

## Prehistory Course\_Syllabus 2017\_Despina Catapoti

This module offers a comprehensive picture of Cretan prehistory, namely the socio-historical transformations that took place on the island between 7000 and 1200 BC.

The module focuses on the following key-themes:

**What is prehistory:** Outline of the course, the history and framework of the concept of "prehistory", prehistory and archaeology, the nature and character of the archaeological record, survey and excavation of sites and features, examination of case studies from around the globe, understanding World Prehistory (chapters 1-3 from Renrew & Bahn 1991).

**Aegean archaeology: An introduction:** History of the discipline, definition of the geographical and chronological framework of Aegean archaeology, main questions and key topics. Minoan archaeology as a sub-field of Aegean archaeology.

**Who were the 'Minoans'?** Nomadic life before the 9<sup>th</sup> millennium BC and the first settlers; possible colonisations during the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC and the question of ethnic identity in the Early Bronze Age Aegean (3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC); contacts during the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC and the concept of 'Minoan thalassocracy'; Mycenaeans in Crete during the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century BC: Immigration, political or economic influence?

**Settlement, house and household:** Settlement development, hierarchy and organization: site dispersal and integration before and during the period of the Minoan palaces; domestic architecture and use of space; the social importance and historical transformation of the household.

**Subsistence and economy:** Food, diet, storage, cooking and consumption; land use patterns and public works (dams, terraces); agricultural surplus management; herding and wool production; craft production; trade and exchange within and outside Crete.

**Social hierarchy and political power:** The emergence of social complexity and the palatial phenomenon in Bronze Age Crete; social models of hierarchy and heterarchy and their application to the Minoan palaces; the architecture and morphology of the palaces; the Minoan palaces as economic and political institutions; power, politics and ritual activity in the palaces; the Minoan villa and the reconfiguration of the political landscape in Crete during the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC; understanding the nature and character of Mycenaean power on Crete after the Santorini eruption.

**Religious and funerary ritual:** from Neolithic caves and rock-shelters to the ancestral landscape of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC; the decline of funerary monumentality during the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium;

possible acts of human sacrifice at the sanctuary of Anemospilia; mountain peak sanctuaries: reflections of popular religion or palatial power? warrior and elite burials after 1450 BC; religion, death and ritual at the periphery: early open-air sanctuaries; caves; domestic sanctuaries and the infiltration of daily life by ritual from the second quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC onwards.

**Bodies and personhood in Minoan Crete:** Body Imagery (as portrayed in figurines, frescoes and seals); gender and material culture in Bronze Age Crete; constructing death and the treatment of the deceased in funerary ritual.

**Lectures are complemented with field trips to the main archaeological sites of Crete.**

### **Bibliography**

REHAK, P. AND YOUNGER, J.G. 1998. Review of Aegean prehistory VII: Neopalatial, Final Palatial and Postpalatial Crete. *American Journal of Archaeology* 102, 91-173.

WATROUS, L.V. 1994. Review of Aegean Prehistory III: Crete for the Earliest Prehistory through the Protopalatial period. *American Journal of Archaeology* 98: 695-753.

### **Further reading**

BRANIGAN, K. 1970. *The foundations of Palatial Crete. A survey of Crete in the Early Bronze Age.* London: Routledge.

DRIESSEN, J. AND MACDONALD, C.F. 1997. *The troubled island. Minoan Crete before and after the Santorini eruption.* *Aegaeum* 17. Liège: Université de Liège.

HÄGG, R. 1997. (Editor) *The Function of the "Minoan Villa", Proceedings of the Eighth International Symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 6-8 June 1992.* *SkrAth* 40, 46. Stockholm: Paul Åströms.

HÄGG R. AND N. MARINATOS 1987. (Editors) *The Function of the Minoan Palaces: Proceedings of the Fourth International Symposium at the Swedish Institute in Athens, 10-16 June, 1984.* *SkrAth* 40, 35. Stockholm: Paul Åströms.

HAMILAKIS, Y. 2002. (Editor) *Labyrinth revisited: Rethinking 'Minoan archaeology'.* Oxford: Oxbow books.

MYERS, J. WILSON, MYERS, E.E. AND CADOGAN, G. 1992. (Editors) *The aerial atlas of ancient Crete.* Berkeley / Los Angeles: University of California Press.

ZOIS, A. 1973. *Κρήτη – Εποχή του Λίθου. Αρχαίες Ελληνικές Πόλεις 18.* Αθήνα: Αθηναϊκό Κέντρο Οικιστικής.