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People and things. Ceramic petrography as a means for exploring the hidden workings of local communities in Postpalatial Crete

In the context of Cretan Protohistory, some groups of people who acted decisively in everyday lives as well as in collective events of an occupation-site have not left any distinctive clue within the archaeological record. In this contribution, I shall demonstrate that ceramic petrography is a robust methodology to explicitly consider the status and physical existence of these groups, at the same time as illuminating the hidden workings of Minoan communities. The material assemblage under study is the Postpalatial "Pit 1" from Malia – Quartier Nu (1370-1200 BC). This disposal of selective drinking vessels is interpreted as the archaeological signature of an extended ceremonial performance in the area. It is attributed to the most controversial phase of Minoan archaeology: the fall of the Mycenaean capital at Knossos (circa 1370 BC) implied unprecedented social disruptions across the island, which impact on the latest phases of the Bronze Age are still the subject of fierce debates among archaeologists.

Owing to the surprising quantity and quality of its material, "Pit 1" is quoted among the most meaningful examples of intentional deposition of artefacts in Postpalatial Crete. The repartition of the vessels between five standardized macroscopic fabrics points to a concurrence between workshops at the local scale as well as to the provenance of some examples and/or consumers from further afield. The petrographic approach of the mineral characteristics of the fabrics and the application of the concept of 'chaîne opératoire' will enable the investigation of the interactions between these elements of material culture and the very individuals who successively created, transported, and used them. For each of these social actors, hypotheses and discussion will focus on geographical origin, traditions network and technological knowledge,

socioeconomic role and factional status, in the context of the intense instability preceding the advent of the Greek Iron Age world.