

PIGS FOR THE GODS: BURNT ANIMAL SACRIFICES AS EMBODIED RITUALS AT A MYCENAEAN SANCTUARY

Summary. The archaeology of animal sacrifice has attracted considerable attention, although discussions on the meanings and social effects of the practice in different contexts are rather under-developed. In the Aegean, classical antiquity has provided abundant literary, zooarchaeological and iconographic evidence (and has inspired some excellent studies) but it has also overshadowed discussion on sacrifice in other periods. Until recently, it was assumed that burnt animal sacrifices (i.e. the ritual burning of bones or parts of the carcass, often taken to be offerings to the deities) were absent from the pre-classical contexts. Recent studies have shown this not to be the case. This article reports and discusses evidence for burnt animal sacrifices from the sanctuary of Ayios Konstantinos at Methana, north-east Peloponnese. It constitutes the first, zooarchaeologically verified such evidence from a sanctuary context. The main sacrificial animals seem to have been juvenile pigs, which were transported as whole carcasses into the main cultic room; non-meaty parts were selected for burning whereas their meaty parts were first consumed by humans and then thrown into the fire (some neonatal pigs may have been thrown into the fire whole). The article integrates zooarchaeological, other contextual, and comparative archaeological evidence and explores the social roles and meanings of sacrifice in the Mycenaean context and more broadly. It is suggested that, rather than focusing on possible continuities of the practice through to the classical period (an issue which remains ambiguous), sacrifice should be meaningfully discussed within the broader framework of the archaeology of feasting, and more generally food consumption, as a socially important, sensory embodied experience. The evidence from Ayios Konstantinos may reveal a hitherto eluding phenomenon: small-scale, sacrificial-feasting ritual in a religious context, conferring cosmological and ideological powers on few individuals, through the participation in an intense, embodied, transcendental experience.

INTRODUCTION

The topic of animal sacrifice has attracted considerable attention in many disciplines, including anthropology, ancient history, classics and archaeology (e.g. Hubert and Mauss 1964; Quaegebeur 1993; Valeri 1985; van Straten 1995). Zooarchaeologically, the phenomenon has

been recorded in many and diverse contexts, ranging from Iron Age and Roman Britain (e.g. Grant 1991; Hill 1995; Levitan 1993), to classical Athens (e.g. Reese 1989), Archaic (i.e. eighth–sixth century BC) Cyprus (e.g. Davis 1996), and ninth century AD Mongolia (Crubézy *et al.* 1996) among others, although many studies focus more on its definition and identification, and less on its meaning and social implications. In the Aegean context, the classical evidence (defined broadly here, to include the time span from the Iron Age to the Hellenistic and Roman periods) looms large and has overshadowed the discussion on the role and meaning of sacrifice in other periods. Within the archaeology of ‘Mycenaean’ Greece (defined here in the conventional sense, as chronologically and spatially specific material manifestation, and not as ethnic indicator), the debate on animal sacrifice tends to concentrate on the archaeological documentation of the practice and its specific form; a central question here is whether burnt animal sacrifice, i.e. the burning of bones or parts of the carcass as offerings to deities, was indeed practised during the Mycenaean period, or whether it is another example of scholars extrapolating from the classical periods and projecting anachronistic statements onto the prehistoric and proto-historic past (cf. Bergquist 1988).

Until recently, it was argued that there is no archaeological evidence for the practice of burnt animal sacrifices in Mycenaean Greece (e.g. Bergquist 1988, 1993). Isaakidou *et al.* (2002) reported evidence of selective burnt animal sacrifices from Pylos (cf. also Davis and Stocker in press). They also discussed briefly whether this evidence is proof for continuity of Mycenaean sacrificial practices into the classical period, when burnt sacrifices are attested in literary, iconographic and zooarchaeological sources. This paper continues the discussion by presenting further zooarchaeological evidence for Mycenaean burnt animal sacrifices from a sanctuary context (cf. Hamilakis 2003). More specifically, the paper presents in a preliminary form and discusses some of the aspects of the zooarchaeological evidence from the recently excavated sanctuary of Ayios Konstantinos, in north-east Peloponnese. It also provides an opportunity to go beyond the issue of archaeological documentation of the phenomenon, and discuss possible interpretations of its role and social implications in a broader context. A full reporting and discussion of the material and its context will be carried out in its final publication.

THE SITE

The site of Ayios Konstantinos is located on a low hill (114m altitude) lying on the east coast of the Methana peninsula (north-east Peloponnese, Greece), and at a distance of 1.5 km north of the modern port town of Methana, and 300m from the coast (Fig. 1). Excavations by the Greek Archaeological Service (2nd Ephoreia of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities), which started as a rescue dig in 1990 and continued as a research project under the direction of Eleni Konsolaki, revealed around the courtyard of the modern chapel of Ayios Konstantinos an architectural complex, dated to the Late Bronze Age (‘Mycenaean’ – LH IIIA–B: fourteenth–thirteenth century BC); the complex (or at least some rooms from it) seems to have been associated with religious practices (Konsolaki 1995, 1996, 2002; Konsolaki-Yannopoulou 2001, 2003a, 2003b, in press). The excavation revealed that the architectural complex was quite extensive (Fig. 2). As the study of the whole complex is still continuing, we will refrain from further general comment, and concentrate instead on the rooms that are linked directly to the zooarchaeological evidence presented here.

More specifically, of the four rooms which were initially excavated (Fig. 3) in the south part of the complex and west of the modern church, room A (measuring internally *c.*4.30 by



Figure 1
Location map of the sites mentioned in the text.

2.60 m) is characterised by architectural features and finds that, if found in association, are linked to the Mycenaean cult (cf. Konsolaki 2002; Renfrew 1985): a stone bench (made of upright stone slabs), linked to three low steps, in the north-west corner; a low stone platform along the south wall; and a small hearth in the south-east corner, made of unworked stone, containing a thick layer of ash and burnt animal bones (Fig. 4). Around 150 terracotta figurines (most of them zoomorphic, depicting bovines, but some anthropomorphic too, depicting charioteers, bull-jumpers and riders, and one boat model) were found on the steps of the bench and its immediate proximity (Fig. 5). According to the excavator (Konsolaki 1999, 2002; Konsolaki-Yannopoulou

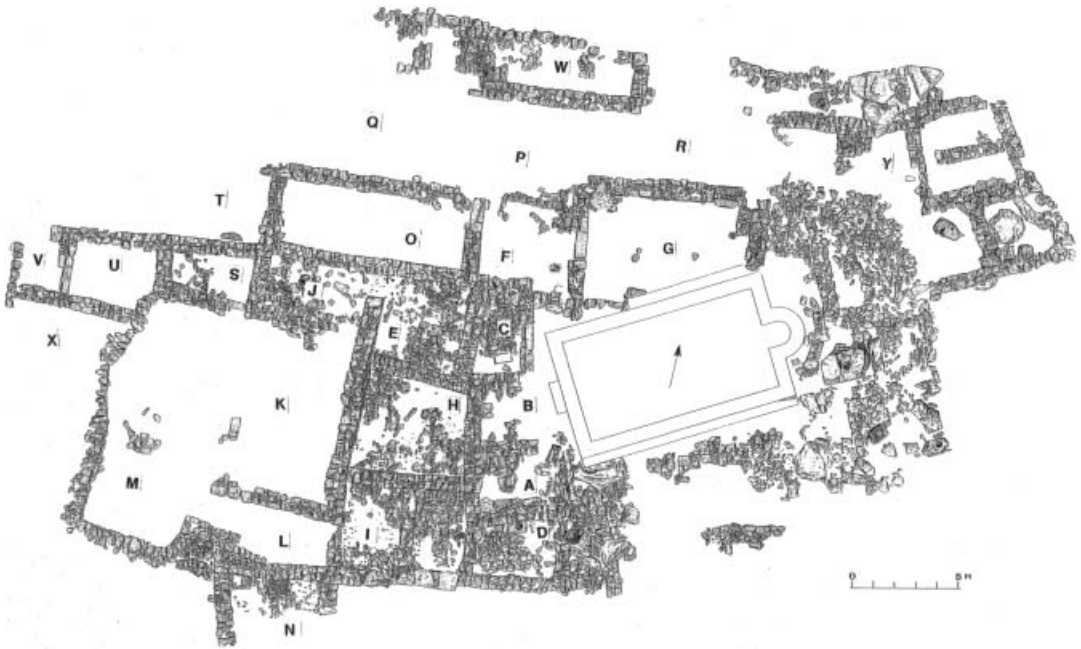


Figure 2

The architectural complex at Ayios Konstantinos, Methana, with the main sanctuary rooms (A, B, C) opposite the entrance of the modern chapel, and the associated structures surrounding it (drawing by Nikos Kalliontzis).

2003b) most of the figurines were votive offerings rather than representations of deities. In the same area, a number of drinking vessels (*kylikes* etc.) and a large triton shell which seems to have had its apex artificially cut (Konsolaki-Yannopoulou 2001, 213ff.), were found (Fig. 5). Around the hearth there were a number of cooking pots and a stone spit-rest (Fig. 6), whereas in other parts of the room, vessels associated with libations, including an animal-head rhyton resembling a pig head, were found. The archaeological deposit in this room appears to belong to a single destruction layer.

The architectural arrangement and the finds in the adjacent rooms B and C (Γ) and D (Δ) were less impressive but included hearths (rooms B and D), and a stone-paved floor in room C that had been cut through to construct a cist-grave containing commingled remains of infant burials (Konsolaki-Yannopoulou 2003a); room D did not contain finds of an obvious 'religious' nature and its most noticeable finds were ground and stone tools and some pieces of lead (Konsolaki 1996, 73; Demou *et al.* 2003).

THE ZOOARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIAL

The analysis of the zooarchaeological material (which was collected by dry-sieving, using 5 mm mesh size) was carried out by one of us (YH) during 1994, at the Wiener Laboratory of the American School of Classical Studies, Athens. The comparative collections of the Laboratory as well as the author's own comparative collection, atlases (e.g. Schmid 1972) and



Figure 3

Simplified plan of the architectural complex of the main sanctuary at Ayios Konstantinos (redrawn by John Scofield, on the basis of drawings and sketches supplied by Eleni Konsolaki; for a more detailed plan, see Konsolaki 2002).

other relevant literature were used for the identification of the material. Quantification followed the method which can be called 'Number of Anatomical Units' (see Hamilakis 1996), a variation of the fragments method (Number of Identified Specimens – NISP). The following anatomical units were defined: mandible, maxilla, mandibular teeth (pre-molars and molars), maxillary teeth (pre-molars and molars), horn/antler, atlas, axis, scapula (glenoid fossa), pelvis (acetabulum), proximal humerus, distal humerus, proximal radius, distal radius, proximal femur, distal femur, proximal tibia, distal tibia, proximal metacarpal, distal metacarpal, proximal metatarsal, distal metatarsal, calcaneum, astragalus, phalanx 1, phalanx 2, phalanx 3. A number of seashells (mostly limpets) found in the three rooms are not included in this analysis.

The assemblage reported here comes from rooms A, B and C. Although relatively small in size (only 125 identifiable fragments of a total of 553), it exhibits some interesting characteristics, as shown below. Table 1 presents the zooarchaeological material from all three rooms in numbers of fragments and Table 2 shows the representation of species from all three rooms (expressed in Numbers of Anatomical Units – NAU). As can be seen, sheep/goat dominate although the high percentage of pigs is noticeable. Other species, including wild fauna such as red deer, are represented in much smaller numbers. But the picture becomes more interesting if we break down the assemblage into two groups, one originating from room A, the main cultic room according to the excavator, and another originating from rooms B and C. As can be seen from Table 3, the assemblage from room A is dominated by pig bones (*c.*54



Figure 4

Room A (seen from the south-east), showing the low platform along the south wall, the stone bench and its associated steps in the north-west corner, and the area of the hearth in the south-east corner (photo by Eleni Konsolaki).



Figure 5

Some of the figurines, the vessels and the triton shell (seen from the north), found in the area of the stone bench, in the north-west corner of room A (photo by Eleni Konsolaki).



Figure 6

The area of the hearth in the south-east corner of Room A (seen from the north) with the stone spit-rest shown (photo by Eleni Konsolaki).

TABLE 1

The vertebrate faunal remains recovered from the Mycenaean sanctuary of Ayios Konstantinos, expressed in numbers of fragments

	Room A	Rooms B and C	TOTAL
Identifiable	59	64	125
Vertebrae	–	5	5
Ribs	2	3	5
Unidentifiable	274	146	418
TOTAL	335	218	553

per cent), with sheep/goat representing only 34 per cent. By contrast, the assemblage from rooms B and C (Table 4) is dominated by sheep/goat which amount to *c.*75 per cent, with pigs only at 7 per cent. Other features of the material add to the interesting pattern. While the anatomical representation of pig bones in room A is more or less even, with most parts of the animals represented (indicating thus that whole carcasses were brought into the room), the anatomical representation of sheep/goat is uneven, with mostly meaty parts present (humerus, femur, tibia, scapula, pelvis), although some metapodials and one phalanx were also found. Features such as mandibles and teeth, calcaneum, astragalus and phalanges which are well represented in pigs, are markedly under-represented in sheep/goat, indicating that the pattern is a reflection of human choice, and not recovery procedures. The anatomical representation for sheep/goat (the dominant species) in rooms B and C is relatively even.

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TABLE 2

The representation of species at the sanctuary of Ayios Konstantinos (rooms A, B, C), expressed in Numbers of Anatomical Units

SPECIES	NAU (Number of Anatomical Units)	%
Sheep/goat (<i>Ovis aries</i> / <i>Capra hircus</i>)	90	54.5
Goat (<i>Capra hircus</i>)	7	4.2
Cattle (<i>Bos taurus</i>)	2	1.2
Pig (<i>Sus domesticus</i>)	50	30.3
Red deer (<i>Cervus elaphus</i>)	1	0.6
Deer	1	0.6
Sheep/goat/roe deer	6	3.6
Mouse/rat	2	1.2
Rock dove (<i>Columba livia</i>)	2	1.2
Bird	3	1.8
Fish	1	0.6
TOTAL	165	

TABLE 3

The representation of species in room A (main cultic room) at the sanctuary of Ayios Konstantinos, expressed in Number of Anatomical Units

SPECIES	NAU (Number of Anatomical Units)	%
Sheep/goat (<i>Ovis aries</i> / <i>Capra hircus</i>)	28	34.1
Goat (<i>Capra hircus</i>)	1	1.2
Pig (<i>Sus domesticus</i>)	44	53.7
Sheep/goat/roe deer	2	2.4
Mouse/rat	2	2.4
Rock dove (<i>Columba livia</i>)	2	2.4
Bird	2	2.4
Fish	1	1.2
TOTAL	82	

TABLE 4

The representation of species in rooms B and C at the sanctuary of Ayios Konstantinos, expressed in Numbers of Anatomical Units

SPECIES	NAU (Number of Anatomical Units)	%
Sheep/goat (<i>Ovis aries</i> / <i>Capra hircus</i>)	62	74.7
Goat (<i>Capra hircus</i>)	6	7.2
Cattle (<i>Bos taurus</i>)	2	2.4
Pig (<i>Sus domesticus</i>)	6	7.2
Red deer (<i>Cervus elaphus</i>)	1	1.2
Deer	1	1.2
Sheep/goat/roe deer	4	4.8
Bird	1	1.2
TOTAL	83	

Most of the material from room A comes from very young (some newborn) animals and most of the pig bones are burnt. Some of the other bones belonging to sheep/goat are also burnt. The majority of burnt bones come from an ashy deposit within a structural feature which has been identified as a hearth (Figs. 3 and 6). The coloration ranges from brown-black to grey-white, with the majority of bones being grey-white, indicating that the bones were exposed to relatively high temperatures (Shipman *et al.* 1984; Spennemann and Colley 1989) which resulted in cracking, deformation, and shrinking. It is also interesting that body parts which carry very little or no meat, such as phalanges, and mandibles and teeth, are also burnt. Chopmarks and cutmarks are rare and are attributed to dismembering and filleting of the skeleton; filleting cutmarks on a burnt pig tibia from room A indicate that the meaty parts of at least some animals were stripped of their meat first, and then thrown into the fire. Most of the material from rooms B and C is unburnt, and although there are bones belonging to juvenile animals, the majority comes from adult animals.

ANIMAL SACRIFICES AND MYCENAEAN SOCIETIES

It is clear that the pattern of animal use and disposal in room A, the main cultic room, is significantly different from that in rooms B and C. In room A we detect the selective ritual consumption of young animals, with clear preference shown to pigs. In MNI terms (Minimum Number of Individuals), both pig and sheep/goat bones from room A give a figure of three. The difference in species representation shown by MNI and NAU may be due to the differential treatment of pig bones (through burning resulting in further fragmentation) and to the fact that whole carcasses of pigs were brought into the room, in contrast to sheep and goat which seem to have entered only as selective meaty parts. Nevertheless, the clear predominance of pig bones from the hearth and their exceptionally high numbers in room A in comparison to rooms B and C are beyond dispute. If anything, pig remains from room A are likely to be under-represented: due to fire-induced deformation, secure identification of much of the burnt material was not possible; as pig is the species that has been primarily selected for burning, it is likely that many of the 274 unidentified fragments from room A come from pigs. Of course, due to their body size, their relative contribution in terms of meat is another matter (see discussion below).

The preference for neonatal/juvenile pigs and sheep/goat contrasts with the mainly bovine clay figurines found in the room (Konsolaki-Yannopoulou 2003b), indicating perhaps that surplus animals (especially pigs, which produce many offspring), rather than animals of high agricultural value such as cattle, were used (contrast the Pylos evidence here, where cattle is the main sacrificial animal: Isaakidou *et al.* 2002). Their choice, however, may have as much (or more?) to do with human perception and animal classifications, as with narrowly defined 'economic' considerations. The burnt bones also indicate that non-meaty parts of the skeletons such as phalanges were selected for burning, whereas meaty parts of the skeleton were first consumed by humans and then thrown into the fire (either as burnt offerings or in order to deliberately destroy by fire human food remnants). The consumption/sacrifice of whole pig carcasses in the main cultic room A, as opposed to the selective consumption of meaty sheep/goat parts, indicates that pig was the main sacrificial animal, with its non-meaty parts (i.e. head and feet) perhaps used directly for burnt sacrifices, and its meaty parts offered as bare bones, stripped of their meat for consumption by humans. Some neonatal pigs may have been thrown into the fire as whole carcasses. The deliberate sacrificial burning of bones (as opposed

to say, burning due to fire caused by any destruction) is supported by: a) the selective nature of the burnt material in terms of species and body parts; b) the calcification of bones indicating intense fire, burning at high temperatures; and c) the find spot of the majority of burnt bones (hearth). In rooms B and C the pattern is the one normally expected from a 'non-ritual' context in this period, with sheep/goat predominating, a more varied age profile, and most of the bones unburnt. This, however, does not exclude the possibility that some of the material in rooms B and C has been ritually consumed or that these rooms were linked to ritual practices performed in room A. It simply means that the archaeological visibility of a potentially ritual activity in rooms B and C is very low, in contrast to room A, although further study may change this picture.

The evidence presented here sheds some light on many archaeological questions. It offers further, zooarchaeological confirmation of the excavator's suggestion that room A functioned as a Mycenaean sanctuary. It also offers the first zooarchaeological evidence for burnt animal sacrifices in a sanctuary during the Mycenaean period. It is unlikely that the evidence from Ayios Konstantinos is a unique case. Similar evidence comes from the cult centre of Mycenae, where high frequencies of burnt bones, some from juvenile pigs, were found (Albarella pers. comm.), and as noted above, Isaakidou *et al.* (2002) have recently presented evidence for animal burnt sacrifices at the 'Palace of Nestor' at Pylos, south-west Peloponnese. There are also hints in the archaeological literature which indicate that burnt sacrifices were practised in other Mycenaean religious contexts, such as the sanctuary of 'Apollon Maleatas' (Epidauros) where burnt animal bones together with other cultic finds were recorded (Lambrinouidakis 1981, 59), at Megaron B in Eleusis, recently re-interpreted by Cosmopoulos as an area of cult activity where burnt bones of 'sheep, goats or pigs' were found (Cosmopoulos 2003, 11), and possibly at Tiryns, where animal bones were found in a low ash altar (Kilian 1981, 53–6). It seems, therefore, that the suggestion that the idea of burnt sacrifices in the Mycenaean period is simply an extrapolation from the classical periods (e.g. Bergquist 1988, 1993), does not find empirical support. The apparent archaeological invisibility of burnt sacrifices in the Mycenaean may have more to do with the scarcity of specialist animal bone analyses, than with the sacrificial practices in Mycenaean society.

Burnt sacrifices, therefore, seem to have been practised in the Mycenaean period, although this does not necessarily mean that they should be seen as the precursor of burnt sacrifices of classical Greece, nor must it be assumed that their meaning and social significance were the same as in later periods. After all, the practice has been recorded from other geographically and historically remote contexts (e.g. Forstenpointner 2003), and as Isaakidou *et al.* note (2002, 90), the classical practice may be an introduction from other regional traditions or a re-emergence of a practice in a different form, which must have, no doubt, conveyed different meanings. More specifically, the classical burnt sacrifices, judging from the bone evidence, focused mostly on bovines and caprovines (Forstenpointner 2003, 204; Reese in press), whereas the Mycenaean ones showed at times preference for other species, most notably pigs (Ayios Konstantinos, possibly Mycenae); in classical times, the cult of Demeter is associated with pig offerings, but these were often unburnt, although when pigs were burnt, they were juvenile and were burnt whole (Jameson 1988, 98; Reese 1994, in press); it is not yet clear whether the well-known selective burning of caprovine and bovine animal parts such as the thighs, attested in Homer (*Iliad* I 460–4; *Odyssey* iii 273, ix 551–5) and in the zooarchaeological record (e.g. Forstenpointner 2003; Chenal-Velarde and Studer 2003), or tails, attested from both classical iconography (van Straten 1995), and animal bones from classical contexts (e.g. Chenal-Velarde and Studer 2003; Forstenpointner 2003; Reese 1989; Villa 2000), is also encountered

in Mycenaean sacrifices. In the Pylian case selective body parts were burnt that do not perfectly coincide with those known from Homer nor the iconography (Isaakidou *et al.* 2002, 90), but are close to the Homeric description. At Ayios Konstantinos there does not seem to be a preference for body parts resembling the classical pattern, as all body parts of the main sacrificial animal were used as burnt offerings. Based on the information to date thus, Mycenaean and classical burnt sacrifices show some formal similarities, as well as differences and thus offer no unambiguous support either way on the argument of continuity.

Finally, the discussion on the continuity of the practice often suffers from a terminological confusion. The terms used conflate different practices, which may not all be archaeologically recognisable: in sacrifice, the ritual killing of animals and the subsequent consumption of the meat is the main defining practice; in the case of burnt sacrifices the important aspect is not the ritual killing of the animal itself, but the destruction of parts of the animal body by fire which are supposed in this way to have been offered to the deities, and are thus seen (at least in contexts such as classical antiquity) as having been consumed by them. It is this later practice, together with evidence for meat consumption by humans, that we witness at Ayios Konstantinos. The term burnt sacrifice, therefore, refers here broadly to the ritual destruction of parts of the animal body by fire, but we cannot necessarily assume that this ritual destruction of animal parts and bones was seen by people as food offerings to be consumed by the deities, as is the case with classical evidence. In sum, even if the formal similarities of the practice in the Mycenaean and in the classical periods were securely established, an argument for linear continuity would have been arbitrary and simplistic, since it would have assumed a continuity of meanings and associations.

What about the social meaning *and* social consequences of the practice? The literature on sacrifice concentrates on certain themes, one of the most prominent of which is the communication between the sacred and the profane worlds, and the role of the sacrificial victim as an intermediary. It has been suggested that the intensity of this communicative process results in the destruction of the victim, which becomes the central point of the interaction between the sacred and the profane (cf. Hubert and Mauss 1964, 98). The Eurocentric (Judeo-Christian) and universalising tone of this thesis have been justifiably criticised (cf. De Heusch 1985), as has its Durkheimian dichotomy between 'sacred' and 'profane'. Another common theme which has been explored mainly in the discussions on animal sacrifice in classical antiquity has to do with the sanctioning of meat-eating through sacrifice (cf. Durant and Schnapp 1989; Jameson 1988; several papers in Detienne and Vernant 1989). Given that for most farming societies, meat is an expensive commodity to produce and also involves the killing of the animal, the offering of part of the animal body to the deities operates as a purification ritual which justifies the violence involved in the killing of the animal as necessary, and represents the consumption of a valuable and rare commodity as an experience shared with the deities.

Despite their merits, these arguments obscure the physical and concrete character of the practice, the embodied and performative nature of the activity, its literal and metaphorical transformative character (cf. Bell 1993, 220 and *passim*). Rather than focusing on dichotomies such as ritual/non-ritual and sacred and profane, we suggest that it is within the broader framework of food consumption and feasting as an embodied experience that we could locate a more interesting, interpretative account of the phenomenon (cf. Hamilakis 1999a, 1999b, 2002 for discussions). It is now clearly recognised from epigraphic and archaeological evidence that feasting was a major feature in Mycenaean societies, and that for the Mycenaean authorities at least, the dispatching of animals (including pigs: cf. Bendall in press; Lupack 1999, 28) and

other food to outlying localities for sacrifices was linked to ceremonies of feasting (cf. Bendall in press; Halstead 2003, 259; Killen 1998; Shelmerdine 1999). While the political and social implications of feasting are well attested ethnographically and archaeologically from many contexts (cf. by way of example, Dietler and Hayden 2001; Hamilakis 1998, 1999a), it is only recently that archaeologists are starting to appreciate its role in Mycenaean societies (cf. Killen 1994; Wright 1995, papers in Voutsaki and Killen 2001; cf. Wright in press for a recent review of the evidence; for an early exception see Säflund 1980). It is not inconceivable that the sanctuary at Ayios Konstantinos was linked to certain political authorities and major centres such as the recently discovered Mycenaean site at Magoula, Galatas (cf. Konsolaki-Yannopoulou 2003c) which is inter-visible with Ayios Konstantinos, or perhaps a major yet undiscovered centre on the Methana peninsula. The political geography of the area is complex and little understood (cf. Mee and Forbes 1997), but it is not improbable that Ayios Konstantinos resembled one of the outlying cult localities that Linear B documents record as receiving animals and other items for sacrifices and feasting (cf. Bennet 1998, 114; Bendall in press). Alternatively, it could have been an autonomous ritual locale, occupying a key nodal point in a network of sea and land routes linking north-east Peloponnese with the Saronic Gulf, Attica and beyond (cf. Sherratt 2001; cf. in that respect the boat model found in room A: Wedde 2003); before the completion of the study of the whole complex and of the surrounding region, however, little can be said with certainty.

Whatever its wider associations, however, like the other Mycenaean cult localities (cf. Wright 1994), the sanctuary is characterised by plain architectural arrangement and lack of monumental structures; the plentiful figurines seem to have been its most impressive feature. The experience of feasting in this sanctuary, therefore, would have been very different from that in other contexts such as the Pylos palace, for example, where the monumental architecture and iconography would have structured a different embodied encounter (cf. Davis and Bennet 1999). In the case of Ayios Konstantinos the embodied ritual practices would have focused primarily around animal burnt sacrifices and food and drink consumption itself, as indicated not only by the animal bones but also finds such as hearths, cooking vessels and other artefacts and pottery related to the preparation and serving of food and drink (*spit-rest*, *kylikes*, etc). Within the relatively restricted space of the sanctuary, the social actors partaking in the ritual activities would have engaged in and witnessed the transformative processes that turned animals into food, the performative act of throwing bones and/or animal parts into the fire, but also the embodied experience of consumption. These practices would have been experienced through the bodily senses of smell, touch, and taste, and the intoxication resulted from the consumption of alcohol (suggested by the drinking vessels found). Other sensory stimulations such as sound effects or music (using, for example, the triton shell, found in room A) would not have been out of place (cf. Renfrew 1985 for parallels from the sanctuary of Phylakopi, involving triton shells and tortoise shell fragments). These processes would have resulted in the generation of memories sedimented in the participants' bodies. Through this process, sensory feelings, emotions and memories were exchanged among all participants (cf. Hamilakis 1998, 2002; Seremetakis 1994). This sensory exchange, however, would not have involved only the human social actors present, but also perhaps the deities or ancestors, thus transcending time and place (cf. Barth 1975, 197). Given that the architectural arrangement of the sanctuary would not have allowed for the participation of a large number of people, however, and that the meat represented by the animal bones (coming from few, very young animals) would not have served large numbers of people,

the ceremonies performed would have been socially restricted. The sensory, emotive experiences thus produced would have been sedimented as bodily memory in the bodies of few individuals. The human body is a political field, however (cf. Foucault 1977), and bodily memory one of its most important conduits of power: these sensory mnemonic experiences would have thus been transferred and possibly re-enacted (discursively or materially) in broader spatial and social arenas, conferring authority and power on those few individuals.

A further comparison with Pylos is instructive: the Pylian sacrifices and feasting discussed by Isaakidou *et al.* (2002) involved at least ten large cattle, able to feed several hundred people, and while certain aspects of the practices might have been socially restricted (*ibid.*), the scale of participation would have been much larger than that at Ayios Konstantinos, where the zooarchaeological and architectural evidence indicates much smaller numbers of people. The two cases therefore seen in combination provide a contrasting but complementary picture of the jigsaw of Mycenaean society: a 'palatial' centre and an outlying sanctuary in different regions, both engaging in burnt animal sacrifices and feasting (indicating some commonality of religious and social ideology) but choosing to differ on the animal species selected and on the specific ritual practices, perhaps indicating a diverging regional religious focus. It is worth noting that Sacconi has recently suggested that Mycenaean epigraphic sources point to two types of feasts: the religious ones where sanctuaries were given small quantities of foodstuff to be consumed in the religious feasting rituals, and the 'banquets d'État', held on special occasions and involving the consumption of large quantities of food (Sacconi 2001). Do Ayios Konstantinos and Pylos offer zooarchaeological proof of these two types?

Moreover, the involvement of a large number of people in the Pylian case and the associated role of monumental architecture and iconography indicate that the political consequences of sacrifices and feasting may have been different from those at Ayios Konstantinos. In the latter case, a much smaller number of participants may have had privileged access to the cosmological powers that the active participation in the sacrificial and feasting rituals of the sanctuary would have perhaps conferred; in the former case, a large number of people would have been fed by a wealthy host, keen to demonstrate generosity and impress through monumentality and iconography, as well as religious rituals (cf. Bentall *in press*). Is it perhaps a case of empowerment for the few (at Ayios Konstantinos), and dis-empowerment for the many (at Pylos)?

CONCLUSION

The zooarchaeological material from Ayios Konstantinos offers further empirical support to the suggestion that the complex functioned as a sanctuary, a rare and important find for Mycenaean archaeology; it also constitutes solid zooarchaeological proof for the practice of burnt animal sacrifices in a Mycenaean sanctuary. Moreover, it allows for a broader discussion on ritual and authority. Burnt animal sacrifices can be seen as communal exchanges of sensory emotions and memories, involving the participants and the deities and resulting in authority and power. This authority, however, did not rely on massive architectural constructions and elaborate burial structures but on transcendental bodily experiences. The zooarchaeology of animal sacrifice and feasting (phenomena rarely distinguishable; Hill 1995, 102) can become instrumental in writing archaeologies of sensory experiences, contributing thus to a reconsideration of the issue of power and authority, by moving away from their treatment as

structural edifices to reveal their personalised and embodied role in pre-modern societies. This will require, however, the close attention to embodied, performative practices rather than abstract, de-contextualised concepts, and on the methodological level, the full integration of zooarchaeological with broader archaeological data.

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