

**Ph.D. and M.Phil. abstracts awarded between  
March 1993 and March 1994**

**Ph.D. Abstracts**

**M. J. Armour-Chelu.** *Vertebrate resource exploitation, ecology, and Taphonomy in Neolithic Britain, with special reference to the sites of Links of Noltland, Eton, and Maiden Castle.*

**J. J. Awe.** *Dawn in the land between the rivers: Formative occupation at Cahal Pech, Belize and its implications for Preclassic development in the Maya Lowlands.*

**V. Economidou.** *Cycladic settlements in the Early Bronze Age and their Aegean context.*

**R. O. Fellner.** *Cultural change and the Epipalaeolithic of Palestine.*

**C. M. Gilliver.** *The Roman art of war: theory and practice. A study of the Roman military writers.*

**S. D. Hamilton.** *First millennium BC pottery traditions in southern Britain.*

**K. Hardy.** *Preceramic lithics in central Mexico: an examination of the Tehuacan and Oaxaca chronological sequences.*

**S. V. Keene.** *A preservation system: information for managing conservation at the Museum of London.*

**A. Manteli.** *The transition from the Neolithic to the Early Bronze Age (EBA) in Crete (Greece), with special reference to pottery.*

**N. M. Moloney.** *Lithic assemblages from the Middle Pleistocene of Iberia: the typology and technology of quartzite artefacts in the Spanish Meseta and Portugal.*

**J. M. Paddock.** *The Bronze Age helmet: the development of the Cassis from the last quarter of the sixth century BC to the third quarter of the first century AD.*

**M. J. Ponting.** *Follies and forgeries: an appraisal of the composition of Roman copper-alloy coinage of the mid third to mid fourth centuries AD from Britain.*

**K. N. Wilkinson.** *The influence of local factors on palaeoenvironment and land-use: evidence from Dry Valley Fills in the South Downs.*

## **MPhil Abstracts**

**R. M. Jones.** *Romano-British settlement in northeastern Surrey: the hypothetical villa estate of Walton Heath - a discussion.*

**G. A. Owens.** *From Linear A to Linear B: a diachronic study of the scripts of Late Minoan Crete.*

## **Ph.D. Abstracts**

**Miranda Jane Armour-Chelu.** *Vertebrate resource exploitation, ecology, and taphonomy in Neolithic Britain, with special reference to the sites of Links of Noltland, Eton, and Maiden Castle.*

This thesis is a comparative study of three faunal assemblages recently excavated from the Neolithic levels at the Links of Noltland, Orkney, Eton causewayed enclosure, Cambridgeshire, and Maiden Castle, Dorset. Quantitative analyses of the assemblages were undertaken to determine the relative proportions of the species present at the three sites, the age at death, and the sex of the remains, where these could be determined. These results were used to reconstruct the culling strategies and husbandry techniques practised during the Neolithic period. Evidence for butchery was recorded and these data were compared with ethnographic and experimental studies in order to interpret the methods employed by Neolithic peoples to process animal carcasses for meat, skins, and marrow. A number of pathological bones were recovered from the three sites and the aetiology of these specimens is discussed in relation to animal husbandry practices and other environmental factors. The study of the taphonomic modifications observed from the faunal remains was used to interpret the depositional and post-depositional history of the assemblages. The thesis concludes with a discussion of aspects of Neolithic diet, animal husbandry, ritual behaviour, and the local environment of the three sites under study.

**Jaime Jose Awe.** *Dawn in the land between the rivers: Formative occupation at Cahal Pech, Belize and its implications for Preclassic development in the Maya Lowlands.*

The objectives of this research were to determine the temporal limits of Formative occupation at Cahal Pech, and to ascertain the socio-political complexity of the site during the Preclassic period. Data retrieved by the investigations were subsequently employed for determining the inter-regional cultural affiliation of the site and for assessing the chronological development of complex society in the upper Belize River valley. The investigations established that Cahal Pech was initially settled ca. 1000 BC. The early Middle Formative, Cunil phase (1000-850 BC) settlers subsisted on a mixed economy

based on farming and the exploitation of local plant and animal resources. They produced pottery, stone tools, and ceramic figurines, and acquired exotic goods from the Guatemalan highlands and the Caribbean coast. Although the social organisation of this early settlement was relatively simple, a system for social ranking appears to have been in operation prior to 850 BC. During the subsequent Kanluk phase (850-350 BC) there were major changes in the Cahal Pech community. The construction of special function structures, differences in burial practices, population increase, and differential distribution of figurines and exotic goods indicate that by the end of the late Middle Formative period (650-350 BC) this precocious community had achieved a relatively high level of social complexity. By the Late Formative Xakal phase (350 BC - AD 250) Cahal Pech had become one of the major regional centres in the Belize Valley. Large monumental architecture, the introduction of polychrome pottery, and a more extensive and complex system of exchange suggest Cahal Pech was comparable to other Late Formative centres in the eastern Maya Lowlands. In addition to enhancing the culture-history of the Belize Valley, the Cahal Pech data further indicate that there was a long history of cultural affiliation between Belize Valley settlements and sites in northern Belize. Evidence which suggests that the development of complex society in the Maya Lowlands had its origins in the Middle Formative period is also presented.

**Vaia Economidou.** *Cycladic settlements in the Early Bronze Age and their Aegean context.*

The main aim of the thesis is the study of Cycladic settlements of the Early Bronze Age. Part of the research refers to the settlements of the Neolithic and Middle Cycladic period, in order to acquire a view of what succeeded these settlements. The terminology to which the thesis subscribes follows the tripartite chronological system with its sub-periods: EC I, EC II, EC IIIA and EC IIIB for Early Bronze Age; MC early and late for the Middle Bronze Age. These are correlated with the local cultural units (e.g. Pelos-Lakkoudes, Keros-Syros, etc.). Each settlement is classified according to its chronological period. The structures of each settlement, within the same period, are examined, in terms of house-types which they represent and location within the settlement area. Then the architectural features of the settlements, such as building materials, masonry types, hearths, benches, etc., are analysed as a whole. Problems, such as those of roofs and entrances are discussed. Finally, the available data are examined in relation to urbanisation factors, such as fortifications, differentiation of buildings, buildings of special function, settlement density, town structure, craft specialisation, interregional trade, etc. Comparisons with contemporary settlements of the Aegean region help in establishing relations between these and the Cycladic settlements. They also contribute to our knowledge of the degree of urbanisation the Cycladic settlements achieved. After the analysis of each period is completed the conclusions follow. The first section concerns the settlements and the problems involved. The second section refers to the Cyclades in their Aegean context and the third section deals with the development of architecture in the Cyclades in its historical framework.

**Robert O. Fellner.** *Cultural change and the Epipalaeolithic of Palestine.*

The Epipalaeolithic of Palestine, lasting from ca. 18000 to 10 000 BP, spans a series of archaeological 'cultures' characterised by tool kits dominated by microliths, whose various shapes are the basis of cultural classification. At the end of this period, agriculture - in particular the domestication of cereals - was developed, and the thesis includes an attempt at examining the various developments that gave rise to this event. The data from over 120 well-published and recently excavated sites - particularly the lithics, but also other aspects of the archaeological evidence, such as faunal remains, architectural features, burials, molluscs collected as ornament, etc. - are examined in order to arrive at an understanding of cultural development throughout the period. Multivariate statistical methods - in particular correspondence and cluster analysis - are applied to facilitate this task. The result is a clearer picture of known changes in the material culture than has been previously available on this subject, as well as the documentation of several unsuspected events of like kind. All obtainable information on the natural environment of the period is reviewed, and the resulting picture of climatic developments is compared and contrasted with that of cultural changes. The thesis also addresses the theoretical questions of how changes in material culture can be interpreted and what form of explanation of cultural change is both appropriate and logically defensible. Simple environmental determinism or models based largely on demographic pressure are found to be both essentially unsupported by the data under investigation and theoretically questionable. The documented changes in the material culture can be partly explained by tracing the history of their development and the unforeseen consequences of decisions made by Epipalaeolithic people, operating within the constraints and opportunities of a changing natural environment. Immediate causes of such events are seen to be in the realm of individual decision-making, and thus beyond the grasp of the prehistorian.

**Catherine M. Gilliver.** *The Roman art of war: theory and practice. A study of the Roman military writers.*

This thesis is a comparative study of the theory and practices of Roman warfare. The content of the various treatises, both extant and lost, is described, along with a discussion of the ancient traditions of textbook composition, their role in education and their possible practical use. The following chapters consider various aspects of Roman warfare for which sufficient historical and archaeological evidence exists and which are dealt with fully in the treatises. The size and internal organisation of the different units of the Roman army are discussed with particular reference to the *de munitionibus castrorum* and Vegetius; a discussion of marching camps follows which considers the origins of these camps and an estimation of the density of soldiers per acre through the application of the rules of the *de munitionibus castrorum* to examples in Britain. The practices of the Roman Army in the field are dealt with in the next three chapters: the order of march, pitched battles, and siege warfare. The first of these includes a discussion of Arrian's order of march and the relationship

between the order of march and the line of battle whilst that on pitched battles considers the role of auxiliaries in the battles of the early Empire and the suggested reintroduction of the Greek style phalanx in the second century AD. The development of siege techniques, both offensive and defensive, is discussed, and this is followed by an analysis of the 'rules of war'. Although it is difficult to argue how much influence the treatises may have had on actual practices, the thesis illustrates the very close correlation between the treatises and actual field practices of the Roman army and shows that some of the treatises were of practical value.

**Susan Dorothy Hamilton.** *First millennium BC pottery traditions in southern Britain.*

Detailed investigation of the basis of southern British first millennium BC pottery groups and traditions has hardly commenced. Sussex pottery provides a core to study how and why pottery production and distribution change from the Late Bronze Age to the end of the pre-Roman Iron Age. Despite quantities of Sussex first millennium BC pottery in museums, good contextual data and modern chronologies have been lacking. Stratified groups of Sussex pottery recovered since c. 1975 are collated and chronologies established. A detailed study is presented of assemblages from Heathy Brow (LBA), Yapton (LBA), Harting Beacon (LBA/EIA), Chanctonbury Ring (LBA/EIA), Hollingbury (EIA), Bishopstone (LBA/EIA) and Oving (LIA). These assemblages have sound stratigraphic contexts and diverse site locations (North and South Downs, and the coastal plain). Collectively, they encompass a broad range of pottery styles and technology (LBA/EIA plain and decorated traditions; EIA/MIA pedestalled forms, and saucepan traditions; and LIA wheel-thrown and hand-made traditions). The extant literature suggests direct and indirect evidence for the structures, tools and methods of British 1st millennium BC pottery production. These are assessed and criteria are established for the tabulation of forming, finishing and firing processes. Domestic/specialist production is investigated via fabric groups. A technique of fabric texture quantification has been developed: 1 gramme samples are disaggregated and inclusion/temper counted and attributed groupings are tested by k-means cluster analysis, principal components analysis, and canonical variate analysis. CAD (Computer Aided Design) pie charts have been designed to characterise fabrics graphically. The pottery traditions isolated variously reflect differential geological sources, standardisation of regional production, and centralised production. The relationship between changing pottery traditions and wider socio-economic changes appears complex.

**Karen Hardy.** *Preceramic lithics in central Mexico: an examination of the Tehuacan and Oaxaca chronological sequences.*

A review of all past work relevant to the preceramic period in central Mexico is presented. The use of projectile point typology is discussed. The Tehuacan project and its central role in the construction of the chronological sequence and

cultural phases of the preceramic period in central Mexico is discussed. Many of the results and interpretations are shown to be problematic in that they were based upon inaccurate or faulty data interpretation. All the Tehuacan lithics which were obtained for study are studied in relation to their original typological groupings. These groups are shown to be fundamentally flawed. This serves to confirm the doubts concerning the validity of the chronological sequence and the cultural phases. The Oaxaca project is discussed. Problems which emerge from the lithic typology are identified and their implications for the chronological sequence and cultural phases are analysed. Study methods for the technological and functional analyses of the Oaxaca artefacts are discussed and placed within the context of lithic analysis in Mexico. A technological analysis of artefacts from ten chronologically ordered zones reveals no significant difference between them. The chronological sequence in Oaxaca is consequently reinterpreted. An experimental programme confirms the parameters of the variables used in the functional analysis and introduces two new worked types. A low-power functional analysis of the Oaxaca lithic artefacts identifies their most likely uses. This is interpreted to provide new information regarding possible site use and relationships between sites. Functionally based groups of artefacts are constructed. The functional types are studied in relation to certain technological criteria. Two operational chains, constructed using both technological and functional data are presented. These serve to illustrate the technological processes involved and identifies selection and use of artefacts within the operational chain context. The thesis concludes by emphasising the errors in the established sequences and proposes a new interpretation, in the form of one open ended phase. The advantages of combining functional and technological data together for the study of lithic assemblages are also emphasised.

**Suzanne Victoria Keene.** *A preservation system: information for managing conservation at the Museum of London.*

Museum collections are held in trust for all. Their preservation is a primary museum function. Adequate, timely and relevant information is essential to success in this. The application of management information techniques to the management of museum conservation in general is discussed in detail. The background of management theory and management information is reviewed and its application to museum management is discussed. The operational context for museums is described. The operational system that the information is to serve is then analysed; only thus can information for managing be made relevant and useful. Systems analysis, and in particular soft systems methodology, has been developed as a tool for clarifying complex real world situations. The wider system, the operation of museums generally, is first analysed using this technique; then, processes of conservation itself. From this, a conceptual system and the processes it would have to include can be described. Functional information analysis is then used together with a discussion of key success factors to specify the generalised information requirements of the processes. The means by which the data for the system are collected and analysed are then considered. Their analysis and presentation are discussed. A methodology for

auditing the state of preservation of museum collections is presented. A number of techniques for assisting in decision making and prioritising action, and their relevance to the information needs of conservation, are then reviewed. The application of the techniques described above to a real-world situation is then described in a case study of the Museum of London. The system is useful to staff at all levels from operational to top management. Finally, this system is evaluated using management information techniques. The evaluation questions whether the techniques investigated did in fact prove useful in the real-life system, and how the findings can be used to improve the care of collections in the future.

**Aikaterini Manteli.** *The transition from the Neolithic to the Early Bronze Age (EBA) in Crete (Greece), with special reference to pottery.*

The transition from the Neolithic to the EBA in Crete is best illustrated through the pottery sequence of the island. Crete is a large self-sufficient island of the Mediterranean and for the best part of the Neolithic era kept aloof from the rest of the Aegean. The EN I to LN pottery is very homogeneous and is characterised by a rather conservative typology. In the LN II and the FN periods a combination of internal factors, such as improvements in pot firing techniques and a taste for innovation from within the system, led to the invention of new types of decoration and a strong tendency for mass production. These developments took place at Knossos and Phaistos, the two main settlements of the island with a fully developed mixed agricultural economy. The other LN/FN sites - mainly caves - do not demonstrate the same creativity and variety in pottery styles. Their pottery assemblages are rather monotonous in typology and of lower quality. This difference may well derive from the different types of economic exploitation practised in the various environments. Nevertheless, there are sufficient typological links between Knossos and Phaistos and the other sites to substantiate the typological and cultural homogeneity of the island as a whole. In the EBA (EM I) a major innovation appears with the sudden introduction of painted pottery. At the same time, each major geographical area of the island develops its own individual style. Despite the apparent discontinuity between the Neolithic and the EBA, which led to the formulation of various invasion theories, lines of continuity can be followed up and have to do with the improvements in pot firing and mass production. Affinities and communication with the Aegean are now stronger and more intensified, but do not justify a cultural break. The Cretan EBA pottery has its own unmistakable character and identity. All in all, the transitional period seems to be rather short and coincides with the last phase of the Neolithic, the FN.

**Norah M. Moloney.** *Lithic assemblages from the Middle Pleistocene of Iberia: the typology and technology of quartzite artefacts in the Spanish Meseta and Portugal*

A multitude of different rock types were exploited for the manufacture of stone artefacts during Middle Pleistocene times. However, different rock types,

especially non-flint rocks, do not always react in the same manner to artificial fracture and may affect the composition and appearance of stone tool assemblages. In Iberia quartzite pebbles and cobbles were widely exploited for the manufacture of stone tools in those areas where flint was not locally available. This thesis attempts to determine the effect of quartzite pebbles on the technology used by the prehistoric hominids in the manufacture of stone artefacts, and their typological classification by modern prehistorians. Assemblages in quartzite and/or flint from the Spanish Meseta and Central Portugal were used as a basis for the study. The main body of the thesis may be divided into three parts: a typological study, based on literary sources, of eighteen lithic assemblages, a technological study of specific stone artefact categories from four assemblages, and a technological and typological study of a fifth assemblage in its entirety. Results of the study suggest that during the Middle Pleistocene, no aspect of stone tool manufacture was directly controlled or determined by the use of quartzite pebbles, although attributes such as size, shape, grain, hardness and availability of stone may have influenced manufacture at times. The exploitation of quartzite pebbles did not prevent the production of particular tool types, all of which have been found in quartzite assemblages. There appears to be a general similarity among quartzite assemblages expressed in the presence of cortex, simple retouch techniques, a flake tool inventory dominated by scrapers, denticulates, notches and piercers, and a tendency for the heavy duty element (unifaces/bifaces, flake cleavers, trihedrals and pebble tools) to be well represented. While the use of quartzite pebbles may contribute to this similarity they are not the source.

**John Miles Paddock.** *The Bronze Age helmet: the development of the Cassis from the last quarter of the sixth century BC to the third quarter of the first century AD.*

This thesis is a study of the bronze Italian helmet over six centuries, from the last quarter of the sixth century BC to the end of the first century AD. It surveys and examines the mainstream development and evolution of the helmet in the Apennine peninsula, in particular the nine major forms which dominate the equipment of the Italian warrior during this period, i.e. the Apulo-Corinthian, the Negau, the Italo-Chalkidian, the Etrusco-Thracian, the Italo-Pilos, the Samno-Attic, the Montefortino, the Coolus and the Hagenau helmets. Starting from the premise that the majority of helmets, no matter of what form, were intended to be functional, and that their evolution is entirely dependent upon the type of warfare for which each form was developed, the changing nature of that warfare and the cultural affinities of the people who used it, this thesis discusses the external agencies and cultural influences that can be traced in the development of each form, the origins of the forms themselves and provides a definitive typology for each. Where possible it also establishes an absolute chronology for these typologies, based upon dated examples, the stylistic evolution of form, the size and shape of the helmet bowl, its decoration and standards of manufacture and finish. Due to the complexities of the manufacturing processes involved in the production of bronze helmets and as many of the techniques used were

common to all forms this study commences with an examination of these processes and the tools and technology employed including an examination of the growth of mass-production technique in Italian helmet production. Where possible workshop groups have been isolated for each form and areas of regional production defined. This analysis is based on a detailed examination and comparison of the distribution of each type within each form, their dating, fittings, i.e. crest-fixtures, cheek-pieces etc. and their decoration and its possible derivation. Finally the functional aspects of the bronze Italian helmet are discussed and attempts are made to account for the overwhelming popularity of the Montefortino helmet which from the end of the third century BC had eclipsed all other Italian helmet forms. It examines the disappearance of the majority of these culturally distinct types which is a marked feature of Rome's domination of Italy. It concludes therefore that it is Rome's centralisation of production under her political and military control that led to the suppression of the widespread indigenous Italian arms industries and inevitably led to the progressive rearmament of the Apennine peninsula after the Roman and ultimately Celtic fashion and therefore that it is Rome's cultural control of Italy that led to the supremacy of the Montefortino helmet.

**Matthew James Ponting.** *Follies and forgeries: an appraisal of the composition of Roman copper-alloy coinage of the mid third to mid fourth centuries AD from Britain.*

This project investigates the effects of corrosion on complex copper-alloy coins from British sites of the mid-third to the mid-fourth centuries AD. More specifically the project looks at how the type of environment within which a coin has lain for a period of archaeological time can alter the perceived composition, and how this can change our archaeological and numismatic interpretation of this material. The first two sections review the published literature in the light of recent research. The archaeological and numismatic background to the period used as a case study is discussed, and the questions posed by the current thinking examined. Chapter three comprises a series of in-depth bulk compositional analyses (by Atomic Absorption Spectroscopy - AAS) of three categories of Roman copper-alloy coin and their contemporary copies. The analyses are used to demonstrate how careful and accurate bulk analyses of eleven elements (silver, tin, zinc, lead, nickel, iron, arsenic, antimony, cobalt and chromium) can be used to differentiate between copy and 'original' and how the data can be used to draw significant numismatic and archaeological conclusions about this often controversial class of material. Furthermore, this research uses the combination of bulk analyses, point Electron Probe Micro-Analyses, elemental composition dot maps, three-dimensional computer aided design (CAD) with data-base link, multi-variate statistics and optical microscopy to demonstrate how significant the effects of the burial environment can be in real terms. Chapter four discusses these effects with reference to a number of case studies which compare numismatically identical material from different environments. A comparison is also made between data produced by so-called non-destructive surface analytical techniques and AAS using small samples.

The differences encountered are demonstrated as being significant enough to engender an erroneous numismatic interpretation. The final chapter deals with how these findings alter the archaeological and numismatic interpretation of analytical data and how existing practices need to be improved. The case studies from chapter three are reviewed and their contribution to archaeological and numismatic thought assessed.

**Keith Nicholas Wilkinson.** *The influence of local factors on palaeoenvironment and land-use: evidence from Dry Valley Fills in the South Downs.*

Previous work on colluvial dry valley fills in southern England is reviewed along with sedimentological and molluscan data specifically from the South Downs. These techniques of palaeoenvironmental reconstruction are discussed in relation to their applicability to dry valley contexts and recent developments of sampling strategy. The evidence from previous studies on dry valley fills and molluscan analysis shows variation in environment and land-use with both time and locality. To further investigate this, a small area of chalk downland in southern England was selected in order to see what effect local factors of environment and land-use had on both the sediments deposited in the valleys and their associated molluscan assemblages. This sampling programme was carried out on seven dry valleys and on ditches from two Bronze Age sites as part of archaeological investigation in advance of construction of the A27 Brighton by-pass. The samples taken from the infilling colluvial sediments in the dry valleys were used for mollusc, magnetic and sedimentological analysis, and were dated by means of their ceramic inclusions and radiocarbon dating by AMS assay. The results of analysis carried out on each dry valley site are discussed separately. Their morphological and environmental development, as reconstructed from the various analyses, are traced from the Late Glacial (c. 11,000 BP) to the present day, and comments are made on past land-use. The results are compared with the molluscan analysis carried out at the two Bronze Age sites, and conclusions are drawn as to the catchment area from which mollusc shells found at different types of site derive. Evidence from all sites is synthesised and shows local variation in land-use and environment with time. It is also illustrated that theories of major forest clearance first occurring in the Bronze Age are over-simplistic. Evidence from this study shows that large-scale clearance had occurred in many areas prior to the Bronze Age, and indeed in some valleys the first evidence of agriculture is from the Iron Age. Finally recommendations are made to future researchers on sampling strategies and methods of investigation when dealing with dry valley fills.

### MPhil Abstracts

**Rita Marion Jones.** *Romano-British settlement in northeastern Surrey: the hypothetical villa estate of Walton Heath - a discussion.*

This thesis looks at sites - villas, bathhouses, non-villa settlements, markets and kilns - within a radius of 10km of Walton Heath villa, a moderately wealthy villa

located on the plateau of the North Downs. It addresses the question of whether a villa estate existed centred on Walton Heath, and whether that speculative estate took advantage of all communication networks in the area. It also asks the question 'Did that network system influence settlement patterns in the area and was that system in place prior to the conquest, the Romans only creating the conditions under which it would flourish?' Settlement patterns are identified within an area of approximately 32,000ha. The defined core territory of 7800ha is then examined in detail - topographically, geologically, geographically and economically - the main features such as soil and natural resources are identified. The main communication systems in the area are identified - the North Downs, the River Mole, Stane Street and the Harroway - and their potential to assist in the distribution of goods, both exports and imports, is assessed. Two illustrations are examined, firstly the non-villa settlements, roadside settlements, markets and kilns and, secondly, the relationship of different aspects of the 'Central Site' theory and peripheral holdings model as presented by Applebaum in an attempt to explain the workings of a villa estate. Finally the theoretical villa estate of Walton Heath is examined and discussed in detail bringing together communications, land use and economy - in fact all the industries that could and did exist in Roman Britain within the territory. Finally a gazetteer is presented of 27 sites within the approximate territory of 10km radius of Walton Heath.

**Gareth Alun Owens.** *From Linear A to Linear B: a diachronic study of the scripts of Late Minoan Crete.*

This study aims to construct a coherent framework within which the scripts of Late Minoan Crete can be related to each other. This is achieved by a combination of archaeological, epigraphical and philological evidence. If the scripts of Late Minoan Crete can be studied diachronically and related to each other, then a better understanding can be gained working from the known, i.e. the Minoan language of the Linear A script. The development of writing on Late Minoan Crete is clarified by combining the archaeological and epigraphical evidence, and the transition from Linear A to Linear B is thus better understood. An interdisciplinary study of the material creates a better understanding of the Late Minoan period on Crete. This study builds upon the scholarship of the last 40 years since the decipherment of Linear B, as well as taking into account recent archaeological discoveries of inscriptions written in Cretan scripts. The transition from Linear A to Linear B is better understood as a result of considering the c. 3000 Linear B tablets and fragments rediscovered in 1984, and the more than 30 Linear A inscriptions discovered since the 1985 publication of the Linear A corpus. This new material allows observations to be based on more information than hitherto possible. The study of Minoan Linear A is therefore based upon an accurate reading of an enlarged corpus. Finally philosophical observations and conclusions are drawn concerning the Minoan language recorded by the Linear A script. This is necessary before a future decipherment can be undertaken with any prospect of success.