth letter of the second word may have been a Greek *lambda* (Λ) which was later jokingly transformed into a *delta* (Δ), thereby altering the proper name of Erpetidamos' father into the adjective 'paidophilas'. The reading, the interpretation of the text, and the time this was rendered on the pithos have been challenged by the latest study on the *graffito* published by Manganaro (1995). He believes that this is a post-firing text and that the final letter of the second word is the letter San (Ϻ), an alternative to the Greek *sigma* (ibid. 141-142). In such case, the interpretation would need to be revised and instead be read as 'This [is the pithos of] Erpetidamos, the Paidophile'[165].

The inscription and the pithos can be perhaps more fully appreciated in the light of its archaeological context. As mentioned, the centuries that separate the original production date of the pithos from the Hellenistic horizons of its findspot indicate the preservation of this vase for multiple generations, perhaps as a valuable family heirloom. On this basis, Whitley (2017, 94; 2018b, 80) favoured Masson's reading of the inscription as a metronym and argued that it is a testimony of the passing of the pithos from one generation to the other, either through the female or the male line. Nikola Cucuzza (2005, 304, 313) took this argument further and connected

[165] Chaniotis (2002, 54) believes that the interpretation of the text ought to remain open. The most recent analysis of ancient Cretan alphabets by Androniki Oikonomaki (2010, 479) favours Manganaro's reading.

the vessel and its inscription to the diachronic habitation in the urban centre at Phaistos. In the context of a Hellenistic *andreion*, which may have had a predecessor in the area already from the 7th c., he argued that '*paidopilas*' is a synonym to the '*paidonomos'* (supervisor of education) (ibid. 36). According to Ephorus, this was the leading male figure in each Cretan *andreion*, responsible for the military training of the boys (*the agelai*)[166] . In the same segment, Ephorus notes that an important aspect of this training and education included ritualized acts of pederasty, reserved for the aristocracy as a form of initiation of the youth to the institution of the *andreion*[167].

Prinias

A near contemporary (but probably slightly later) to the pithos from Phaistos, is the inscribed pithos neck north of the Patela in Prinias (fig. 74). This large fragment was found by the Italian excavation team within room NF6 which constitutes part of a larger Archaic domestic edifice dated to the 6th c. BC, in the area conventionally named *terrazza III* (Rizza 2008, 92, NF6). The pre-firing and 0.65cm long inscription is provisionally read as --*]ΕΤΕΟΚΕΡΑΜΕΥΣ* and it has been most recently dated by Androniki Oikonomaki (2010, 667) to the end of the 8th – beginning of the 7th c. BC. Currently, there is no certain interpretation of the inscription. For example, Oikonomaki hypothesized that it may be of a votive character, but she considers the possibility that it may be a potter's signature (ibid. 431, 667). Giovanni Marginesu (2010, 71-101) supports the latter, and reads the inscription as – – –] ιεζε ὸ κεραμεύς (*the potter made),* wherein *[epo]ieze* would be an epichoric variant for *epoiese* (ibid. 89).

If the inscription on the pithos from Prinias is in fact a craftsman's signature, then this constitutes our earliest such example on Crete and one of the earliest examples in the Greek world overall. It is only clearly preceded by the signature of a potter on the bowl fragment from Pithekoussai on Ischia, which bears the *dipinto*]ΙΝΟΣ Μ'ΕΠΟΙΕΣΕ, [(a man whose name ends in -) inos made me], dated from 720 to 700 BC (Osborne and Pappas 2007, 135-197, fig. 5.3). Provided this hypothesis is correct, then this pithos neck and the inscribed cauldron handle from the sanctuary of

[166] Ephorus, as cited by Strabo 10.4.20. Cretan pederasty is also mentioned as a form of state-imposed regulation by Aristotle (Pol. 2.127a 22-24), meant to control the population through the promotion of love and sexual desire into relations between males.
[167] Aristotle, Pol. 2.127a 22-24.

Syme Viannou (mid- 7th c. BC), with the writing ΔΑΜΟΘΕΤΟΣ ΕΠΟΗΣΕΝ Ο ΔΑΤΑΛΕΣ (made by Damothetos from Datala)[168], are our earliest and only examples of craftsmen signatures on Crete.

In the context of current debates on Cretan literacy, the case of the Prinias pithos and the presence of a craftsman's signature, especially at the early stages of the Cretan alphabet, invite reflection on the two main concerns. The first regards the degree of literacy amongst a 'lower class' of the population and specifically artisans. The second regards the use of writing in a non-public context, i.e. a private one. As I discuss in the final part of this section, I would argue that this inscription is not only evidence for the personal, non-legislative use of writing on pithoi, but it is also evidence for the boastful expression of the craftsman's skills, thus placing pithos makers within a well-acknowledged class of the population.

Kommos

South of Prinias, from the coastal site of Kommos, comes an inscribed pithos sherd dated to the 7th c. BC (fig. 75). The sherd is part of the large assemblage of pre- and post-firing inscriptions on pottery recovered from Kommos, noteworthy for the presence of inscriptions in cult contexts and for their early dating to the 8th and 7th c. BC. The specific pithos fragment was found together with 32 inscribed sherds which were concentrated in a dump south of Temple B; the dump was filled with ash and remnants of meals. The inscription preserves part of the post-firing *graffito - αι vacat | πα* – which runs centrally along the surface of the fragment (Csapo et al. 2000, 18, n. 30). Neither the orientation of the lettering (which cannot be determined), nor the fragmentary state of the fragment help the interpretation of the text. Eric Csapo, who studied the EIA-Archaic inscribed pottery from Kommos, suggests that because no other pithos fragments were found in the dump and because there is a high possibility that the inscribed text continued (but is not preserved), the fragment may have been selectively used as an *ostracon,* perhaps bearing the name of its dedicant or of a female deity as suggested by the ending –αι (ibid. 119). This is a possibility we cannot rule out since as I will discuss below, the presentation of pithoi as votive offerings to other Greek sanctuaries is not uncommon.

[168] SEG 52.864. Lebessi 1973, 191, pl. 193γ; Oikonomaki 2010, 441, n.2.

Due to its highly micaceous fabric, the fragment is thought to be a possible import from the Cyclades, but the writing, and particularly the Cretan form of *π*, finds parallels in other early Cretan inscriptions, such as the armour of Aphrati and other inscriptions on pottery from Gortyn (Hoffmann 1972; Oikonomaki 2010, 507-508, n.30). This led Csapo to suggest that the actual vessel was made elsewhere but the writing on the fragment was inscribed by 'a Cretan hand' perhaps by a local of Kommos (Csapo et al. 2000, 105, 118). However, I remain sceptical about the interpretation of the sherd as an off-island (Cycladic?) import. Although I have not been able to personally inspect the fabric of this sherd, the petrographic analysis presented in Chapter 2 has shown the possibility that a coarse micaceous fabric, identified in pithoi excavated at Aphrati, Lyktos and Knossos, was dominant in central Crete during the Archaic period. We may therefore need to revise the hypothesis on the provenance of this fragment and investigate the possibility that the piece from Kommos actually comes from central Crete. A Cretan provenance has also been assumed by Alan Johnston (2013, 430), who follows Csapo in dating the *graffito* to the 7th c. but identifies the fragment as part of an earlier Bronze Age pithos. Since no other fragments of the pithos were found in the dump, Johnston suggested that the fragment is part of a Minoan pithos that was preserved as heirloom and used as an *ostracon.*

Azoria

One of the most recently excavated inscriptions on pots and pithoi come from Azoria. Overall, the site has yielded 17 short inscriptions (15 *graffiti* and 2 *dipinti*) dated from the late 6th or early 5th c. BC, which have been studied in detail by William West (2015). The majority of the inscriptions came from well-stratified 6th and early 5th c. contexts, thereby providing a broad but accurate terminus *ante quem* from their use and production (Haggis et al. 2011a, 58). Most of the inscribed fragments derive from public buildings, and specifically from the service complexes of the kitchen areas and the storerooms. Two inscribed vertical pithos handles were recovered from one such area, in room D300, which the excavators identify as a public olive-press facility (Haggis 2013, 78-79; see also discussion in Chapter 3.4). The two handles were probably part of the same pithos, but they were found in different areas of the same trench (D339.5, D339.4, D342.21) (fig. 76); one was found in the destruction deposit of the room and the other was reused, apparently as a means

to reinforce part of the wall of a slab-built bin. The latter handle was adjoined to a large pithos sherd consisting of part of the neck and rim, which was decorated with a centaur rendered in relief (fig. 77).

Both inscriptions are rendered pre-firing and are identical to one another, with the letters *ΞPTAK* scratched vertically along the handles, in a form of writing that is dated to the late 6th or early 5th c. BC (Haggis et al. 2011a, 57–58; West 2015, 4). One of the letters (*Xi*) occurs in the epichoric alphabet of Eteocretan Praisos and similarly, the unusual cluster of consonants pointed to the Eteocretan script that is testified by a few alphabetic inscriptions found at Dreros and Praisos (Haggis et al. 2011a, 58). West (2015, 155) believes that this is a complete text which may be an abbreviation of a potter's name or of a commercial mark.

In addition, one inscribed pithos came from the storage room A1200 of the 'Communal Dining Building' complex of Azoria. The complete (restored) vessel has a short, double-letter pre-firing (?) *graffito* on its neck. The scratched letters are PH, which should be read as *ρ* and *η* ('*rhe*'). Like the letters on the pithos handles, these may also be an abbreviation of a name, written by a Cretan hand. The form of the second letter is used in the 5th c. BC (West 2015, 153).

Arkalochori

Conforming to this pattern of rarity, examples from the later Archaic period, namely during or after the 6th c., remain scarce but not altogether absent. The most well-known specimen is an impressively large decorated pithos from Arkalochori in Pediada, which has been tentatively dated to the late Archaic – early Classical period (6th – early 5th c. BC) (fig. 78). The pithos preserves much of its very elaborate decoration and two after-firing *graffiti*. Thus, so far, it constitutes the earliest and best known example in Cretan ceramics to combine text with visual narrative. Fragments of this (today restored) pithos were recovered from the Late Classical/Hellenistic settlement at the hill of Prophitis Elias (Galanaki et al. 2017), which also produced numerous 7th – 6th c. pithos fragments from Hellenistic destruction layers. The assemblage, including the inscribed pithos under discussion, is a subject treated in more detail further below as a case-study for the heirloom-able status of Cretan pithoi.

The inscribed pithos, or '*pithamphora'* as termed by Simantoni-Bournia who studied the vessel[169], was recovered from a dwelling at the northeast of the hill of Prophitis Elias, in the northeast corner of a storeroom. It preserved much of its front side and it was restored to an estimated height of 1.91m. Unlike most of the 7th c. pithoi from Crete, whose decoration was neatly impressed or achieved by the use of moulds, a large part of the decoration on the Arkalochori pithos was rendered freehand, in addition to a roulette and a stamp which were employed to create the egg-and-dart motif on the rim and to perfect parts of the pictorial representations of the body. Equally unusual – and in fact unparalleled in Cretan pottery – are the two elaborate relief representations of pastoral scenes set on friezes on the neck and the belly, both of which are placed only on the front, visible part of the vase. The decoration on the neck is set in a large panel, depicting a scene of two antithetical horses separated by their groom, a young beardless man dressed in an unbelted tunic, who bends to the right (from the perspective of the spectator) and gathers the ropes by which he prepares to lead away the two horses. On the belly, the decoration comprises of six zones divided by quadruple relief bands: the upper zones consists of series of running spirals ending in panther heads, followed by frieze which encloses pairs of antithetical walking or battering rams. The lower zones consist of horizontal zigzags, running spirals, a row of empty rectangular metopes and undulant clay bands. In general, quadrupeds and animal friezes are not rare themes in representations of Greek relief vases from the Late Geometric period until at least the 6th c. BC[170]; however, the very distinctive decorative themes on the friezes of this pithos and some anachronisms that accompany a few individual characteristics of the animal figures (such as the naturalistic representation of the head of the rams versus their stylized body) are quite unique features. This makes the dating of this pithos particularly difficult. Lacking comparative examples, Simantoni-Bournia relied mainly on its excavation context and dated it to the last quarter of the 6th or to the transition from the 6th to the 5th c. (Galanaki et al. 2017, 218). The Arkalochori pithos seems to share some typological and decorative similarities with a pithos from Kastelli in Pediada,

[169] Inv. n. Π 329344. On the term 'pithos-amphora' *('πιθαμφορέας')* employed by Simantoni-Bournia, the technical characteristics and details of decoration, see Galanaki et al. 2017, 206 -225, esp. fn. 43-44.

[170] See a collection of themes, discussion and references in Simantoni-Bournia 2017.

displayed at the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion[171]. Therefore, the two pieces are assumed to be the product of a single workshop in Central Crete, and were perhaps manufactured by the same team of pithos makers. Based on stylistic criteria, both pithoi are attributed to the artistic tradition of Aphrati (Galanaki et al. 2017, 216, 218).

The two inscriptions on the Arkalochori pithos have been examined by Charalambos Kritzas. Although not particularly telling, the first inscription is a 0.03m wide *graffito* in the shape of a sidelong *hypsilon*, scratched under the left handle (Galanaki et al. 2017, 223) (fig. 79). The second and more informative *graffito* is the one scratched beneath the neck of the rightmost ram on the frieze of the belly. It is written retrograde in letters of the epichoric alphabet and reads as *CSOM ΠῖοϚ* (fig. 80). In accordance to the dating of the pithos, the form of the letters is dated to the second half of the 6th c. BC. Kritzas interprets the word *ΠῖοϚ* as the name of the ram, a form of the poetic word *πίων* (meaning plump/well-fed), often used in reference to livestock as a way to signify rich agropastoral production. This adjective is also associated with a well-known custom of early modern and modern stockmen, usually practised right before the mating period of rams, where the animals are kept in isolation to be intensively fed as a way to build up their stamina for the ensuing and savagely violent battle for the position of herd-leader. Based on this inscription and its correlations, Kritzas interprets the scene on the frieze as a scene of this battle and further assumes that the opposing ram was also named in non-preserved *graffito*. Like the battering rams on the belly, he also considers the horses of the neck frieze as mares, as may be suggested by the absence of genitals and by the slightly raised tail as an indication of their going into heat and in wait for the stallion. With respect to its iconography, the closest Cretan parallel can be found in metalwork on one of the early 7th c. BC bronze votive shields from the Idean Cave sanctuary, on which Kunze identified two hunting scenes (Galanaki et al. 2017, 221; Kunze 1931, 14, n. 10, pl. 26-27).

In all, the pithos from Arkalochori is the only known case of Cretan inscribed pottery to which could be taken to incorporate and connect aspects of function, iconography and text: as a container of animal produce, it is embellished with agropastoral scenes, accompanied by the name of the animal it depicts. Provided the

[171] Inv. n. 1117. See references in Galanaki et al. 2017, 216, fn. 108.

interpretation of the *graffito* is correct, this pithos is the only known example from Archaic Crete to integrates functional, decorative and textual elements; this could be viewed as statement of the potter's and the inscriber's intention to depict the seminal forces of nature on a pithos, as well as to stress the importance of livestock and agricultural wealth in the livelihood of ancient Cretan communities.

At a first glance, this short list of inscribed pithoi from Crete is not particularly informative. The texts are very fragmentary and not well-understood in terms of meaning, and the surviving examples are far too few to form any safe conclusions regarding the use and degree of literacy. However, we can discern two noteworthy elements of pithoi as inscribed media: firstly, it is particularly intriguing that two of the earliest attestations of the Greek alphabet are cut into the Cretan pithoi of Phaistos and Prinias. Both of these inscriptions can be considered non-legal or unofficial texts and, as far as we can currently tell, the same is true for the character of the rest of the inscriptions on the pithoi from Kommos, Azoria and Arkalochori. Secondly, it is interesting that we encounter these inscriptions on pithoi in the first place, since generally the practice of inscribing long texts on coarse wares is not commonly attested and, especially for the case of Crete, private inscriptions are mostly encountered on bronzes rather than pots[172]. In this sense, Whitley's claim that Cretan pithoi are '*regularly* inscribed' (emphasis mine) (Whitley 2018a, 78) is not entirely dismissible. Lastly, with regards to their context, it is noteworthy that throughout the Archaic period we find inscribed pithoi in both private domestic contexts and in contexts tentatively associated with public venues related to the *andreion*. In order to fully appreciate these inscriptions and to evaluate their significance in Cretan pithoi, it is essential that we first consider the evidence from inscriptions on pithoi in other regions of Archaic Greece, presented immediately below.

4.1.3.2. Inscriptions on pithoi beyond Crete

A number of non-Cretan inscribed jars with complete or partly preserved *graffiti* occur from the 7th c. onward in various regions of Greece. In many of these

[172] According to Perlman's 2002 catalogue of private inscriptions on Crete, of the 42 personal then-known inscriptions, eight are scratched on pots, two on terracotta figurines, 16 on bronze (14 of which are from the cache of inscribed bronzes allegedly found at Aphrati), and the rest are on rock or stone (Perlman 2002, 218-225).

cases, pithoi and pithos fragments have been found mostly as offerings in sanctuaries[173], and more rarely in cemeteries. In their majority the dedicatory inscriptions are written in the standard '*anetheke'* formula. In a few cases, inscriptions also preserve the name of individuals which, depending on the context, may refer to the potter of the pithos or to the dedicant of the pithos. Four inscriptions are on burial pithoi. The overview of the published pieces is presented below in broad geographical divisions: central Greece (Attica, Boeotia, Euboea, and the Peloponnese), insular Greece (Paros, Rhodes) and northern Greece (Methone, Aiani, Samothrace).

Central Greece

One of the earliest examples of an non-Cretan inscribed pithos is a mid- 7th c. fragment recovered from Zarax, close to the modern village of Zarakes in the region of modern Karystia in central-southern Euboea (Matthaiou 2004-2009, 541-544; Chatzidemetriou 2004, 309-310) (fig. 80-81). Excavations by the Greek Archaeological Service in 1997-1998 revealed the remains of a building complex which has been identified as a sanctuary, possibly dedicated to the worship of Apollo Delios. The complex has a diachronic activity spanning from the late 8th c. to the late Roman period. The identification of the site as a cult place is based on a series of epigraphic finds which include a bronze weight of the 4th c. BC decorated with a ram's head, inscribed with the name *Ἀπόλλωνος Δηλίο* in pointillé[174], as well the inscribed pithos fragment under discussion. The specific fragment was found in Building II of the complex, a large, elongated and possibly arched edifice with circular holes along its longest western side, probably intended to facilitate the installation of wooden supports.

The pithos fragment comprises five adjoining sherds which probably form part of the neck. The (pre-firing?) inscription is written left-to-right and reads as

[173] In regions outside Crete, the practice of offering pithoi in sanctuaries is attested throughout antiquity, especially in the area of Macedonia (Giannopoulou 2006a). In Crete, pithoi associated with such contexts are rare but not completely missing, though none of them have been found to be inscribed. Examples include fragments of relief pithoi at the sanctuary in the Cave of Psychro (Boardman 1961, 59, n. 248-253), and a pithos fragment recovered from Building K1 at the northern side of the Acropolis at Smari (Hadzi-Vallianou 2000, 535, fig. 10a; Brisart, 2007, 110, fn. 38). A votive function has been suggested for the pithoi of the workshop of Phaistos found at Acropoli Mediana (Palermo 1992b) and for the pithos from the pronaos of Temple A at Prinias (Pernier 1914, 66-67; see also discussion in Chapter 4). For a brief commentary on Cretan Archaic pithoi in cultic contexts, see Brisart 2009, 152, fn. 28.

[174] *SEG* LI 1128.

[h]ιερός? ZεI[--]Iας Παφυλάτες ἐσπάλασε. The text is set under a frieze of relief stamped representations of hunting centaurs and hares, followed by another narrow zone of stamped horizontal zigzags. The theme of centaurs in pursuit of hares may be connected to the wider repertoire of Corinthian relief art, as well as to the local myths tied to the site of Zarakes, according to which Zarax was a mountain in Euboea that took its name after a local hero, the son of Karystos. Ancient sources also mention that Chiron, the eldest and the wisest of centaurs, was the father of Karystos. Drawing from these mythical bonds between Chiron, Karystos and Zarax, Chatzidemetriou (2004, 310) suggested that the pithos maker was inspired by this myth to depict the scene on the frieze[175].

As mentioned, the inscription on the pithos was one of the key-elements which enabled the identification of the building complex as a temple and of the pithos fragment as an offering. But the inscription itself also gives clues on the maker of the pithos. The preserved words are very fragmentary, but a few assumptions have been postulated by Matthaiou (2004-2009, 541-544) and Chatzidemetriou (2004, 309-310) who studied the inscription and the assemblage of relief fragments from Zarax respectively. The word *[h]ιερός?* (sacred?) indicates the votive character of pithos. The name *Πα(μ)φυλάτες* and the partly preserved first name *ZεI[--]Iας* which precedes it, are believed to be a reference to the name of the potter and perhaps to his place of origin *(from Παμφύλη)* (Matthaiou, 2004-2009, 542). Of particular interest is the choice of the verb *ἐσπάλασε*, which is the past tense of 'σφαλάσσω' (meaning to cut or to sew), an alternative to *ἐποίει* or *ἔγραφσε*, employed to declare the maker or the painter of a pot. This is probably a reference to the technique employed by pithos makers who applied or 'sewed' the relief decoration onto a pithos. Based on this assumption, Chatzidemetriou (2004, 310) believes that the potter, inscriber and

[175] Although a possible connection between the iconography and the local myth of Chiron cannot be excluded for the case of Zarax, centaurs in general are quite often depicted on Greek relief pithoi, including some fragments from Crete. However, with the exception of the inscribed pithos sherd from Zarax and the sherd from Azoria discussed above, the rest of the known pieces are not accompanied by any text. Centaurs are commonly depicted on Corinthian relief ware (Weinberg, 1954, esp. 113, pl. 25c), on Rhodian vessels (Levi 1945, 30) and on some Cycladic pithoi, most notably in the pieces from Xombourgo in Tenos and Zagora at Andros (e.g. those in Caskey 1976, 22, 25, n. 4-7). Examples from Crete include: two fragments in the collection of the Benaki Museum at Athens (inv. n. 30953, 3954; Brisart 2007, 126-127, pls. 22, fig. 8 and pl. 23), which preserve a scene of the battle between Herakles (?) and a centaur, and a partly preserved sphinx and a centaur each carrying three branches. A similar rim fragment of a pithos, possibly from Kastri in Siteia, is part of the collection of the Ashmolean Museum (inv. n. G.487; Boardman 1961, 117, n. 512, pl. XLII). The fragment has a stamped decoration of a row of centaurs holding branches in each hand.

dedicant of the vessel are the same individual. However, this hypothesis is doubtful for this may equally be a dedication of an individual who ordered the making of the pithos, perhaps already marked by its potter.

Two more early examples of inscribed pithoi come from Attica. Specifically, a mid 7th c. sherd with relief decoration was picked up in a vineyard on the north bank of Megalo Reuma, close to the cemetery of Pikermi (fig. 83). The site was repeatedly disturbed by cultivation, illicit diggings and heavy ploughing, which eradicated all that was left *in situ*. However, the few remaining graves and the pithos fragment under discussion show that the cemetery was in use during the Classical and Hellenistic times and perhaps earlier during the Archaic period. The fragment comes from the upper part of a pithos wall and it is decorated with a figured scene of (parts of) two warriors facing to the left, set in a panel decorated with spirals. The first warrior preserves only the back of the helmet and part of his spear. The second warrior, who seems to be emerging from the border, preserves his helmet and part of his shield decorated with a rosette. A spear is also indicated by the presence of an incised line cut over his shoulder. A pre-firing inscription written retrograde identifies the warrior as *Ἀντίλο[χος]*. It is assumed that this is a reference to Antilochos, the eldest son of Nestor who was famous for swiftness of foot, beauty, and his skills as a charioteer (Vanderpool 1971). Next to the Mykonos pithos (Ervin 1964; Ebbinghaus 2005), this fragment constitutes one of the earliest representations associated with the Trojan War.

Another votive inscribed pithos fragment with relief decoration was recovered from the south wall of the Athenian Acropolis. The fragment is dated to the late Archaic period (600-500 BC) and the inscription preserves part of the dedicatory verb *ἀ]νεθ[εκεν*, set behind the figure of a nude man holding a bow (?) and partly preserved legs of horses (Pottier 1888, 495, n. 2; Anderson 1975, 94, At 18).

Two inscribed pithos rims, dated to the 6th and the 5th c. BC, come from Boeotia. One is a terracotta pithos rim with a votive *graffito* (6th c. BC) which was recovered from the sanctuary of the hero Ptoios, west of the neighboring sanctuary of Apollo Ptoios at the hill of Kastraki. The sanctuary has yielded a total of twelve dedicatory inscriptions, nine on tripod columns, two on marble bases and one inscription on the pithos under discussion (Giovagnorio 2018). The inscription on the pithos is a dedication to the local hero Ptoios (or Ptous) offered by the Akraiphians: *Πυ[ρ]ίδαο ἄρχοντος Ἀκραιφ[ι]έες ἀνέθει[α]ν [τ]οῖ Πτοίοι ἡ[έροι] (Under the*

archonship of Pyridas, the Akraiphians offered to the Hero Ptoios) (ibid. 25, n. 3). The other, late 5th c. pithos rim comes from the ancient cemetery northwest of Thebes, in the present suburb of Pyri. The sherd was found in a monumental 6th c. cist, next to a contemporary inscribed column fragment (a *kioniskos*), within the loose earth filling which contained a layer of roof tiles, fragments of an Archaic statuette (a small sphinx?), pieces of a marble perirrhanterion and a few other pottery sherds. The preserved inscription on the rim is *]OI ANEΘ*[(Aravantinos 2006, 372, fn. 7; *SEG* 54-519).

From ancient Messene come two adjoining pithos rim fragments, one of which preserves a dedicatory inscription. The sherds of pithos K147 were collected from the apothetes of the temple of Poseidon at Akrovitika. The post-firing inscription is written on the outer surface of the rim and it preserves part of the normal dedicatory verb *[----αν]έθηκε* and the complete name of the dedicant *Θιοπαλίδας* (Themelis 2010). Based on the type of the letters, the inscription is dated to the second half of the 6th century BC. The excavator, Petros Themelis, suggested that the pithos is an import from Sparta, in which case this is evidence for the long-distance travelling of pithoi which were destined as votives.

Finally, Central Greece has yielded many examples of Hellenistic inscribed pithos fragments. Specifically, in Kallithro at Karditsa, three of the nine large storage jars revealed *in situ* at the storeroom of House A (in use from the second half of the 4th c. to the end of the 3rd – beginning of the 2nd c. BC) had incised and stamped inscriptions on their rims, presumably with the name of the same potter *COYTHPIΔHΣ and ΣΩTH<P>IΔ[AΣ]* (Giannopoulou 2006b, 136, fn. 9, fig. 3).

Insular Greece

Two examples from insular Greece concern inscriptions on 6th c. pithoi. One is the pre-firing inscription on a partly preserved pithos rim found in Building H (room H5) of the sanctuary of Despotiko in Paros, dated to the second half of the 6th c. (inv. n. AK 4958-4959) (fig. 84). The fragment is decorated in relief and stamped motives. The letters read as *-[ι?]αστέον εἰμ[ί -?-]*; the first (fragmentary) word has been considered as the genitive of the plural *αστέων*, perhaps a mention to a club of worshipers from Paros (Kourayos 2009, 59, 63-64; Kourayos et al. 2012, 162-163, fig. 78; Matthaiou 2020, n.2, 67-68).

The next inscription is on a complete 6th c. undecorated burial pithos, today displayed at the Archaeological Museum in Rhodes (inv. n. 13090). The pithos came from burial 186 from the excavations at the necropolis of Kameiros in the area of Makry Langoni. The inscription has the name ΕΡΓΙΑΣ (Jacopi 1931, 333, pl. VIII, n. 185).

Northern Greece

Perhaps the earliest – yet not particularly informative – example of an inscribed pithos fragment comes from northern Aegean, in the coastal site of ancient Methone, near Pieria. The inscribed pithos sherd came from an underground structure (the so-called *'hypogeio'*) of Methone, a large rock-cut, 11m. deep pit found at the crest of the eastern hill at Methone. The pit contained 191 vessels with inscriptions, incisions or symbols, originating from various trading centres of the Aegean and the eastern Mediterranean, dated to the late 8th – early 7th c. BC (Besios et al. 2012). This undecorated fragment was collected from the backfilling of this underground structure, dated to the late 8th – early 7th c. BC. It has an after-firing *graffito* in the form of a side-long 'A' (ibid. 162, 426, n. 86) and it is the only inscription on a pithos sherd from this assemblage.

Finally, three late Archaic-early Classical examples from northern Greece concern inscriptions on burial pithoi. Two of these were found in pithos burials at Samothrace. One early 5th c. burial pithos was incised with the name of the (female) deceased '*ΡΕΔΕΠΕ*', and one 1st c. burial pithos was inscribed with the initials of a name ('*ΑΤ*'). According to the lettering type, both inscriptions on pithoi date to the 5th - 4th c., meaning that the second vessel was manufactured long before it ended up as a burial container (Lehmann 1960, 129, n. 317-318, pl. XII). Moreover, one pre-firing illegible inscription has been traced on a rim of a burial pithos from the necropolis of Aiani, in western Macedonia. The writing is in dextograde and the inscription is dated to the second half of the 6th century (Karamitrou-Mentesidi 2008, 41, 81, fig. 70) (fig. 85)

4.1.3.3. Later examples and ethnographic comparanda

Writing on pithoi continued throughout antiquity and it is still practised nowadays by modern pithos makers. Most commonly, inscriptions were incised or

stamped pre-firing by the pithos makers who signed their vessels with their name or the date of production. More rarely, potters also wrote the name of the purchaser or the intended owner of the vessel. This practice is widely attested in northern Greece during the Hellenistic period. The area has produced a considerable number of pithos fragments with inscriptions incised mainly on the rims of pithoi (Giannopoulou 2006b, 136). Many examples come from the large storeroom (*pitheonas*) at the Hellenistic site of Petres in Florina, where fragments of at least 16 large pithoi have been found *in situ*. Some pieces were marked with incisions related to the capacity of the vessels but two inscriptions on the rims of pithoi have the name of their potter *(ΔΙΣΙΚΟΥ ΠΟΙΗΣΙΣ*) and the name of the owner (?) (*ΙΟΛΛΑΣ*) (Adam-Veleni 1997, 140; Giannopoulou 2011, 687). On the slope of the hill of Aghios Panteleimonas in the city at Florina, two inscribed pithos rims dated to the 3rd or 2nd c. BC have been recovered from a contemporary pitheonas. The inscriptions have the names *ΠΑΡΑΜΟΝΟΥ* and *ΑΜΜΙΑ* (Akamati-Lilibaki – Akamatis 2006, 27, 58).

From Hellenistic Crete, there is at least one known example of an inscribed pithos from Praisos, collected by Bosanquet from the excavations at the Almond Tree house in 1901 (fig. 86). The pre-firing inscription is on a 0.05m-wide pithos rim with an estimated diameter of 0.045m, which is part of a large assemblage of similar (but not inscribed) pithos fragments collected from room 3 of the complex (Bosanquet 1901–1902, 269; Whitley 2011, 29, fn. 21). The text is the name *ΠΑΝCΩΝΟC* (the Π is mutilated), meaning 'of Panson'. The inscription is carved in deeply incised letters some 0.025m in height, and it has been dated by Guarducci to the 3rd c. BC (Guarducci 1942, 154, 6.25, pl.25). It is unclear if the writing signifies the owner or the potter of the vessel.

Some ethnographic studies provide additional information on the practice of inscribing Greek pithoi throughout the post-medieval, the early modern and the modern periods. Most well-known examples come from 18th c. AD Chios, an island which has produced a large number of pithoi whose lids, lips or necks are usually incised with apotropaic symbols and other decorative motifs. These are also inscribed with single names of potters and are at times accompanied by dates of manufacture or of purchase (Liaros 2016, 63-67). Some of the inscriptions refer to the potter's name which is followed by a patronym, for example *Ιωάννης Νικολί παπά ['Ioannis, (son of) the priest Nikoli]* and *Μιχάλης του Παπαγιάννη* ['*Michalis (son) of the priest Giannis'*]. Moreover, some of these names are also encountered on pithoi found in

distant areas, suggesting that well-known pithos makers acquired a fame that spread outside their birthplace. Similar examples have been attested in some 19th and early 20th c. pithoi from Cyprus. Pre-firing inscriptions are very often found on the lip and sides of pithoi, some of which include worshiping and ritual symbols such as the pentacle, and many others bear the name of the potter, the owner, the purchaser or, a combination of the above (Rizopoulou-Egoumenidou 1995).

A few ethnographic parallels of inscriptions on pithoi come from early modern and modern Crete. A couple of early 20th c. inscribed pithoi still stand visible amongst a row of plain pithoi placed at the terrace of the Monastery of Moni Odigitria at Asterousia Mountains. Locally known as *trakosioka* (meaning of a 300-oka capacity), most of the pithoi have an incised cross (thus named *stavropithara)* and some preserve incisions with the name of the *mastoras* (the pithos maker) and the date of production/donation to the Monastery (year 1936) (fig. 87-88)[176]. Also, there is at least one case of a now deceased but formerly very active and well-known Cretan pithos maker who regularly signed his pots, named Nikos Kavgalakes or Mastro-Nikos (1937-2015). Kavgalakes was born from a family of itinerant pithos makers at the pottery village of Margarites and he quickly became renowned for his 'enormous Ali Baba jars', as described in a popular Crete travel guide book (Fisher and Garvey 2001, 244). Because his pithoi were particularly appreciated, Kavgalakes often participated in pottery festivals and travelled to traditional pottery villages outside Crete, such as Kornos and Nicosia in Cyprus, Marousi in Athens and Mandamados in Lesvos, to make his pithoi there (fig. 89). He continued to mark his jars with his name until he passed away. One such pithos, made in 2008, is today displayed at the small Folk Museum of Spili, in the region of Rethymnon (fig. 90)[177].

[176] Two interconnected interior rooms of the Monastery also preserve a *pitheonas*. The rooms have been reconstructed but they are virtually untouched from the date of the Monastery's establishment in the 14th or 15th century AD. To this day, the storage jars in the pitheonas are partly sunk in the ground. For the storerooms and the pithoi of the Monastery of Odigitria, see also Blitzer 2004, 129, pl. 6.36.

[177] Mastro-Nikos was very well-respected amongst his peers and his co-villagers. Two public obituaries on his memory can be found in the online publications of the local newspapers of Chania and Rethymno (http://www.haniotika-nea.gr/teleftei-paradosiaki-kritiki-angioplastes/; http://www.rethnea.gr/article.aspx?id=31444). Kavgalakes' case also exemplifies a very rare occasion in Crete where the baton was passed on to two female descendants. His two daughters took over his pottery workshop and continued to make pots but not pithoi. The art of pithos making is today continued only by his grandson, Manos.

4.1.4. Cretan inscribed pithoi as monuments

When compared, examples of inscribed pithoi from Crete and other parts of Greece allow us to reflect on the questions posed in the initial part of this Chapter. Specifically, identified regional differences allow us to assess Whitley's initial claim that Cretan pithoi differ from their Cycladic counterparts. If that turns out to be so, then to what degree do these differences reveal aspects of Crete's socio-political structure?

Inscriptions are almost completely absent from pithoi from the Cyclades. With the exception of the fragment from the sanctuary at Paros, there are no other known specimens. However, as the evidence from other regions show, writing on pithoi was not a uniquely Cretan phenomenon and especially after the 7th c. BC, this practice is attested in other areas of the ancient Greek world. This challenges Whitley's assertion for the particularity of Cretan pithoi but it does not necessarily diminish his thesis with respect to regional differences in the use of the alphabet.

We can detect some special features of Cretan inscribed pithoi with regards to their context, decoration, and other distinct elements of the text inscribed. The first distinctive element for review regards the issue of collective representations. At least two pithos fragments from outside Crete preserve text which accompanies the visual imagery depicted: one is the pithos fragment from Zarax, where we are provided with the name and place of origin of the potter and/or the owner, and one is the fragment from close to the cemetery of Pikermi, where we are given the name of the warrior depicted. In both instances, the inscriptions accompany representations of mythological or heroic acts. As I mentioned elsewhere (Chapter 3.3.2.), although scenes which could be possibly identified with mythological scenes are not entirely absent from Cretan pithoi, they are notably rare. Next to the pithoi from Aphrati which may depict the myth of Bellerophon, the only known case which could be more positively identified as such is the 7th c. pithos neck fragment from Koupos in Kroussonas with a scene arguably inspired by Oresteia (Demopoulou-Rethemiotaki 1989, 355-356; 1992, 53-531). However, none of these specimens is accompanied by text. Moreover, in contrast to the famous 7th c. *Mykonos pithos* and its detailed narrative portrayal of *Ilioupersis* (Ebbinghaus 2005), or the neck of a 7th c. Cycladic pithos (now in the Louvre) with a striking image of Medusa's death (Topper 2010), mythological references are not as explicitly depicted on Cretan pithoi. The absence

of text and mythological scenes combined on Cretan pithoi is not surprising given the general lack of evidence. This partly fits with what others have suggested for the overall disassociation of Cretans with the Homeric epics and heroic cults (e.g. Lebessi 1987, 134-135; Whitley 1997, 659-660) and even if we take into consideration the most recent arguments to the contrary[178], Cretan association with Homeric poems does not appear to have ever reached representations which include texts. In the single Cretan example of a *Bild und Lied* connection, on the pithos from Arkalochori, the decorative theme is far from the mythological or the Homeric repertoire and the *graffito* which accompanies the pot is of an entirely different nature. Here, representations and text concern daily activities which are far from the realm of the metaphysical.

In agreement with Whitley's analysis (Whitley 2017, table 4.3), the isolated cases of Cretan pithoi from cemeteries or sanctuaries are not inscribed and certainly not rendered in the standard '*anetheke'* dedicatory formula. The inscribed fragment from Kommos may be an exception, however the fragmentary state of the text and its coastal (port) location do not allow for any safe conclusions. On the contrary, four of the dedicatory pithos fragments from the rest of Greece are written in the '*anetheke'* formula. Though it is important to note that these differences involve only these few surviving fragments, thus making generalizations risky and perhaps misleading, it is also important to note that none of this evidence contradicts Whitley's argument regarding the limited use of writing for personal expression in Crete.

Perhaps the major difference between Cretan pithoi and those found elsewhere is their archaeological context. Most of the inscribed pithoi from places outside Crete are associated with cemeteries or sanctuaries or, like the cases of Rhodes and Samothrace, with burial pithoi. As mentioned, with the exception of Kommos, none of the Cretan examples are associated with these sanctuaries and no Cretan burial pithos has been found to be inscribed. Instead, inscribed Cretan pithoi come from either domestic contexts or buildings associated with commensality.

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[178] For example Kotsonas 2018 draws evidence from a Knossian 11th c. BC tomb known as the 'Tomb of Meriones', to argue that a few Cretans were at least familiar with stories based on Homeric epics. See also discussions in Pilz 2014; Kotsonas 2019, and my suggestion for the interpretation of pithoi from Aphrati with depictions of fallen men under winged horses (myth of Bellerophon?) in Chapter 4.3.2.

Putting aside these regional differences, Cretan pithoi display some particularities. The first distinct element is that two of our earliest indications of the Greek alphabet, which in fact predate public inscriptions, are found on storage jars, that is, on the pithos from Phaistos and the pithos from Prinias. The importance of these two examples is as much in the choice of pithoi as the inscribed *medium* at this early stage of the alphabet, as on the fact that inscriptions themselves preserve a form of implicit personal expression, either via the mention a complete name and ownership (the pithos of *Epretidamos*) or that of the craftsman (*Eteokerameus*).

Confusion and possible readings of the Erpetidamos *graffito* notwithstanding, all readings of the inscription on the Phaistian pithos point to one conclusion: that in the first stages of the alphabet, writing in Crete was used in order to mark the property of a particularly high-valued possession. If we accept earlier interpretations of the inscription (i.e. 'This [is the pithos] of Paidophila, [the wife or son] of Erpetidamos'), writing was in fact used to signify an especially high-valued familial possession which denoted strong ancestral bonds, either of matrilineal or patrilineal descent. On the other hand, even if we take a more cautious path and adopt Manganaro's' reading (i.e. one which excludes the mention of Erpetidamos' family line), we still have to consider another point adumbrated by Whitley, that is, the text 'avoids the first person, a choice that is perhaps an augury of things to come' (Whitley 2017, 94). The 'Erpetidamos inscription' is of the onomastic type, however, the word *'οδε'* ('this is') sets the object at a distance from the reader and adds a more impersonal quality to the text. In this sense, it is greatly dissimilar to the slightly earlier inscription on 'Nestor's cup' from Pithekoussai, provided we accept a translation which favours the use of first person: '*Νεστορος ε[μ?]ι ευποτ[ον] ποτεριον'* (I am(?) the cup of Nestor good for drinking)[179]. Rather, the ownership formula on the Phaistian pithos is more closely comparable to the Phoenician inscription on the Cypriot-type bowl from Tekke Tomb J near Knossos, dated to ca. 1000 BC, which provisionally reads as 'The bowl of X, son of Y' (Sznycer 1979; Cross 1980, 15-17; Hoffman 1997, 28). It can also be paralleled to the

[179] The restoration of the verb remains tentative; amongst other it has also been restored as *ε[στ?]ι* and therefore translated as a verb given in the third person (i.e. 'this is'). However, Jeffery (1961, 235-236), West (1970, 171), Hansen (1983) and Johnston (1983) believe that it should be read as *ειμί* and thus regarded as a representative case of 'speaking objects'. For bibliography on the various restorations on the inscription see Gaunt 2016, 96, fn. 15.

four opening formulas of the public inscriptions at the walls of the temple of Apollo in Dreros *('ἔϝαδε πόλι: the polis has decided*) and those at Lyktos and Gortyn, the inscription of Spensithios (*ἔϝαδε Δατελεῦσι: the Dataleis resolved*), and even to the demonstrative pronoun '*τόνδε (or τόνδ'*) which accompanies nine of the onomastic inscriptions of the Aphrati bronzes[180].

Equally interesting is the case of the pre-firing inscription on the pithos at Prinias. This case obliges us to return to the issue of literacy in the lower *strata* of population and, in particular, amongst artisans. The word -*KEPAMEYΣ* (*potter*) could be suggestive of the high level of specialization involved in pithos making and a reference to pithos maker, a practice which resembles many of the ethnographic examples mentioned earlier. Throughout the millennia, pithos making has been one of the most difficult and highly skilled forms of pottery, known to demand from a potter his maximum experience on formation techniques and knowledge of raw materials, and the pithos itself came to symbolize 'the ultimate level of mastery' (Hasaki 2019, 300). The ancient proverb *'τὸ λεγόμενον δὴ τοῦτο ἐν τῷ πίθῳ τὴν κεραμείαν ἐπιχειρεῖν μανθάνειν'*[181] declares the futility of trying to learn the potter's craft by undertaking the making of a pithos (the equivalent of the English 'trying to run before you can walk'), an anecdotal reference to this highly specialized craft that only few potters could master. In this respect, the inscription ETEOKEPAMEYΣ on the pithos from Prinias as the declaration of the potter's artistic skills suggests that such a specialized potter could boast about the product of his craftsmanship. It is also possible that the prefix *ETEO*-, which means real/true, is an advertisement of the potter's artistic skills, in a text which could potentially be read as '*this is the work of a true artist/potter'*[182]. This sort of labelling has implications both for literacy amongst specialized craftsmen, as well as for their integration within the population of Prinias. Marginesu (2010, 90) however, argues that, rather than evidence for literacy amongst craftsmen, this inscription suggests the control exercised by the aristocracy over production activities, for, as he claims, it would be surprising if the *graffiti* had been affixed by a ceramist

[180] On the opening formula of 'Spensithios' see Jeffery and Morpugo-Davies 1970, 126. On the Aphrati bronzes, see Perlman 2002, 219-221, n. 10-11, 13-17, 19-20. On the opening formula *ἔϝαδε* at Dreros, see Demargne and van Effenterre 1937, 333-348; for the inscriptions from Lyktos and Gortyn, see Jeffery and Morpugo-Davies 1970, 126 and ibid. 133-134 for a brief commentary on the pronominal form of the *ἔϝαδε* in comparison with the Spensithios decree pronominal *'τῶνυ'*.
[181] Plato, *Gorgias* 414e; Plato, *Laches* 187.
[182] One could also hypothesise that this declares the potter's origin (an Eteocretan?).

and not by an aristocrat. I would argue though that as with the ethnographic examples presented above, this should be read as a craftsman's signature that was incised on a valuable object by a skilled potter who so identifies himself in the eyes of the community and as one who is acknowledged as such by the owner(s) of the pithos. Whatever the meaning of the prefix ETEO-, it is perhaps not incidental that the only other known case of craftsman signature from Archaic Crete is on another highly valued material, that is on the bronze the mid-7th c. cauldron from Kato Syme. In this context, we can infer that pithoi, or at least the specific pithos from Prinias, was considered a comparably if not an equally valuable possession, created by someone who could read and was acknowledged as having the right to declare his name and/or his profession.

It can also be argued that the writer of the text on the pithos from Prinias retains an impersonal tone, almost similar to that of the Erpetidamos pithos. Eteokerameus lets us know of his occupation, perhaps in a boastful expression of his master creation, yet he restrained himself from writing his own name, and quite unlike the near contemporary *dipinto* on the Ischia bowl, (-ΙΝΟΣ Μ'ΕΠΟΙΕΣΕ), he did not use a verb in the first person. Thus, taking the inscription of Erpetidamos into consideration, Whitley's proposal for suppressed individual expression in Crete during the Archaic period should not be completely dismissed. This is not to say that Cretan unofficial inscriptions are completely lacking in verbs given in the first person, however, these occur some 200 years later than inscriptions on pithoi, and they comprise extremely few and isolated cases. The fact that they occur in coastal sites further complicates the picture. Examples include the 6th c. BC grave marker from Chersonessos (*Εὔαγρος μ' ἔστασε: Euagros set me up*)[183], and one Archaic or Classical rupestral inscription from Cape Sideros at the eastern extremity of Crete (]*μον ἔγραφέ με: someone whose name ends in]mon made me*). These are exceptions which Whitley himself acknowledged, but he connected their occurrence in coastal sites as 'Central Greek forms of material entanglement' (Whitley 2017, 93). The point, therefore, remains that if in the course of the sociopolitical transformations during the Archaic period on Crete literacy was extended beyond a closed scribal class, this opening did not signify or encourage forms of personal expression.

[183] Perlman 2002, 223, n. 32 and 222, n. 25

Finally, it is worth considering the context of the two inscribed pithoi from Phaistos and Azoria, in spaces connected to commensality. The first piece, although found in much later Hellenistic context, is most unlikely to have been moved far from its original context. The room this pithos was found in came from close to the Theatral area and the so-called Western Court of the Palace, a part of the Minoan complex which has been linked to rites of passage associated with an Archaic *andreion* at Phaistos (Cucuzza 2013, 35-36). Similarly, the inscribed pithos and the pithos fragments from Azoria came from communal areas, namely from the olive press building and from storage room A1200, both of which are associated communal feasting. Taking into account proposals for the monumentality and symbolism of publicly displayed laws, I argue that these inscribed pieces from Phaistos and Azoria, should be viewed as kinds of public monuments. Both in durability and monumentality, Greek pithoi are not far apart from the large limestone blocks. Their functional properties, which grant them the capacity to endure their own weight and the hundreds of litres stored in them, make them the largest and one of the most durable objects, most unlikely to be transported or removed from their original place. Whether decorated or not, pithoi attract attention and elicit a response from the beholder by their mere presence. Specifically, in the case of Archaic Crete, their importance as engraved media in communal contexts extends to aspects of their symbolic value. As the container of goods, the pithos is intrinsically linked to agricultural wealth and prosperity and yet further correlated to their contexts in places associated with public meetings and commensality. This, I believe, is symptomatic of their treatment and appreciation by a specific class of citizens who could not only afford such a high-priced vessel and possess the contents stored in them, but they could also use or read the inscription on it. Thus, inscribed pithoi placed in public contexts, such as an *andreion,* should be viewed as statement of their owners – perhaps even of their makers – high socio-political rank. Alternatively, if we consider these pithoi as shared properties and therefore possibly as symbols of the community as a whole (see discussion in 3.4.3.1), we may also consider them as objects with a quality of monumentality comparable to that of inscribed walls. In connecting relief decorated pithoi with a specific class of elite Cretan citizens of the 7th c. BC, Brisart has argued that their appearance defined their status: because they are large and decorated, they acquired an added value. He further noted that it is likely that decorated relief pithoi were destined, from the moment of their production, to be

placed in contexts of civic nature in order to signify the elite status of their owners (Brisart 2009, 156-157). I would suggest that this may also be true for some plain but inscribed pithoi whose owners or even potters displayed their valuable possessions and master creations in civic contexts. Like the case of the monumental inscribed walls, inscriptions on pithoi, depending on their visibility, would augment the imposing visual effect of pithoi, particularly in the eyes of a population that hardly inscribed a personal fashion.

Having said that, one could argue that the reason we find inscriptions on pithoi in the first place is because of their exceptional survivability and visibility in the archaeological record. As Papakonstantinou (2002) proposed, it is quite possible that we lack evidence for other, private, inscriptions which may have been written onto other less durable or not yet excavated objects. Still, there is an enormous quantity of EIA-Archaic Cretan pottery other than pithoi which has barely any inscriptions. However, it is important to note that, based on the inscriptions from Cretan pithoi alone, we cannot evaluate whether literacy in Crete was used to support the establishment rather than to more innovative purposes. Neither the fragmentary state of the texts, nor their contexts allow us to support such a claim. Nevertheless, the signatures of *Eteokerameus* on the pithos from Phaistos and of *Damothetos* on the bronze cauldron from Kato Syme show that literacy or at least the ability to write short texts was practised amongst some specialized craftsmen of the Archaic period. Whether writing was the role of a special, scribal class with the privileges and obligations of someone like Spensithios has to remain an open question, at least at the current stage of research. In view of arguments posed by those who reject Whitley's proposal for a limited 'scribal literacy', and as archaeological interest on Crete of this period is increasingly rising, we have yet to further evaluate whether the current epigraphic picture of Archaic Crete reflects the habits of aristocratic citizens, or if this is merely the result of the general lack of excavations on Cretan sites of this period[184].

Lastly, I close by noting that the inscription on the pithos from Phaistos, which potentially stresses the ancestral line of the owner, as well as the pithos from Prinias and Arkalochori were found in later contexts, thus pointing to the reuse of

[184] The most recent doctoral thesis by Oikonomaki, an epigraphist specializing in the Archaic and Classical Cretan alphabets, supported our perception that Cretans' epigraphic habits have been obscured from us by the lack of findings (Oikonomaki 2010, 72-73).

pithoi perhaps as items connected with ancestral bonds and the past. This aspect of pithoi is treated in detail in the following section, dedicated to the reuse of Cretan pithoi.

4.2. Reuse of ancient Cretan pithoi

Since the works of Appadurai (1986) and Kopytoff (1986), interest on the reuse and the life-cycle of ceramics has been on the increase, particularly during the last two decades. Peña's publication on the biographies of Roman transport amphorae (Peña 2007) promoted consideration on the agency of pots and patterns of their depositional behaviour and paved the way for a new appreciation of coarse wares, including the Roman *dolia* and their reuse as containers, basins, shelter, furnaces, architectural insets (ibid. 194-196). Continuing this fresh approach, the authors contributing to the collective volume edited by Lawall and Lund (2011) elaborated on Peña's ideas and widened his model to include case-studies on the production, repair and reuse of ceramics from Greece and Eastern Mediterranean from the Archaic to the Late Roman period. In addition, the work of Hans Peter Hahn and Hadas Weiss (2013) in '*Mobility, Meaning and the Transformations of Things'* extended ideas on the agency of reused archaeological objects and included case-studies from different contexts and periods which go as far and as late as the Medieval and Tudor Britain of the 12th to 16th centuries AD (i.e. Gilchrist 2013).

As part of this wider academic interest, a number of scholars have been particularly concerned with the reuse of space, landscapes, and objects specifically in ancient Greece and Crete. The majority of relevant studies regard the biographies and the agency of objects during the Bronze Age and, more rarely, during the EIA and Archaic period (see Chapter 1.3., fn. 26). For example, Whitley (2002) discussed the life-cycle of antique objects accompanying Late Bronze Age and EIA 'warrior graves' from Knossos and Lefkandi, to propose that their increasing frequency reflects a new conception of masculinity and social order. Also, Flouda (2010) re-assessed Pylian sealing techniques of the Mycenaean period to argue for the multigenerational collective agency of seals by means of symbolisms in glyptic imagery. With regards to the glyptic art of Cretan Bronze Age seals, Emily Anderson (2016) focused on the so-called 'Parading Lions seals' as items with accumulated value, identity and social efficacy. Others have discussed the accumulated historical

value of architectural structures and their effect in deposition behaviour. For instance, Driessen (2010) treated some Minoan houses as the materialized expression of social groups with intergenerational investment, and their architecture and the valuable objects such as heirlooms as the basis for Minoan social relations. The use of some Minoan remains in later periods has also been a focal point of some studies with diachronic perspectives spanning from the Bronze Age to the EIA and the Archaic periods, which suggest the existence of material, architectural and landscape memories. For example, Wallace (2003) investigated some Late Bronze Age and EIA material remains which were found on Protogeometric/Geometric and Archaic settlements, cults and mortuary practices, and considered them as elements of continuity which shaped local and regional-based cultural identities. Prent (2003) has also examined EIA cultic engagement with the Bronze Age past in Minoan ruins as indications of the phenomenon of memory. Along the same lines, Sjögren (2008, 158-194) discussed the religious use of some Bronze Age structures in Archaic Crete (mainly the palaces of Phaistos and Knossos), as the mediators of a collective memory. Lastly, Cucuzza (2013) reviewed the archaeological and historical evidence from Knossos, Phaistos and Kydonia to suggest the collective memory exercised by these sites, as indicated by the reuse of some Bronze Age areas for liturgical, ceremonial and cultic purposes during the Archaic period.

Despite this rising popularity in the biographies of objects, architectural structures and landscapes, the reuse of Cretan pithoi during antiquity remains a largely neglected theme. That said, some early and recent scholars have repeatedly pointed to cases of Geometric or Archaic Cretan pithoi found in later contexts and suggested their use as antiques. The first to underline these aspects of Cretan pithoi in particular was Doro Levi; during his excavations at the Palace of Phaistos and its surroundings in the 1960s, he found some complete or partly preserved Geometric and Orientalizing pithoi in the Hellenistic houses west of the court of the Minoan theatre. One of these pithoi was the inscribed pithos described in the previous section and Levi (1969b) devoted a separate publication to these vessels as 'antiques during antiquity' *('antichità presso gli antichi'*). More than forty years after Levi's observations, the holistic interpretations of the Archaic Cycladic and Cretan pithoi by Ebbinghaus (2005) and by Brisart (2007) respectively, emphasized the multilayered socio-political and symbolic aspects of storage jars and invited scholars to take a broader and deeper look into Greek pithoi as containers of cultural identities. Also,

James Whitley alluded to the use and reuse of some Cretan Archaic pithoi as case-studies for the biography and the agency of objects used as heirlooms (Whitley 2011, 29-31; 2016; 2018a; forthcoming[185]); this subject has also been explored by Kaliope Galanaki and her colleagues, with particular attention paid to cases of Archaic pithoi found in Hellenistic contexts at Lyktos and at Prophetis Elias in Arkalochori (Galanaki et al. 2015, 326-338; 2017; Galanaki et al. 2019).

The following subsection draws from theories on the biography of objects to discuss the secondary use of some Archaic pithoi during antiquity. The aim is to assess the effect of storage jars in deposition behaviour and to examine their significance as objects with cumulative and ancestral value through processes of social memory. The discussion is divided into two parts: in the first part, I review the evidence for Archaic Cretan pithoi found in later contexts, divided into geographical regions and sub-regions of central and east Crete; in the second part, I synthesize and contextualize this evidence to argue that pithoi carry different kinds of agencies and symbolisms according to their size, utility, high-priced value and durability. These specific features are treated as elements which favour their use down the generations, transforming them into objects with the capacity to elicit memories and to declare ancestral bonds linked to household.

4.2.1. Cretan pithoi in later contexts: review of case-studies

The pithoi and pithos fragments presented here include the most well or relatively well-documented and stratified cases as derived from rescue and systematic excavations in central and east Crete from the 1960s until the present. Before proceeding to listing them, it is important to make a general observation regarding the current state of research and the available material under examination. Not all cases of pithoi in found in secondary use have been thoroughly investigated or published, and this is especially true for some pieces included in excavations reports of the past century[186]. Yet, in the last decades modern archaeological practises and contextual

[185] Sincere thanks to James Whitley for generously sharing his forthcoming paper, initially presented at the 12th Cretological Congress.

[186] Some early archaeological reports have recorded fragments of Archaic pithoi on Hellenistic floors; however these are either preliminary publications and/or regard pithoi with poor stratification. One such case, not included in this chapter, is the example of some Archaic pithoi found at Aghia Pelagia (ancient Apollonia?), to the west side of the putative *andreion* or *prytaneion* (Alexiou 1972; 1973, 560).

studies on material culture increasingly favour the inclusion of coarse and plain vessels in publications. At the same time, with the shift of archaeological interest in Crete to the historic period, excavations and survey projects on various Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic sites have incorporated modern, systematic and interdisciplinary methods of finds analyses which have come to include pithoi. This includes the systematic excavations at Azoria, Praisos and Trypitos (presented below), and the ongoing intensive survey project at Pediada which encloses the Archaic pithos production centres of Aphrati and Lyktos (see petrographic analysis in Chapter 2), which have yielded considerable amounts of complete or fragmentary pithoi, some of which are preserved in well-stratified contexts. Therefore, contrary to past practices where many plain pithoi and pithos fragments were overlooked or even discarded in favour of fine wares, fragments of pithoi are today more commonly included in the lists of findings, thus providing wider access to pottery specialists.

4.2.1.1. Central Crete

The region of Pediada occupies a large portion of central Crete and it encloses the municipal units and archaeological sites of Kastelli, Lyktos, Aphrati and Arkalochori, all of which have yielded examples of reused Archaic pithoi. In addition to the Pediada, examples of reused pithoi in central Crete come from Knossos and Phaistos[187].

Lyktos

Although largely understudied, Lyktos is known to have produced some very elaborate and tall Archaic pithoi, some of which were found in later contexts. In fact, it was the large number of relief pithos fragments brought to light which prompted the first rescue excavations at the site in 1970 by Lebessi. A couple of years prior, in 1968, Lebessi collected some pithos fragments from the property of a villager at Koutela, a place on the south slope of the hill that overlooks the modern village Lyttos (otherwise known as Xidas) (Lebessi 1969b, 418). As the owner of the field required to be allowed to continue the cultivation of his land, Lebessi initiated a small rescue operation there and a small trial excavation in two other parts of the same hill at the place called ‘Anemomyloi’, which had also yielded some relief pithos fragments

[187] A short overview of reused pithoi in Archaic contexts from central Crete is available in Galanaki et al. 2019.

previously collected by Platon in the 1950s (Platon 1957, 336; Lebessi 1971b, 493-496).

The first trial trench at Koutela (*Dokimastiki Ereuna I/Trial Trench I*) measured 14.60m(E-W) x 7m (N-S) and revealed two walls (4.80m and 3.60m in lenght) of a large Hellenistic three-room edifice (fig. 91-92). The walls and the contents of the southern and northern part had been largely destroyed by heavy ploughing; however, the north-western part of the middle room preserved five complete and almost intact Archaic pithoi with an average height of 1.50 to 1.60m. The lower halves of two more pithoi were found *in situ*, whilst their upper parts seemed to have become buried within the backfill of the trench at the northern part of the field. Alongside the pithoi, a four-handled cylindrical bin and a total of 58 small and larger complete pots of domestic use were unearthed. The pottery clearly belonged to two distinct chronological phases, the earliest of which was represented by the pithoi dated between the 7th and the 6th c. BC. The oldest and most elaborate pithos, dated to the last quarter of the 7th c., has coils on the rim terminating in panther heads, the neck and the shoulder are decorated with relief representations of sphinxes and griffins respectively, and the lower body is adorned with wavy lines, empty metopes and shield bosses (Lebessi 1971a, pl. 512a) (fig. 93). Fragments of the same vessel had been previously collected during the earlier rescue diggings of 1968 (Lebessi 1969b, 418). Today, the restored pithos is on display at the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion. The other pithos is more plainly decorated with the most elaborate patterns reserved for the upper and front part of the vessel (Lebessi 1971b, pl. 512b) (fig. 94). Like the first pithos, coils on the rim end in panther heads; incised foliate patterns and a double row of spirals are set on the front side of neck and the lower part is decorated with rows of applied clay bands and incised spirals close to base. Its shape resembles pithoi from the Phaistos workshop and it has been dated by Lebessi to around the same period, namely the early 6th c. BC. Today, the pithos is kept in the storerooms of the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion[188]. The remaining pithoi, whose decorative motifs consisted of rows of rosettes, small shields, snakelike patterns and bands in relief, were dated between the 7th and the early 6th century BC. The latest, Hellenistic phase of the edifice was represented by a variety of pots: one

[188] Inv. N. Π 19282. I am indebted Maria Kyrimi of the Archaeological Museum for assisting me in tracing the specific vessel.

lamp (end of the 4th or beginning of the 3rd c. BC) was found within one of the complete pithos and just beneath the rest of the pithoi but within the same layer of the trench there were 30 pots of various types, including oinochoai, lekanai, plates, jugs, cups, kantharoi, hydriai, phialai, pointed-base amphorae and unguentaria, all dated to the 3rd and perhaps the early 2nd c. BC (fig. 95)[189]. Other finds from within the middle and eastern room included a particularly large number of loomweights (190 in total), plain and incised stone door-jambs (*stathmoi*), several iron tools and the pointed-based amphorae mentioned above. The handles of one of the amphora were inscribed with two names ('ΕΠΙΔΑΜΟΝΟΣ' and another, unreadable name, presumably of the potter) and a monogram. Smaller finds comprised bone jewellery, found on a surface of burned material, together with three small bronze nail heads. A bronze coin from one of the rooms confirmed the dating of the pottery and narrowed the abandonment of the building to the 3rd c. BC. This coincides with the period just before the final destruction of Lyttos by the Knossians (221-220BC), as mentioned by Polybius (4.53-455) in his account on the Lyktian war. The type and wealth of the finds led Lebessi to the conclusion that the building was part of a Hellenistic storage room.

Contemporary to the building at Koutela are the remains of a building excavated at Anemomyloi, the site that occupies the hill of Lyktos approximately 1.2km from the modern village. As noted, the place was first excavated by N. Platon in 1957 who revealed the remains of what he identified as an Archaic house and fragments of Archaic relief pithoi whose decoration closely resembled those collected from Koutela (Platon 1957, 336). When Lebessi resumed research at Lyktos in 1970, she collected more pieces of pithoi, one of which belonged to a pithos previously collected by Platon. Lebessi revealed the wall of a house which was composed of two building blocks and a partly preserved paved floor (Lebessi 1971b, 499). The pottery from the building belonged to two relief Archaic pithoi with representations of opposed sphinxes and foliate patterns. Similarly to the pieces from Koutela, the jars were dated to the 7th-early 6th c. BC. The rest of the findings, which included fragments of smaller pottery such as a plate and a shallow skyphos, were dated to the Hellenistic period. As in the case of Koutela, the house was dated to the Hellenistic

[189] This and the rest of the Hellenistic pottery from the excavations at Lyktos are published by Maria Englezou 2005, 94-110.

period and the fragments of the pithoi were considered as relics, with continuous use from the Archaic period.

In 1983 Giorgos Rethemiotakis resumed research at Lyktos at the eastern and the western part of the hill (west of the Church of Timios Stavros and north of the Church of Aghios Georgios respectively) (Rethemiotakis 1983; 1984). Excavations focused on Hellenistic, Roman and Late Roman layers which brought to light two rooms of Late Roman magazines, four rooms of a Hellenistic building, a Roman complex with niches, and a Roman assembly hall (*bouleuterion*). Archaic pithos fragments were recovered from the 3rd-2nd c. BC destruction layer of the Hellenistic building. The building included a central room with an *eschara*, workshop spaces and storerooms (Rethemiotakis 1983, pl. 151a) and it was destroyed by a violent fire which preserved the 0.50-0.60m-thick destruction layer intact. Much pottery came out of this layer, including a variety of drinking, pouring and serving vessels, loomweights and figurines. Moreover, there were many carbonized seeds, predominately of cereals and olives. The pottery dates to late 3rd - early 2nd c. BC (which again, times with the final destruction of Lyttos mentioned by Polybius) but it also included some 7th-6th c. pithos fragments, one of which was a large shoulder fragment decorated with relief representation of a lion (dated to the late 6th c. BC).

Kastelli

Very close to Lyktos, ca. 3km to the west, similar finds came from Kastelli, the modern administrative centre of the Pediada region. Rescue excavations and other random discoveries such as pottery sherds and a few surface finds, indicate the existence of a large and densely inhabited Minoan settlement which spreads across the modern village and possibly extends out to the municipal road leading to modern Lyttos (Rethemiotakis 1991; 1992; 1992-1993). A large part of the settlement lies under some of the modern public buildings at Kastelli and rescue excavations at the administrative office of village in the years 1987-1990 revealed a large portion of the so-called 'Central Minoan building', a large two storey-building. After having been rebuilt twice during the Neopalatial period, the building was finally destroyed in the Late Minoan period (LM IB). The Central Minoan building consisted of at least eight rooms built with ashlar masonry and a large main hall with the *polythyron* of the 'Minoan-Hall' type, an antechamber and possibly a light-well (Rethemiotakis 1992-1993). The prehistoric destruction phase was almost completely covered by a

Hellenistic layer which extended under the local nursery school. The layer preserved minor remains of walls and part of a road and the Hellenistic backfill contained fragments of Archaic pithoi mixed with numerous Hellenistic loomweights, sherds of black-glazed pottery and some plain miniature cups (Rethemiotakis 1991, 396; Englezou 2005, 110, fn. 45).

Arkalochori

A number of decorated 6th c. pithoi have turned up at the Hellenistic settlement at the hill of Prophitis Elias in Arkalochori. The site is best known for the Minoan cave of Arkalochori situated at the top of the hill, arguably used from the Early Minoan to the late Roman period (Panagiotakis 2003, 334–346, fn. 23, map 3). Excavations on the slopes of the hill by the Greek Archaeological Service in 1991 and in 2008-2010, revealed signs of intense occupation during the Late Classical-Early Hellenistic period (350-220 BC). A complex of houses was excavated on the east and south-east slopes and a Hellenistic fortification wall, possibly built on top of an earlier Archaic wall, and a contemporary watchtower were traced around the north and the northeast slopes (Galanaki and Triantafillidi 2018).

The Late Classical-Hellenistic houses of the settlement are arranged in the isodomic linear way following the form of the so-called 'Cretan Hellenistic linear houses with hearth rooms', and they seem to have fully absorbed an earlier, probably Archaic-Classical architectural core (fig. 96). Finds from within the houses produced significant evidence for intense agricultural activities and for the everyday life of their occupants. Much of this evidence came from an extended and thick destruction layer which enclosed many collapsed architectural remains and roof tiles, pithoi, cooking and table wares, lamps, spindle whorls, loom weights, as well as stone grinding and metal tools and coins, all dated to the 3rd c. BC (fig. 97). The great quantity of food processing and storage equipment suggests that the rooms were originally used for storage, thus indicating the importance of agricultural production in the establishment of the site. Many of the Hellenistic pithoi were found *in situ,* mostly in the destruction layers of the storage and the work areas. These were mixed with a considerable number of plainly and elaborately decorated Archaic pithos fragments of the late 7th - early 6th c. BC, some of which belong to the large inscribed *pithamphora* discussed previously (Galanaki et al. 2015, esp. 325-328, 2017) (fig. 98).

Phaistos

The most well-preserved cases of reused pithoi have turned up in the Hellenistic and Late Roman layers in Phaistos. As mentioned, Levi was the first to gather up most of these pieces and to identify them as valuable antiques which were intentionally kept and appreciated by later generations for their artistic value or for their peculiar character (Levi 1969b)[190]. Overall, examples of reused pithoi include three largely preserved pithoi and three fragments of different pithoi dated to the Geometric, Orientalizing and Archaic periods collected at various times during the excavations at the Minoan Palace area in the 1950s and 1960s. The first case was recorded at the western edge of the Minoan Palace known as the Theatral area, where in 1953 the Italian excavation team found remains of two interconnected rooms of a Hellenistic house named 'Casa Greca' (Levi 1952-1954, 467-468; 1969b, 390). On the floor of one of these rooms lay the fragments of the upper half of an Orientalizing relief pithos, decorated with a band of running spirals on the belly and with a metope on the neck with an animal figure, perhaps a dog or a lioness (fig. 99-100). The vessel was intentionally and neatly cut in two and the lower half has not been found. Under the floor on which the pithos rested was a layer filled with mixed pottery dated from the Minoan to the Hellenistic period, apparently used as a form of support for the floor.

From immediately next to the rooms described above, during the latest excavation seasons west of the Minoan Palace, came the inscribed Geometric pithos (the 'Erpetidamos pithos') discussed in previously (Levi 1965-1966, 376-381). The jar was found on the destruction layer of area *l* (*vano l*), in the southwest corner of a large edifice with an *eschara* resembling a Mycenaean *megaron,* and it was placed right next to another Hellenistic pithos (fig. 101-102). Together with the Hellenistic pithos the building also preserved other finds typical of the Hellenistic period, such as an olpe. From the same Hellenistic destruction horizon of Phaistos at Chalara, just northeast of the Minoan Palace, came one of the Archaic pithoi of the Phaistos workshop discussed in Chapter 3.2. The excavations of the area have uncovered two large paved roads (3m wide), one leading to the Palace hill and the other probably to

[190] Levi (1969b, 388): '*Non è escluso, anzi sembra del tuttoverisimile, ehe presso agli antichi siano esistiti degli amatori e raccoglitori di oggetti appartenenti a età assai più remote di loro, forse non indotti a tale loro passione per il valore magico di tali oggetti, ma piuttosto per il loro valore artistico o per il loro carattere di curiosità …'*

the same hill but to the northernmost part, perhaps traversing through the northernmost section of Phaistos by the nearby quarters of Aghia Photini (Levi 1967-1968). The paved roads passing through Chalara testify to the occupation of the site during the Geometric period (ibid. 92-95), and the fragments of relief pithoi from the Phaistos workshop found close by indicate that Chalara was also occupied during the 7^{th} - 6^{th} c. (Palermo 1992b, esp. 57). As mentioned in the previous Chapter (3.2), it is assumed that during this period the city extended downstream near the location of Chalara, close to where Levi uncovered parts of a Hellenistic-Roman quarter. There, on the Hellenistic floor levels of area *q' (vano q),* in the so-called Central Sector (*Settore Centrale*), Levi found the upper part of an Archaic pithos partly sunk within the floor, set within a very close space between the east and west walls of the room (Levi 1967-1968, 94, figs. 44-45; 1969b, 390; Palermo 1992b, 36, fig. 1e) (fig. 103-104). Like the case of the first pithos from Casa Greca, the upper part of pithos from Chalara had been carefully cut off and placed with its decorated side visible. The decoration consists of zones of relief decoration with a large bull set in metopes on the neck, a zone of wavy lines along the shoulder and a band of spirals on the belly (a band of zigzag lines on the lower part was added during restoration) (fig. 105). The finds associated with the pithos from the upper and lower levels of the floor included an abundance of some very characteristic Hellenistic objects, especially discoid loom weights.

Finally, from the same settlement at Chalara but from the Late Roman levels of a large five-roomed building, came at least three fragments of Archaic pithoi decorated with running spirals and panther heads (fig. 106). The fragments were found in the filling of *vano i'* just above the original, Late Roman level of the floor, where another large Roman pithos was found *in situ* together with mixed pottery from the Hellenistic to the Byzantine period (Levi 1967-1968, 74-76) (fig. 107).

Knossos

From the Little Palace Well, just west of the facade of the Unexplored Mansion of Knossos, came fragments of Archaic pithoi and tiles mixed with Hellenistic pottery. In the winter of 1938 a very heavy rain exposed the top of the well and in the same year, the curator at Knossos, Richard W. Hutchinson, conducted a small rescue operation at the site. He revealed the water-level depth of the well at 18m down, and collected the pottery that occupied the successive fills (Young 1938, 233).

The heavy rain meant that some of the material within the well had been washed down from above, but the later systematic and thorough examination of the deposit by Peter Callaghan (1981, 36) allowed for some safe conclusions regarding the main pottery shapes and their dating. The deepest deposits of the well, between 1 and 2m thick, were dominated by Archaic pithos fragments and some tiles. Although this added an extra difficulty to the study of the already disturbed fillings, the fact that no other Archaic pottery was found was quite suggestive. The associated cup and jug fragments found in the same lot were purely Hellenistic (2nd c. BC) and contemporary with the main fill above. This massive fill occupied the whole well shaft to a depth of about 5m, all the way down to the level of the pithos fragments; it included some very characteristic types of Hellenistic pottery such as cylindrical cups, and jugs, glazed cups, a few kantharoi, olpe, kraters, bowls, cooking pots, lamps and hydrae. As the 'most advanced shapes' of pottery were represented throughout the depth of the well, Callaghan concluded that all the pottery, including the Archaic pithos fragments, was dumped at the same time. The evidence from the higher levels of the well indicated that the fill of the shaft was connected to the demolition of a house; thus the pithoi and the tiles, dumped at the same time with the rest of the material into the well, probably reflect some sort of a large-scale rebuilding of the house (ibid. 36).

4.2.1.2. East Crete

From east Crete, cases of reused pithoi have been recorded at Hellenistic layers excavated at Dreros, Trypitos and Praisos. In addition, there is one case of a Bronze Age pithos found in the late 6th c. destruction layer at Azoria.

Dreros

Dreros, in northeast Crete (ca. 16km northwest of Aghios Nikolaos), is mostly known for remains of the EIA-Archaic period which include the Temple of Apollo Delphinios, the large inscribed blocks with the first Greek laws, and the three bronze statuettes (*sphyrelata*), known as the famous Triad of Dreros[191]. The site has been periodically excavated from the early 20th c. Since the first diggings in 1917 by Xanthoudides (1918, 24-28) on the double hill of Dreros, research has been resumed four more times: first, in 1932 by Demargne (Béquignon 1933, 299-300), then in 1935

[191] For an overview of the finds and interpretations of the Temple, see Prent 2005, 456, 460-461.

by Marinatos (1936), and again in 1936 by Demargne and van Effenterre (1937, 1938). As well as the temple, the early campaigns uncovered the urban centre of Dreros in the saddle between the two Acropoleis, and traces of late Roman habitation at the foot of the East Acropolis. Particularly since Marinatos' excavations, it became known that Dreros produced Geometric and Archaic pithoi, a dozen of which were found placed in a row in the terrace area of the temple, and other pithos fragments with incised decoration were found in front of the temple (Marinatos 1936, 162, 234-263; figs 24-27; see also discussion in Chapter 3.2). Since 2008, Dreros is being re-investigated by a Greek/French archaeological team directed by Vasiliki Zographaki and Alexandre Farnoux (Zographaki and Farnoux 2014a)[192].

As part of this latest research, excavations resumed at the area of the terrace between the two Acropoleis, on what has been identified as the *agora* of the Archaic city. In 2010-2011, digging focused on the northern sector of city, at the area immediately below the terrace, on the remains of a large Hellenistic house arranged on terraces (Gaignerot-Driessen 2013; Zographaki and Farnoux 2014b, 789-788) (fig. 108). The Hellenistic destruction layer of the house and its rooms was found intact, thus fully showing the degree of its sudden and complete abandonment sometime in the end of the 3rd or the beginning of the 2nd c. BC. Specifically, Florence Gaignerot-Driessen uncovered a large storeroom ($22m^2$) on the north side of the building, with a destruction layer comprising of twelve pithoi, three amphorae and other types of vessels and metal objects, all found in *situ* (ibid. 291-292) (fig. 109-110). At least two of these pithoi have been dated to the Orientalizing or Archaic period, one of which is engraved with eight-petal rosettes (Lefèvre-Novaro et al. 2013, 6; Zographaki and Farnoux 2014b, 790).

Trypitos

Perhaps the most intriguing case of reused Archaic pithoi comes from the Hellenistic site of Trypitos. This is because unlike the other examples discussed here, Trypitos is a single-phase site only inhabited in the Hellenistic period. The settlement lies in northeast Crete, occupying the natural peninsula formed just a few kilometres east of Siteia. The excavations led by Nikos Papadakis (conducted periodically from 1987 to 2000) have revealed a large fortification wall running along the southern part

[192] See also Zographaki and Farnoux 2014a, 103-104 for the history of research at Dreros.

of the cape and a city-gate, as well as six large building clusters, with each cluster containing two to three houses (Vogeikoff-Brogan – Papadakis 2003; Vogeikoff-Brogan 2011a; 2011b). In general, the pottery from the clusters includes some stamped amphora handles and lamps which securely date Trypitos to a brief occupation period between the last quarter of the 3rd to the second quarter of the 2nd c. BC; this date roughly coincides with the destruction of the nearby site of Praisos in the middle of the 2nd century BC.

The architecture and the finds from the northeaster building clusters (called B1, B2 and E) have been examined in detail by Natalia Vogeikoff-Brogan (2011a; 2011b). Her examination revealed that these clusters represent three distinct types of structures which reflect some kind of a civic planning (fig. 111). The houses of cluster B1 are linearly arranged with communicating rooms, while Cluster B2 had a provision for a separate space that was not accessible by the houses. The easternmost cluster E, occupied an area of approximately 150sqm and it consisted of three main buildings (A, B, and C) that were directly accessible from the street. Building C of Cluster E consisted of two communicating rooms (E1 and E4). E4 was probably the living room area and the adjacent room E1, in the southwest of the complex, probably functioned as the storehouse or as a shop. This is indicated by the architectural planning, which provided access to the street, as well as by the pottery which included at least 12 transport amphorae and at least ten large pithoi. The pottery from E1 represented a wide variety of typical Hellenistic vessels and other objects, such as the above-mentioned transport amphorae, lopades, lamps and unguentaria. Six of the ten pithoi from the room were restored to an average height of 0.50m to 0.70m. Amongst these, one pithos, restored to a height of 0.71m, clearly stood out in form and decoration; it has been dated to the Archaic period (Vogeikoff-Brogan 2011a, 553, pl. 237, cat. n. 48) (fig. 112).

As mentioned, this reused pithos from Trypitos is quite unique in the sense that it is the only case where an older pithos was found in a purely Hellenistic site with no traces of previous habitation. According to Vogeikoff-Brogan (2011a, 555), this means that the first inhabitants of Trypitos did not simply inherit the vessel from a previous generation of occupants; rather they must have gone at great lengths and put substantial – most probably team – efforts to carry it, perhaps as heirloom and as a means to publicly declare their territorial rights in the newly founded settlement.

Praisos

Some 20 kilometres south of Trypitos, at the ancient site of Praisos, at least five Archaic pithoi were found in Hellenistic layers. Unlike Trypitos, Praisos has a long history of occupation which goes back to the Late Bronze Age (LM III). However, the settlement reached its apex during the late Classical-Hellenistic period before its final destruction by the city of Ierapetra in 145-140 BC[193]. Praisos was first excavated by Halbherr during his first expedition in Crete in the years 1893-1894 (Halbherr 1894, 1896). Some years later, in 1901, Robert Carr Bosanquet resumed excavations at the site focusing at the cemetery and the Altar hill (or Third Acropolis), as well as at a Hellenistic house on the northwest slope of the First Acropolis, which became known as the '*andreion*' or 'the Almond Tree House' (Bosanquet 1901-1902, 260). After Bosanquet's diggings, Praisos remained largely unexplored. The extensive looting of the 1960s (for which see discussion in Chapter 6) necessitated some small rescue excavations by the Greek Archaeological Service, which managed to salvage only a few chance finds[194]. Since the early 1990s, the site has been systematically re-examined and excavated by Whitley. Initially, the excavation team launched an architectural and topographical and fieldwalking survey (Whitley 2011, 8, fn. 7), but in 2007 they started a systematic excavation and re-investigation of the area around the Almond Tree House. Although Bosanquet's '*andreion'* was not excavated, the re-investigation of the adjacent structures and findings offered convincing evidence which buttressed the identification of the building as a public hall. Two trenches to the north and south of the Almond Tree House (A-200 and A-300) yielded some very interesting finds, including the reused pithoi under discussion.

The very mixed nature of the pottery on the upper layers of the trenches indicated that they corresponded to the dumps where Bosanquet had thrown out the material excavated from within the building (Whitley 2014b, 147). As Whitley dug through Bosanquet's dump in Trench A-200, he found deposits of a large number of lamps, hydriai, jugs and cup fragments of late Classical or Hellenistic date. Next to the local finewares, a number of coarsewares were found in the upper layers of the

[193] The destruction of Praisos by Ierapetra is mentioned by Strabo (10.4.12): '*Κατέσκαψαν Ιεραπύτνιοι'*
[194] For research by the Greek Archaeological Service at Praisos, see Whitley et al. 1995, 406-407; Whitley 2011, 7, fn. 6; 2015, 36-37.

trench. These included open vessels such as mortaria, as well as pithoi, which comprised about 1-2% of the finds[195]. The adjoining room to the west of the Almond Tree House also contained a layer of fragments from at least four different pithoi which were found *in situ* at the southeast corner of the room. In the centre of the room was a stone column base and to the southwest there was a rectangular stone-built hearth and a small amphora (fig. 113). The pottery from immediately above the floor contained numerous cup fragments (at least 342), as well as fragments of at least two large Classical or Hellenistic pithoi, one of which is the incised pithos mentioned in the previous section. On the floor level itself, there were fragments of four more pithoi, three of which were of Archaic date (Whitley 2011, 27-28, Pithoi 1, 2 and 3) (fig. 114). Drawing from these reused pithoi at Praisos and Trypitos, as well as from the cases from central Crete described previously, Whitley argued that the retention of these pithoi is not only a matter of their being viewed as antiques but rather a matter of familial heirlooms which, like some of the inscribed pithoi, attests to their 'distinct kind of agency' (Whitley 2011, 3).

Azoria

Before further investigating the reuse of Cretan pithoi, it is worth noting that it is not only Geometric, Orientalizing or Archaic pithoi we find in later contexts. There is at least one documented case of LM IIIC (12th c.) pithos found on the destruction layer of storeroom B300 at Azoria in the so-called East Corridor House (Haggis et al. 2004, 354-355) (fig. 115). This fragmentary Bronze Age pithos, considered typical of the local LM IIIC type, has a decoration of incised chevron bands and applied rope patterns and it was found next to an Archaic pithos and two groundstone tools. Like many of the cases described so far, these two pithoi were found in the destruction layer of the house, on top of which a new surface was constructed as part of the major renovation of the site at the end of the 6th c. BC. The excavators believe that the Bronze Age pithos was retained as an heirloom, a

[195] The majority of coarsewares and the pithoi are of local origin (consisting of phyllite or quartzite inclusions) but a major exception was 'a coarse yellow fabric with clearly micaceous inclusions' (Whitley 2011, 13). The presence of silver mica was a feature taken to indicate an off-island import of coarsewares to Praisos either a Cycladic (Naxian?) or West Anatolian origin for Aegean fabrics. Like the pithos fragment of Kommos, discussed in the previous section, the presence of silver mica in coarsewares may correspond with the micaceous pithos fabric identified in the present thesis. A future cross-examination of the two fabrics may actually point towards the identification of this fabric in the Praisian coarsewares as Cretan, perhaps even from the wider area of Pediada.

remarkable case of pithos recycling, for this vessel was some 700 years old (ibid. 354, ft. 47). Together with this pithos, Azoria has other cases of retained or reused items. These include one Daedalic plaque, found in the kitchen of the North Acropolis Building, one EIA figurine from the south kitchen of the Service Complex, a Protogeometric krater in the north room of the Civic Shrine as well as some early figurines from its altar[196]. For all these cases, including the pithos under discussion, Fitzsimons (2014, 243) suggested that they indicate 'an interest on the part of (at least) some individual families in preserving some of the material elements from earlier generations'. More specifically, he addressed the possibility that some of these items were purposefully kept and displayed as heirlooms as part of an active and conscious social mechanism in order to 'maintain physical, symbolic, and emotional ties to the social environment of the immediate and more distant past' (ibid. 243).

In sum, at least nine sites of central and east Crete have cases of reused complete or fragmentary pithoi. In their overwhelming majority, these pithoi have been found in abandonment or destruction layers of domestic units of the Hellenistic or the Late Roman period, or as in the case of Azoria, in an Archaic destruction level. It is worth noting that in most of these cases, the pithoi found in later contexts were readily identified by the excavators as cases of reused objects, some of which were ascribed with the value of heirlooms. In the following part, I discuss these cases from a broader perspective to argue that Cretan pithoi were also identifiable during antiquity as valuable objects to be preserved for later usage. I also argue that because of their physical characteristics, the high specialization required for their making and their symbolic meanings, pithoi became associated with valuable ancestral possessions closely associated with the domestic realm.

4.2.2. Heirloom-ability of Cretan pithoi

The retention of pithoi for long periods of time is not a phenomenon unique to ancient Crete. Although much less frequently documented, there are a number of isolated cases from other parts of the Greek world. The best-known cases outside Crete are the late 8th and 7th c. relief pithoi from the sanctuary of Demeter

[196] See collection of references on their precise contexts at Azoria in Fitzsimons 2014, 243.

Thesmophoros in (E)Xobourgo, Tenos, an island known for its production of the Tenian-Boeotian pithoi (Kontoleon 1952, 533-540; 1953, 259-268; Mazarakis Ainian 1997, 177-188; Kourou 2002, 265). The sanctuary was in use from the late 8th until at least the 4th c., but many of these early pithoi were found in later contexts, including the famous Geometric pithos with decoration on the neck of alternating horizontal bands of meander and hook-chain and the 7th c. *Birth Pithos*[197]. Both of these pithoi were collected from the east part of the complex (areas V.1 and VI) in the levels of the Classical and Hellenistic walls, thus confirming the diachronic use of the complex and of the pithoi. From the later periods and from outside Greece, similar cases have been reported for some Roman *dolia* which were retained for prime use for extremely long periods, and were occasionally salvaged from abandoned sites by means of pit-robbing (Peña 2007, 46-47). Next to examples from antiquity, a number of ethnographic cross-cultural sources testify to the long use of storage jars (Rice 1987, 297). The ethnographic review by Michael Shott (1996) demonstrated that a vessel's large height and heavy weight are reliable predicators of their long life-use, and this is particularly the case for vessels such as storage jars which were less likely to be moved. We find some examples in early modern Cyprus which showed that of some modern *pitharia* used for the fermentation of wine in the Troodos Mountains remained in use for over a century (London 1989, 68, 71). Moreover, from Crete of the 20th c. AD, there is at least one known case, where a pre-WW II house of a family in Monastiraki in east Crete contained some 50 pithoi (lessened to 30 pithoi in the post-war period), many of which were more than two centuries old (Kanta 1983, 159, fig.21).

Though these examples demonstrate that storage jars are indeed reused throughout time and space, the particularity of reused ancient Cretan pithoi listed above lies in four fundamental elements. Firstly, the examples from Crete show a regional pattern, where the practice of reusing ancient pithoi was habitually adopted in the central and the east part of the island. Secondly, the cases from Crete constitute the most numerous (thus-far documented) examples from anywhere else in the Greek world. Thirdly, the majority of these cases are associated with household contexts and particularly with their destruction layers. Lastly, what distinguishes Cretan pithoi is

[197] Specifically for these pithoi of the Tenian-Boeotian group, see Caskey 1976 and Simantoni-Bournia 2004, pl. 22; 24-31; 32-38.

their actual period of retention which in most of the cases is longer than four hundred years. If we follow the general rule of thumb for a generation to be an average period of thirty years, then in some of the cases presented above the Geometric or Archaic pithoi were preserved almost intact for as long as thirteen generations. In other words, as Whitley (2011, 29) put it: 'the extent to which Cretans clearly liked to hold on to their pithoi is remarkable'. Apparently, as we have seen from the cases presented previously, this even includes some less finely or ornamented vessels, such as the pithoi from Trypitos, the inscribed pithos from Phaistos, and those from Praisos. Whitley's graph for the longevity of these pithoi is demonstrative of their long retention (Whitley 2018a, 80) (fig. 116). In view of these particularities, the reuse of Cretan ancient pithoi becomes rather a matter of *continuous use*. This begs the question whether some of these were continuously used simply because of their *de facto* longevity, or whether they were purposefully retained as antiques and even as heirlooms because of their pragmatic and symbolic value.

At this point it is worth exploring the difference between an *antique* and an *heirloom*. An *antique* is something that is simply old, whilst an *heirloom* (literally meaning 'a tool or article given to one's heirs') refers to 'an object retained within the same family for several generations' (Whitley 2002, 226). In other words, an *heirloom* is an *antique* but an *antique* is not necessarily an *heirloom*. As such, heirlooms are intrinsically and genealogically connected to the house both as an architectural and as a social unit (Joyce 2000)[198]. The problem with pinpointing the distinction between the two in the archaeological record lies in the fact that lacking texts (i.e. inscriptions) or other kinds of accompanying evidence ethnographers have at their disposal (i.e. oral testimonies), archaeologists cannot easily differentiate an object's state of being (an *antique*) from how this object was treated by its owners (an *heirloom*).

At present, there is no solid archaeological framework for the approach of anachronistic objects or a definite terminology for their identification (i.e. heirlooms,

[198] As Susan McKinnon also concluded in her analysis of the wooden ancestral altars (*tavu*) in Indonesian Tanimbar, '[h]eirloom valuables are not only connected with the actions of the founding ancestors and therefore associated with the origins of the house; they are also linked to the sources of otherworldly power' (McKinnon 2002, 172).

ancestor artefacts, relics, mementoes, antiques)[199]. Methodological and interpretative problems as to the identification of 'the past in the past' remain because in order to map the transformation of an object into an heirloom we need to trace not only the exact context of its reuse but also the process by which it made its way into a later context. Even more so, this would need to be on a case-by-case basis and not on a class of objects in general, for not all reused items were necessarily heirlooms. As Jo Stoner (2019, 95) acknowledges, 'it is impossible to be sure of the presence of heirlooms unless the moment in which meaning is created is shown'. Naturally, this is not the case for the Cretan pithoi under discussion. The evidence we have at our disposal is only their final stage of deposition but we do not have traces of their cultural biographies in the past. For this reason, it would be more realistic – and perhaps even more useful for understanding the cultural biographies of artefacts – to speak about the heirloom-ability of pithoi, namely the circumstances and the attributes which *could* have transformed them into valuable familial possessions.

Specifically in the case of pithoi, any differentiation between the two meanings (antique – heirloom) becomes much more complicated. To start with, there are practical and economic reasons which make them worthy to be retained in the first place. In general, the size and their specialized craft process did not promote their mass production; their making required considerable labour investment and expertise, thus making them one of the most valuable and expensive items, more likely to be carefully mended with lead clamps rather than to be simply thrown away. For the Roman period, Cato (*De Agricultura*) gives specific details for the mending of pithoi[200], and archaeologically, this practice is testified for many Roman *dolia* (Peña 2007, 46-47), as well as for some Greek pithoi from Tenos and Crete[201]. In addition to their high economic value (Cahill 2002, 228; see also Chapter 1.1.3, fn. 12), what is particularly true for ceramic storage containers is that, provided they retain a

[199] For an overview of methodological concerns, problems in terminology and the interpretation(s) of anachronistic objects, see Knight et al. 2019, esp. 3-5, table 1.1. The authors suggest that 'reappropriation' serves best as a catch-all term, because 'in a sense, any interaction with an already old object is a reappropriation of some kind' (ibid. 11).

[200] De Agricultura 39.1: '*and mend wine-jars with lead, or hoop them with thoroughly dried oak wood. If you mend it carefully, or hoop it tightly, closing the cracks with cement and pitching it thoroughly, you can make any jar serve as a wine-jar*'. On more textual sources and a commentary on the repair of Roman *dolia*, see Peña, 2007, 211-217.

[201] For examples from Greece, see Kourou 2002, 266 for pithos E1 from Tenos mentioned earlier; see Bosanquet 1901-1902, 270 for a pithos mended with a lead rivet found at the Almond Tree House of Praisos.

relatively good state of preservation, they do not lose their primary utilitarian efficacy which is to store mass amounts of goods. For example, a pithos which is no longer appropriate for the storage of liquids can easily turn into a container for solid goods or other kinds of artefacts.

The ability of storage jars to retain their primary use for long periods of time adds a diachronic functional value, thus making it exceptionally challenging to assess the potential appreciation of a reused pithos as an heirloom. In fact, Evans and Millet (1992, 225) have argued that a distinction between 'so-called heirlooms and rubbish-survivals' is meaningless because 'any artefact type will have a currency in circulation which will always include occasional examples with a considerably longer than average use-life'. Although interpretational concerns are valid, this approach ignores the many meanings that pithoi or other durable objects may acquire precisely because of their extended use-lives. Studies on the cultural biographies and/or the agency of objects have demonstrated that objects, as personal possessions, can serve a mnemonic function which does not primarily derive from an object's materiality (i.e. its physical characteristics); rather it is the meanings and the social value ascribed to an object that cause its ability to stimulate emotional responses, to evoke feelings of inter-generational bonds and to prompt familial memories (e.g. Gell 1998; Hoskins 1998; Woodard 2002; Jones 2007; Gilchrist 2013). Therefore, objects with extended biographies can be retained, reused and valued for their symbolic and/or for their functional properties, since the appropriateness for the reuse of an object does not necessarily outweigh the potential meanings it may acquire.

Valuable evidence for some necessary conditions to ascribe objects as heirlooms comes from Katina Lillios' wide-ranging ethnographic research on the use of the heirloom in bands, tribes and chiefdoms (Lillios 1999). From her review of the ethnographic data, it became evident that throughout the ethnographic record heirlooms are typically made of durable and semi-durable materials (stone, ceramics, metal, wood, and textile) and they are rather restricted in type (ibid. 242). Especially in the case of chiefly and elite societies, the inheritance of property is critically related to access to important resources and goods (be it by means of land ownership or prestige). Following this review, Lillios proposed that in the archaeological record, heirlooms can be recognized provided they fulfil the following conditions: first, they date to an earlier period than other objects in that context; second, heirlooms are conservative in their general form over time; third, particularly as symbol of authority

associated with chiefdoms, they are often represented in different raw materials; and lastly, heirlooms are often items of ornamentation, and if agricultural implements made of highly valued materials, used for food production, preparation or storage (251-252). Although archaeologically, Lillios' third attribute regarding the variability of raw materials is not easily traceable in the archaeological record when it comes to storage containers in general (for example, containers such as baskets do not survive), the three other attributes are represented exceptionally well by Cretan pithoi: they are the containers of material and land wealth, they are often embellished with elaborate decoration, they are particularly resistant to typological change, and of course, they were all found in much later contexts.

Perhaps the closest parallel to the heirloom-ability of storage containers is the recent study by Jo Stoner (2019) on the 'Cultural Lives of Domestic Objects in Late Antiquity'. Stoner built on the cultural biography of objects to explore the treatment of objects as heirlooms, gifts, souvenirs etc. during the 3rd – 5th c. AD. This wide-ranging work includes a case-study on the multilayered appreciation of baskets, be they as ritual objects, as a symbol of the plenty, or as the containers of personal meanings (ibid. 73-91). Stoner showed that domestic objects such as baskets became heirlooms via their lengthy curation within the house which grants them the capacity to accumulate memories. Domestic contexts such as storage, she adds, 'allowed the extended preservation and the static use or display of domestic material culture, with meanings associated with family identity and memory collecting as a consequence'. This study also demonstrated that, although heirlooms are represented in a very broad spectrum of materials in terms of their economic worth, there is high heirloom-ability in expensive possessions, perhaps a reflection of a desire to connect an object's material value with its symbolic meaning: 'objects of high economic worth seem to thus correspond to the formal creation of heirlooms and their accumulation of meaning and memories within the home' (ibid. 21).

Following Lillios and Stoner, the pithoi under discussion incorporate some fundamental conditions for their consideration as possible heirlooms. These are primarily suggested by the function and durability of their material as well as by their high-economic worth. Most significantly, however, it is the context of reuse, the house, which bestows them with an heirloom-able value. Reused pithoi from Crete were mostly found in contexts associated with the domestic realm. Given the fact that storage jars are a necessary item of the household, this context is not surprising;

however their size and their ability to maintain their storage role lend them the ability to become part of a permanent or semi-permanent fixture within the home. In the spirit of Stoner, who draws attention to the extended preservation and static use of heirlooms, the permanence of pithoi strengthens their capacity to become the containers not only of goods but also of memories, and thus their potential to acquire an heirloom status. Moreover, as I have argued for some of the inscribed pithoi, their size and quite often their decoration, render them with a quality of permanence and monumentality that is similar to architectural structures and sculpture. Thus, in the strictest meaning of the word monument (from the Greek *mnemosynon* and the Latin *moneo*, *monere,* meaning 'to remind'), pithoi can be perceived as object-monuments and as the strong physical markers of a memorialisation processes. By virtue of this monumentality, pithoi elicit a visual and social effect, sometimes also augmented by their decoration: they have the potency to impose their message as the containers of an identity that was potentially legitimized via ancestral bonds, thereby tying their present owners with their forefathers. Yet, the monumentality of pithoi differs from that of monumental buildings in the sense storage jars are much more approachable: they are objects-monuments which are tangible, recognizable and much more familiar from every-day experience and exposure within the average household. This characteristic adds to the heirloom-ability of the Cretan pithoi discussed here.

Moreover, the repeated occurrence of older Cretan pithoi in later destruction and abandonment layers or in phases of radical rebuilding processes strengthens their inherent connection with the house, revealing that pithoi were only 'abandoned when the household as a social unit – and as a constituent part of the *polis* – in turn ceased to exist' (Whitley 2018a, 80). One possible manifestation of the inseparable link between the Cretan pithos and the house is on the case of the reused pithos from the one-phase Hellenistic site of Trypitos. Evidently, the Archaic pithos came from another settlement established elsewhere. Surely, it is possible that this was taken from an abandoned house or even bought second-hand; however, it is equally possible that the pithos became part of a moveable ancestral material culture, or, as Whitley put it, 'when the house moved, then so did the pithoi' (ibid. 80). In this case, we can assume that this vessel was perhaps so intrinsically tied to the household and the family of its occupants to the point that it came to declare the links of an Archaic past with an Hellenistic present.

Another key-factor for the concentration of heirloom-able value to pithoi is their symbolism, firstly as 'receptacle[s] for the fruits of the earth' (Cullen Keller 1990, 193) and secondly as the products of a specialized skill. By function, pithoi are connected with the prosperity of a house. This, in addition to their high economic value and their limited movability, adds to their potential to acquire an ancestral significance and to act as the means for the display of individual and familial wealth, as for example it has been argued for the pithoi from the houses of Azoria (Chapter 3.3. II) or for the inscribed pithos at Phaistos mentioned earlier, the text of which has been read as an expression of a valuable familial possession. As such, the pithos has the capacity to confer an individual's or a family's ability to possess such pot and to fill it in with (hopefully) massive amounts of goods. Furthermore, pithoi were a symbol of the ultimate level of mastery in crafts. The ancient proverb *'τὸ λεγόμενον δὴ τοῦτο ἐν τῷ πίθῳ τὴν κεραμείαν ἐπιχειρεῖν μανθάνειν',* attested as early as the 4th c. BC (see the previous section), highlights that their emblematic value as the most supreme creation of craftsmen was widely established in ancient consciousness. The laborious making of pithoi, which would have been witnessed first-hand by their consumers, turned them into an index of craftsmanship. Thus, both the pithos, as a recognised form, and the process of its manufacture could have come to embody a valuable familial possession, perhaps one with an ancestral value too.

Lastly, I would like to draw attention to the two cases of reused pithoi from Casa Greca and from Chalara at Phaistos. In both instances the pithoi were purposefully and neatly cut in halves. Their deposition and their curation indicate that they became incorporated into contemporary, Hellenistic household culture, in a way which removed them from circulation and deprived them of their primary function. Whether this indicates their use as heirlooms has to remain hypothetical, however, the cases from Phaistos demonstrate that the original form, the function and the meaning of pithoi transformed during the period of their use.

In sum, although some have recognized Cretan reused pithoi as heirlooms, we should be extremely cautious in readily assuming that their archaeological discovery equals knowledge of their history. However, within the cases presented so far, we can infer possible attachments between Cretan pithoi and their consumers in the context of memorialisation processes. All in all, the reused pithoi discussed here incorporate some fundamental attributes which lend them the capacity to turn into estimable family and household possessions, worthy of preservation and mending, as

well as of being passed on to succeeding generations. This enables us to contemplate the many possibilities of their cultural biographies in the past: the meanings and memories they evoked, however shifting through time, remained applicable through daily experiences and household, familial usage. With these possibilities in mind, we can evaluate Cretan pithoi or indeed Greek pithoi and other artefacts with extended biographies, beyond their stylistic features and we can begin to re-consider them as artefacts with a potency to incorporate, display and elicit memories.

Conclusion

The practice of writing on Cretan EIA-Archaic pithoi has been taken to indicate their agency as inscribed media and evidence for a conventional ideology based on values of moderation and austerity. In reviewing the evidence on inscribed pithoi from Crete and by comparing it with examples from elsewhere in Greece, this study showed that writing on pithoi was not unique to Crete and that the inscribed specimens from the island are very few and fragmentary to allow for safe conclusions. However, the study highlighted the particularity of Cretan pithoi as indicated by two distinctive elements: a) the two specimens from Phaistos and Prinias represent one of our earliest indications of the Greek alphabet, and b) unlike the examples from the rest of Greece where inscribed pithoi are usually found in cemeteries of sanctuaries, Cretan inscribed pithoi are generally associated with domestic spaces or spaces linked to commensality. Drawing from this, but also from the fact that these earliest inscriptions preserve a form of implicit personal expression (either via the mention of a complete name and ownership or that of the craftsman), I argued that the choice of pithoi as the inscribed medium at this early stage of the alphabet signifies that in Crete, writing was initially used to mark the property of a particularly high-valued possession. In addition, the character of the text inscribed has implications for literacy amongst pithos makers and for their integration within the population of Cretan EIA-Archaic communities. Furthermore, I considered the monumentality of inscribed pithoi wherein the engraved text added to their symbolic value by expressing one's ability to own such a pot as and from one's access to literacy.

Following on from this, I surveyed the occurrence of EIA-Archaic pithoi in later contexts and I elaborated on proposals for their retention as heirlooms. The evidence of reused pithoi from Crete showed a regional pattern in the central and the

east part of the island and their association with domestic contexts, especially with destruction or abandonment layers. Having called for a cautious and critical use of the term ‘heirloom’, I suggested that discussion should instead be focused on their heirloom-ability of pithoi as the most appropriate approach for understanding their cultural biographies in the past. In contextualizing the context of their reuse, I argued that certain aspects of Cretan pithoi establish them as heirloom-able objects. These aspects range from their physical properties and their high-economic worth, to the visual, memorable effect caused by their size and/or by their decoration, their permanent or semi-permanent fixture within the house, their symbolic association with the household and its prosperity, and their form as the embodiment of high-skilled craftsmanship. These are attributes which could have transformed these utilitarian objects into artefacts with a strong biographical agency that was enhanced over time. This is a pervasive quality of Cretan pithoi which continues well on into the early modern and modern periods. And it is a matter which I explore further in the next two Chapters of this thesis.