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Assessing a Polity in Protopalatial Crete: The Malia-Lasithi State

CARL KNAPPETT

Abstract

This paper is an attempt to elucidate the regional character of the Malia-Lasithi state, one of the early states of Minoan Crete. The center of this state, the palace of Malia, was constructed, as also at Knossos, Phaistos, and perhaps Zakros, during the Middle Minoan I period (ca. 1900 B.C.). The territorial extent of the Malia-Lasithi polity has hitherto been hypothesized on the basis of the regional distribution of artifact styles, most notably in pottery; however, this process of placing dots on a map provides limited information. Of the various sites that are thus identified as possibly falling within the territory of Malia, the relatively distant site of Myrtos Pyrgos stands out by virtue of its abundant deposits of pottery, showing very strong stylistic similarities with Malia pottery. In this study detailed comparisons of the MM IIB pottery from Myrtos Pyrgos and Malia (Quartier Mu) are presented, integrating typological, stylistic, technological, and compositional data. It emerges that indeed much of the fine tableware is so close as to be practically identical; it is, nevertheless, made locally at each of the two sites. Storage and transport vessels suggest substantial trade throughout the region but rarely between Malia and Myrtos Pyrgos. Production of other coarse wares and cooking ware is quite different at the two sites. The ceramic and other evidence suggest that Malia may not have been at the head of a centralized state, exercising economic and political control over Myrtos Pyrgos, as previously believed. Rather, any power it held at the regional level may have been based more upon ideology than economy, and the Malia-Lasithi state may be better characterized as a decentralized state.*

As the modern civilized world approaches the millennium, its predilection for contemplating the earliest emergence of civilization seems set to intensify. The task of fulfilling this millennial urge falls in large part to the discipline of prehistoric archaeol-

ogy, which, in its brief 150-year history, has already unearthed, on a huge scale, vestiges of the very earliest civilizations, from Mesoamerica to Mesopotamia. But in meeting this challenge the archaeologist encounters one particularly striking dilemma. On the one hand, early civilizations emerged across the globe in different times and places, in locations as distant and distinctive as Peru and China, displaying a bewildering structural variety. On the other hand, they are all linked by a set of core features that mark them out as civilizations. One response to this dilemma might be to study each early civilization on its own terms, which has the advantage of achieving a deep knowledge of the historical and cultural specifics of the particular situation in hand. Another response, and one with quite different possibilities, is to study each civilization in such a way that it can be compared with all other examples. This process of comparison need not be focused on drawing out similarities, but may also serve to highlight differences.

As part of attempts to make this process of comparison explicit and rigorous, archaeologists have tended more and more to make use of the term "state" rather than "civilization." Use of the term "state" focusses attention on social and political organization rather than on cultural units and represents a stage in social evolutionary schemes devised by anthropologists in the 1960s and 1970s,¹ rather than by Lewis Henry Morgan in the 1860s and 1870s. The regular denunciation of neoevolutionism, and the efforts of some postprocessual approaches to replace discussion of economy and systems with ideology and agency, may have caused the "state" to endure a period when its value as a paradigm was questioned, but it has not been superseded as an organizing principle for re-

* Thanks go to the British School at Athens and to the École Française d'Athènes for permission to study, and reproduce here, the pottery from Myrtos Pyrgos and Malia, respectively; I am especially indebted to Gerald Cadogan and Jean-Claude Poursat for their help and generosity. I am extremely grateful to John Bennet, Gerald Cadogan, Jan Driessen, Krystof Nowicki, Jean-Claude Poursat, and Todd Whitelaw for their constructive comments on earlier versions of this paper. Most of the research was conducted in the course of my doctoral thesis, made possible by a studentship from the Natural Envi-

ronment Research Council, with additional support from St. John's College, Cambridge. Many thanks are also due to Christ's College, Cambridge.

¹ In this respect, archaeologists appear to have been most influenced by the work of the anthropologists Elman Service and Morton Fried: E.R. Service, *Primitive Social Organisation* (New York 1962); Service, *Origins of the State and Civilization: The Process of Cultural Evolution* (New York 1975); M.H. Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society: An Essay in Political Anthropology* (New York 1967).

search. One could claim that it has come through even stronger than before, with a range of recent major contributions addressing issues of “state” to good advantage.² Indeed, questions of ideology and agency have, if anything, been integrated within approaches to states, rather than replacing them. In short, it would seem that the evolutionary scheme of which the state forms a part remains indispensable as a framework for thinking about societies and social change.

THE MINOAN CONTEXT — STATES AND CIVILIZATIONS

With regard to Minoan Crete (figs. 1 and 2), the emergence of civilization is certainly one of the major issues facing the student of Aegean prehistory. The centrality of this issue to the field is in large part due to the groundbreaking work by Colin Renfrew in the 1970s.³ The very title of Renfrew’s major work of that period, *The Emergence of Civilization*, denotes his choice of the term “civilization” rather than “state.” John Cherry, however, has drawn attention to Renfrew’s lengthy 70-page effort to define “civilization,” noting that he may, in fact, have been better served had he used the term “state.” In the late 1970s and early 1980s, echoing broader developments in the discipline as a whole, the discussion in Aegean contexts came to make more use of the term “state” than “civilization,” mostly following Cherry’s impressive lead.⁴ However, it can be argued that since these most useful developments, research into the earliest Minoan states has not progressed as fully as it might have done. This situation can be attributed to four major causes, chief amongst them a tendency to try

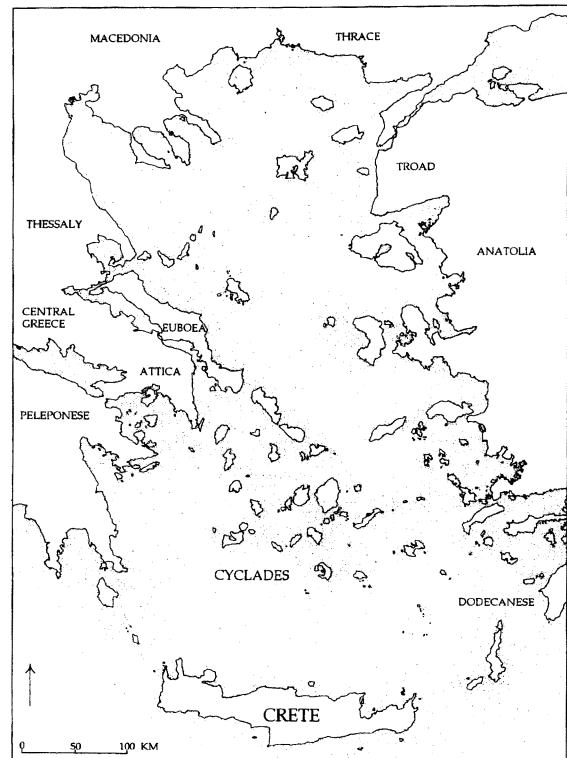


Fig. 1. Crete and the Aegean

and explain the *origins* of the earliest Minoan states before their actual *character* had been sufficiently explored.⁵ A second problem, with us since the turn of the century, has been an excessive concentration on palatial centers at the expense of their hinterlands which has, admittedly, been partially offset by the tremendous energy poured into regional sur-

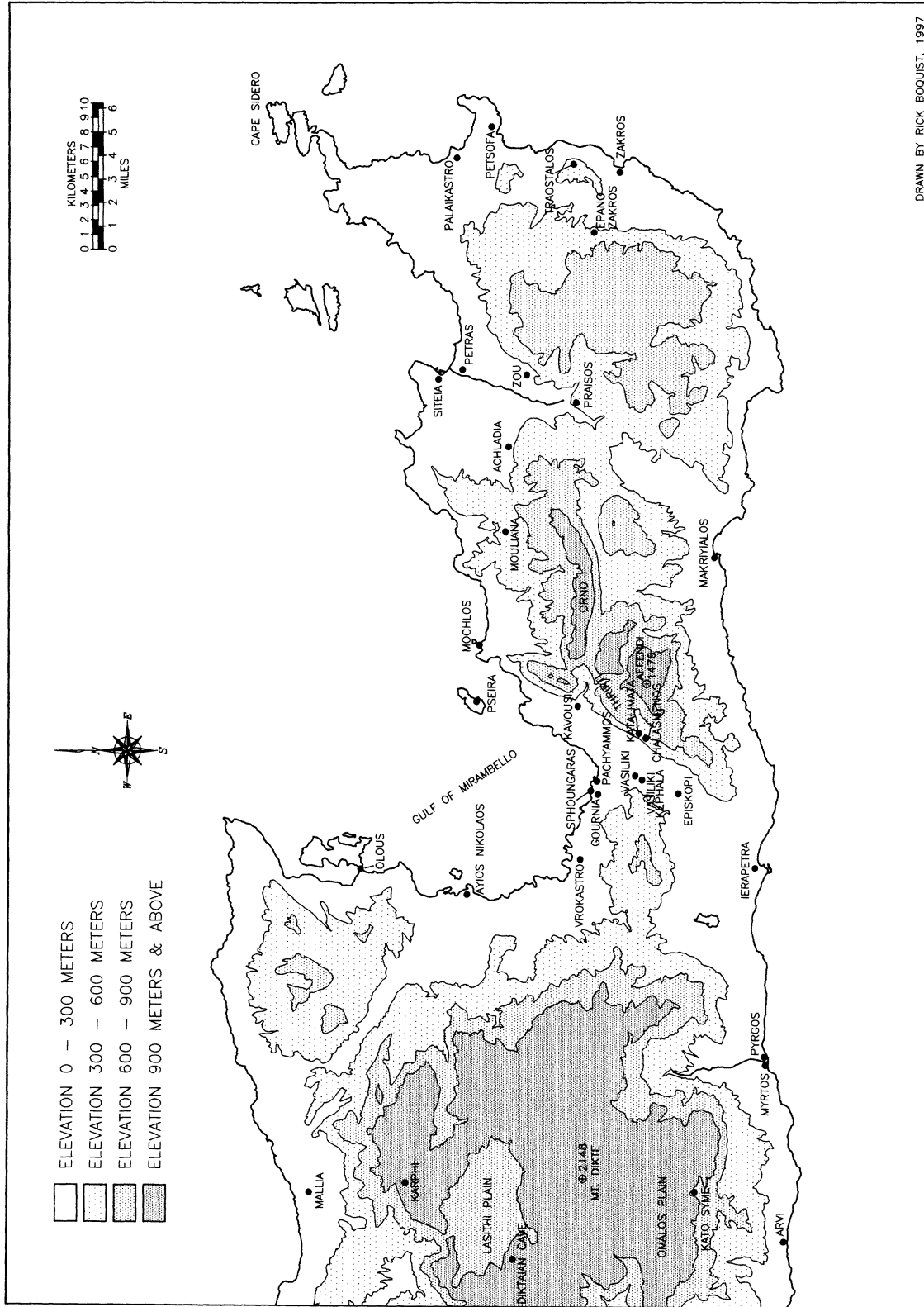
² The following examples represent a broad cross-section of such contributions rather than an exhaustive list: C.K. Maisels, *The Emergence of Civilization: From Hunting and Gathering to Agriculture, Cities, and the State in the Near East* (London 1990); O. De Montmollin, *The Archaeology of Political Structure: Settlement Analysis in a Classic Maya Polity* (Cambridge 1989); D.L. Nichols and T.H. Charlton eds., *The Archaeology of City-States: Cross-Cultural Approaches* (Washington 1997); C. Scarre and B.M. Fagan, *Ancient Civilizations* (New York 1997); G.M. Schwartz and S.E. Falconer eds., *Archaeological Views from the Countryside: Village Communities in Early Complex Societies* (London 1994); G. Stein and M. S. Rothman eds., *Chiefdoms and Early States in the Near East: The Organisational Dynamics of Complexity* (Monographs in World Archaeology 18, Madison 1994); J.W. Fox, G.W. Cook, A.F. Chase, and D.Z. Chase, “Questions of Political and Economic Integration: Segmentary versus Centralised States amongst the Ancient Maya,” *Current Anthropology* 37 (1996) 795–821; B. Trigger, *Early Civilizations: Ancient Egypt in Context* (Cairo 1993).

³ A.C. Renfrew, *The Emergence of Civilization: The Cyclades*

and the Aegean in the 3rd Millennium B.C. (London 1972); Renfrew, “Trade as Action at a Distance: Questions of Integration and Communication,” in J. Sabloff and C.C. Lamberg-Karlovsky eds., *Ancient Civilization and Trade* (Albuquerque 1975) 3–59.

⁴ J.F. Cherry, “Generalisation and the Archaeology of the State,” in D. Green et al. eds., *Social Organisation and Settlement* (BAR-IS 47, Oxford 1978) 411–37; Cherry, “Evolution, Revolution, and the Origins of Complex Society in Minoan Crete,” in O. Krzyszkowska and L. Nixon eds., *Minoan Society* (Bristol 1983) 33–45; Cherry, “The Emergence of the State in the Prehistoric Aegean,” *PCPS* 210 (1984) 18–48.

⁵ Much of Cherry’s work focussed on the question of palatial origins (1983, 1984, supra n. 4). One notable and very influential attempt to explain the actual character of the earliest states on Crete is Cherry’s, “Politics and Palaces: Some Problems in Minoan State Formation,” in Renfrew and Cherry eds., *Peer Polity Interaction and Socio-political Change* (Cambridge 1986) 19–45.



DRAWN BY RICK BOQUIST, 1997

Fig. 2. Map of East Crete. (R. Boquist, courtesy P. Rehak and J.G. Younger, *AJA* 102 [1998] 96 fig. 3.)

face surveys on Crete over the past 30 years.⁶ Thirdly, there has been a general disinclination to acknowledge the economic, the ideological, and the political as separate though overlapping networks of power. Fourthly, there has been an overly rigid view of the “state” as a social type, rather than as an organizational response to sociopolitical circumstances.

In an attempt to remedy these shortcomings and to pursue a more fruitful path, the following four points are suggested as basic conceptual building blocks.

1. The main requirement is that research should concentrate on assessing the *character* of the earliest states on Crete. In this paper the focus falls on one state in particular, centered on the palatial site of Malia.
2. An explicitly regional approach is taken in order to compare the palatial site of Malia with sites that are thought to lie within its territory.
3. The importance of analytically separating the economic, the political, and the ideological attributes of social activities and institutions is also emphasized.
4. Full consideration is also given to the variability that may be encompassed within the term “state.” This involves investigating the idea of a continuum between decentralized (segmentary) and centralized (unitary) states.⁷ Further, it may be suggested that in equivocating between chiefdom and state, and coming up with “chiefdom-state,” Renfrew⁸ may in hindsight have settled for a concept such as the decentralized state.

⁶ Areas for which regional surface surveys have been fully or partially published include Lasithi, Chania, the western Mesara, Pseira, Kavousi, Ayiapharango, Malia, Kommos, and Sphakia. References can be found in L.V. Watrous, “Annual Review of Aegean Prehistory III: Crete from Earliest Prehistory through the Protopalatial Period,” *AJA* 98 (1994) 698; and in P. Rehak and J. Younger, “Review of Aegean Prehistory VII: Neopalatial, Final Palatial, and Postpalatial Crete,” *AJA* 102 (1998) 91–173. Yet more surveys have been conducted in recent years, which can only increase our understanding of palatial hinterlands, e.g., in the northern part of the Isthmus of Ierapetra, Vrokastro, Praisos, Atsipadhes, Gavdos, and Ziros—references to these can also be found in Watrous (1994) and Rehak and Younger (1998). Ziros has been published very recently: K. Branigan, “Prehistoric and Early Historic Settlement in the Ziros Region, Eastern Crete,” *BSA* 93 (1998) 23–90. However, one limitation of survey data is that they do not often provide a very detailed indication of the *character* of occupation of a site, something which can only really be satisfactorily provided through excavation.

⁷ Other recent efforts to explore state variability have also proposed the idea of a continuum, for example between city-state and territorial state (Maisels 1990; Trigger 1993; Nichols and Charlton 1997, all supra n. 2). However this scheme is not as universally applicable as the continuum

LESSONS FROM EAST AND WEST

In all four of these points, lessons can be learned from the work of archaeologists on state contexts elsewhere, in which close attention has been paid to the possible insights afforded by anthropological examples. A number of archaeologists, many of them American, working on Near Eastern civilizations have applied anthropological ideas of the state in processual studies.⁹ This has also been true of archaeological research in Mesoamerica.¹⁰ In such work there has developed an explicit focus upon the *organizational* features of early complex societies. Also of significance has been the growth of a more concerted effort to study these state systems at the *regional* scale. That is not to say that the state centers have been suddenly neglected. We should remember that most studies of ancient states begin at the urban centers, and not unreasonably so.¹¹ Stein, too, acknowledges that this urban focus is only natural, but that it has not been sufficiently counterbalanced by analysis of the state at the regional level.¹² This spatial bias is inevitably accompanied by a “power” bias, such that total economic, ideological, and political power is thought to reside in the institutions (temple and/or palace) of the state center, while the rural sector is largely overlooked. Nonetheless, regional analysis has advanced more in the Near East than in most areas (e.g., Crete), with early studies by Wright and Johnson¹³ showing how it is possible to assess center and periphery simultaneously. Thus their argument, that the Middle Uruk states of Mesopotamia were strongly

between centralized and decentralized, and it is difficult to see how the Protopalatial Minoan states would be classified in such a system.

⁸ Renfrew (supra n. 3) 367, for use of the term “chiefdom-state.”

⁹ R. McC. Adams, *The Evolution of Urban Society* (Chicago 1966); H.T. Wright, *The Administration of Rural Production in an Early Mesopotamian Town* (Anthropology Papers 38, Ann Arbor 1969); Wright, “Recent Research on the Origin of the State,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 6 (1977) 379–97; H.T. Wright and G.A. Johnson, “Population, Exchange, and Early State Formation in Southwestern Iran,” *American Anthropologist* 77 (1975) 267–89; C.L. Redman, *The Rise of Civilization: from Early Farmers to Urban Society in the Ancient Near East* (San Francisco 1978).

¹⁰ K.V. Flannery, “The Cultural Evolution of Civilizations,” *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics* 3 (1972) 399–426; W.T. Sanders, J.R. Parsons, and R.S. Santley, *The Basin of Mexico: Ecological Processes in the Evolution of a Civilization* (New York 1979).

¹¹ Redman 1978 (supra n. 9).

¹² G.J. Stein, “Segmentary States and Organisational Variation in Early Complex Societies: A Rural Perspective,” in Schwartz and Falconer (supra n. 2) 10–18.

¹³ Wright and Johnson (supra n. 9).

centralized with an economic structure controlled by an elite, is not based upon assumption; these authors have taken a broad perspective, integrating regional survey data with detailed information from excavation at major regional centers, and smaller second and third order sites.

With the continued excavation of smaller non-central sites, there has in the Near East been an increasing orientation towards the rural sector, thereby placing urban centers in a regional context that is more than just a series of dots on a distribution map. As a corollary, the idea of a centrally administered economy stretching across a territory has been challenged by Adams,¹⁴ and more recently by a number of other scholars.¹⁵ In its place the notion that early states may have had certain decentralised qualities has been gaining currency. Yet this more critical reconsideration of the nature of early states has not as yet had any effective impact in studies of Minoan Crete.¹⁶

This shift in orientation has been paralleled by a somewhat less explicit move towards separating the economic, ideological, and political facets of early states, rather than assuming their complete interdependence. Many of the aforementioned studies in Near Eastern contexts have focused particularly on the nature of *economic* organization in the rural sector.¹⁷ It is understood that "some kind of relationship exists between rural economic organization and the political structure of early state societies,"¹⁸ although the nature of this link is not well understood as yet and requires an explicit analytical framework. What is increasingly apparent is that in many early states the rural economy is barely affected by a cen-

tralized administration, and that state control over economic affairs may be weak and irregular.¹⁹ The sentiment, that ancient states are incapable of effectively exerting their control across a region, is found also in the anthropological work of Georges Balandier: "... because of technical and economic conditions and the survival of social relations that were hardly compatible with its own power, the [ancient] state finds it hard to carry this [centralizing] logic to its conclusion."²⁰

In a similar vein, Manning²¹ draws on work by Giddens, Mann, and Cherry²² to argue that ancient states in general lacked the necessary infrastructure to achieve a direct and continuous administrative penetration of society. Building on the arguments of Cherry²³ in particular, he asserts that in order to overcome the indirect and irregular nature of the power they wielded, ancient states had to rely on symbols and symbolic acts that would communicate state and elite ideologies to achieve a degree of cohesion and control over wider areas. Here we see not so much a concern with the link between economic and political institutions in early states, but rather between their ideological and political features. This connection between the ideological and the political can be taken further, if we introduce concepts expressed by Southall: in the absence of control over the *material means of production*, due to infrastructural limitations, authority in early states was first achieved through control of the *imaginary means of production*.²⁴

In other words, a state may not be quite so effective and all-pervasive as its central authority may wish it to be. The centralizing nature of the state, in terms not only of polity but also of economy and ideology,

¹⁴ R. McC. Adams 1966 (supra n. 9); and "Strategies of Maximisation, Stability, and Resilience in Mesopotamian Society, Settlement, and Agriculture," *ProcPhilSoc* 122 (1978) 329–35.

¹⁵ Schwartz and Falconer 1994 (supra n. 2); S. Pollock, M. Pope, and C. Coursey, "Household Production at the Uruk Mound, Abu Salabikh, Iraq," *AJA* 100 (1996) 683–98; P. Wattenmaker, "Town and Village Economies in an Early State Society," *Paléorient* 13 (1987) 113–22; P. Wattenmaker, "Household Economy in Early State Society: Material Value, Productive Context, and Spheres of Exchange," in E.M. Brumfiel ed., *The Economic Anthropology of the State* (Monographs in Economic Anthropology 21, Lanham 1994) 93–118; N. Yoffee, "Political Economy in Early Mesopotamian States," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995) 281–311.

¹⁶ C.J. Knappett, "Ceramic Production in the Protopalatial Malia 'State': Evidence from Quartier Mu and Myrtos Pyrgos," in P. Betancourt and R. Laffineur eds., *TEXNH: Craftsmen, Craftswomen, and Craftsmanship in the Aegean Bronze Age* (*Aegaeum* 16, Liège 1997) 305–11.

¹⁷ See Wattenmaker 1987, and Pollock et al. 1996 (both

supra n. 15).

¹⁸ Stein (supra n. 12) 10.

¹⁹ Although in a palatial center the economic, the ideological, and the political may be coextensive, at the regional level they may begin to disassociate themselves, perhaps due to infrastructural limitations.

²⁰ G. Balandier, *Political Anthropology* (London 1970) 137.

²¹ S.W. Manning, *Before Daidalos: The Origins of Complex Society and the Genesis of the State on Crete* (Diss. Univ. of Cambridge 1995).

²² A. Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge 1984); M. Mann, *The Sources of Social Power* 1 (Cambridge 1986); J.F. Cherry, "Power in Space: Archaeological and Geographical Studies of the State," in J.M. Wagstaff ed., *Landscape and Culture: Geographical and Archaeological Perspectives* (Oxford 1987) 146–72.

²³ Cherry (supra n. 22).

²⁴ A.R. Southall, "The Segmentary State: From the Imaginary to the Material Means of Production," in H.J.M. Claessen and P. van de Velde eds., *Early State Economics* (Political and Legal Anthropology Series 8, London 1991) 75–96.

is invariably compromised to some degree by infra-structural limitations. One might therefore say that the tension between centralizing and decentralizing tendencies is at the core of any process of state formation and consolidation. This should be particularly true of early states with their less developed technological means for achieving direct penetration through all sectors of society. This idea needs to be at the core of any discussion that follows—that states can be described as falling somewhere on a broad spectrum between being very centralized on the one hand and very decentralized on the other. Moreover, the idea of the Malia state²⁵ must also be evaluated in these terms. According to the conclusions then reached, that is, whether the Malia state tends towards the centralized or the decentralized in character, it may then, and only then, be feasible to reconsider the possible prepalatial *origins* of this political system. It may emerge that during the initial stages in the development of such a state, ideology was a more important source of regional power than was economy. This would have major ramifications for those theories of state development that place economy first²⁶ and portray ideology as a secondary, legitimizing form of power.²⁷

MINOAN STATES REASSESSED

Aegean archaeologists interpret the palace-based societies of Minoan Crete in the Protopalatial period²⁸ as the earliest occurrences in the Aegean world of state-level society. This interpretation is based largely on evidence from the palaces themselves. Yet when there is mention of “states” in archaeology, the implication is that there exists beyond the palace a surrounding town and an associated territory. However, the evidence from the towns and territories linked with the First Palaces of Minoan Crete is by no

means clearly understood. The result is that we have only a partial grasp on the term “state”—its meaning is relatively apparent at the level of the palace, but Minoan archaeologists have been unable, and indeed have rarely attempted, to evaluate the regional character of these early states. This inability has been partly due to the limited evidence, but is also in large part attributable to an unsuitable methodology for dealing with those data that do exist, and little recognition of the potential variety in the nature of early states in general.

The traditional view, that the state center exercises considerable economic and political control over its entire territory, is fundamental to the model of the state espoused by those who argue for a redistributive economy in the palatial systems of Minoan Crete.²⁹ In this perspective, the economic, ideological, and political components of the palace are considered to be coextensive and to extend equally across the whole state domain. However, rather than testing this hypothesis against data collected from sites across a region, centralized regional control is instead assumed by the simple existence of the state centers.

Naturally, one must expect the primary focus to have fallen thus far in Minoan archaeology upon the palatial centers. It would therefore seem probable that most of our knowledge of the first Minoan states comes from the palaces themselves. However, much of the fabric of these First Palaces was obliterated with the construction in Middle Minoan III of the subsequent New Palaces. Most of what is visible to the modern visitor to the sites is from this Neopalatial period. Thus, even at the palatial centers themselves, we are left in the Protopalatial period with only a relatively small and patchy body of evidence, especially when compared to the evidence available

²⁵ For the idea of a Malia state, cf. G. Cadogan, “Lasithi in the Old Palace Period,” *BICS* 37 (1990) 172–74; Cadogan, “Malia and Lasithi: A Palace-State,” in *Τα Πεπραγμένα του Διεθνούς Κρητολογικού Συνεδρίου 7* (hereafter 7th *Cret-Cong*) (Rethymnon 1996) 97–104; J.-C. Poursat, “Town and Palace at Malia in the Protopalatial Period,” in R. Hägg and N. Marinatos eds., *The Function of the Minoan Palaces* (Stockholm 1987) 75–76.

²⁶ P. Halstead, “From Determinism to Uncertainty: Social Storage and the Rise of the Minoan Palace,” in A. Sheridan and G. Bailey eds., *Economic Archaeology: Toward an Integration of Ecological and Social Approaches* (BAR 96, 1981) 187–213; Halstead, “On Redistribution and the Origin of Minoan-Mycenaean Palatial Economies,” in E. French and K. Wardle eds., *Problems in Greek Prehistory* (Bristol 1988) 519–30.

²⁷ See Cherry 1986 (supra n. 5).

²⁸ Other terms synonymous with “Protopalatial” are

“First Palace,” “Early Palace,” and “Old Palace.” The period first begins towards the end of the 20th cent. B.C., in the ceramic phase known since Evans as Middle Minoan IB. The beginning of the period is given as “19th c. B.C.” by P.M. Warren and V. Hankey, *Aegean Bronze Age Chronology* (Bristol 1989); while Manning suggests that MM IB starts ca. 1925–1900 B.C.; cf. S.W. Manning, *The Absolute Chronology of the Aegean Early Bronze Age* (Sheffield 1995).

²⁹ See Renfrew 1972 (supra n. 3); M.I. Finley, *Early Greece: The Bronze and Archaic Ages* (London 1970); P.M. Warren, *The Aegean Civilizations: From Ancient Crete to Mycenae* (Oxford 1975); K. Branigan, “Social Security and the State in Middle Bronze Age Crete,” *Aegaeum* 2 (1988) 11–17; T.G. Palaima, “Origin, Development, Transition and Transformation: The Purposes and Techniques of Administration in Minoan and Mycenaean Society,” in T.G. Palaima ed., *Aegean Seals, Sealings, and Administration* (*Aegaeum* 5, Liège 1990) 83–104.

from the Neopalatial period. Notwithstanding such frustrations, there is sufficient evidence to argue that at three of the main New Palaces, namely Knossos, Phaistos, and Malia, there was in the preceding period a central unified structure with many of the same functional and formal characteristics as their successors, thereby meriting the label “palace.”³⁰ Even if many architectural details are unknown,³¹ and despite our ignorance of the various workings of the palaces, most scholars would agree that to speak of palaces is justifiable.³² Our picture of these Middle Minoan I–II palaces will always tend to be patchy because of their complicated histories, with numerous episodes of building, destruction, and rebuilding. This situation is not helped by the obvious reluctance of archaeologists to destroy later features in the pursuit of earlier levels. However, such factors are not nearly so much of a hindrance when we look beyond the palaces proper, making the adoption of a regional perspective all the more imperative.

AN “URBAN” PERSPECTIVE — PALACE AND TOWN

It is clear that each palace must have had a significant surrounding town area, but the data at hand are slim. While limited excavation has provided some insight into settlement in the vicinity of the palace at Knossos in the Neopalatial period, for example, in the area of the House of the Frescoes, to the North and South of the Royal Road, and behind the Stratigraphical Museum, these really represent little more than glimpses into the sizeable town that clearly ex-

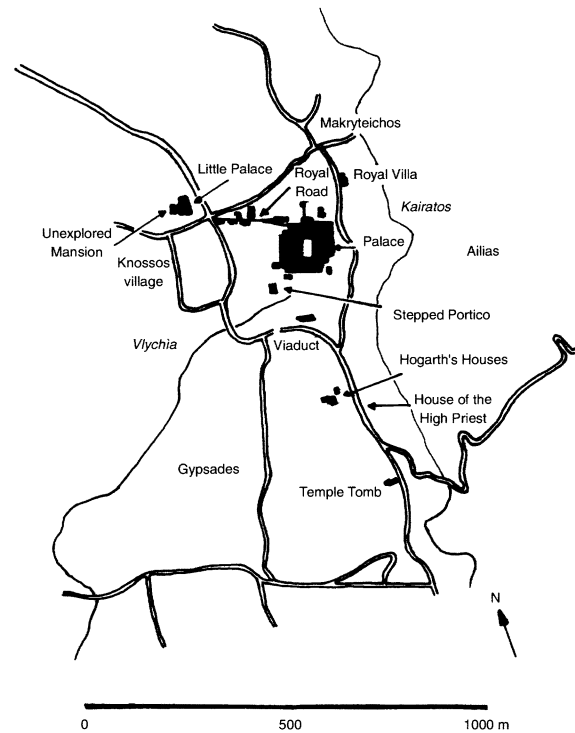


Fig. 3. The Knossos Area. (After Cadogan et al. 1992)

isted.³³ For the Protopalatial town at Knossos we have even less to go on (fig. 3). Based on his collation of the results of trial and rescue excavations at Knossos, Hood was able to remark that, “by the end of the Middle Minoan I period the area of intensive settlement at Knossos had expanded to a size that was hardly surpassed at any later stage of the Bronze Age.”³⁴ As

³⁰ Investigations beneath floor levels of the Neopalatial palace at Zakros, and those more recently excavated at Petras and Galatas, have revealed Middle Minoan IB–II deposits that suggest the probable existence of Old Palace period predecessors at these sites. For Zakros, see N. Platon, “Zakro,” in J.W. Myers, E.E. Myers, and G. Cadogan eds., *The Aerial Atlas of Ancient Crete* (London 1992) 292–301; For Petras, M. Tsipopoulou and M. Wedde, *Διαβάζοντας ένα χωμάτινο παλιμνηστο: Στοιματογραφικές τομές στο ανακτορικό κτήριο του Πετρά Σητείας*, 8th *CretCong* (Heraklion, in press). For Galatas, G. Rethemiotakis, “Galatas,” *Kritiki Estia* (1996) 317–22.

³¹ E.g., J.D.S. Pendlebury, *The Archaeology of Crete: An Introduction* (London 1939) 96. He suggests that the East Wing at Knossos may not have been fully developed until the MM IIA period, after the initial palatial construction in MM IB, during which the palace may have been constituted of insulae, i.e., isolated blocks of buildings organized around the central court. Only in MM II are the separate insulae replaced by a unified scheme, cf. A. Evans, *The Palace of Minos at Knossos 1* (London 1921) 139–40. More recent discussion can be found in J.A. MacGillivray, “The Foundation of the Old Palaces in Crete,” 6th *CretCong* (1990) 429–34; MacGillivray “The Early History of the Pal-

ace at Knossos (MM I–II),” in D. Evely et al. eds., *A Labyrinth of History: Papers in Honour of Sinclair Hood* (Oxford 1994) 45–55.

³² For Malia, cf. O. Pelon, “La naissance des palais dans le Proche-Orient et dans l’Égée: Contribution à l’étude du développement d’un système architectural,” in P. Darcque and R. Treuil eds., *L’Habitat égéen préhistorique* (BCH Suppl. 19, Athens 1990) 265–79; for difficulties with Zakros, see N. Platon 1992 (supra n. 31); for Phaistos, see D. Levi, *Festos e la civiltà minoica 1* (Rome 1976).

³³ Cf. A. Evans, *The Palace of Minos at Knossos 2* (London 1921) 547–51; M.S.F. Hood and D. Smyth, “Archaeological Survey of the Knossos Area,” *BSA Suppl.* 14 (London 1981).

³⁴ Hood and Smyth (supra n. 33) 8. Also T.M. Whitelaw, “The Settlement at Fournou Korifi Myrtos and Aspects of Early Minoan Social Organisation,” in O. Krzyzskowska and L. Nixon eds., *Minoan Society* (Bristol 1983) 323–45. He notes that Protopalatial Knossos probably covered at least 45 ha, although now would revise this figure to ca. 70–80 ha (pers. comm.). Warren estimates that during the period MM I to LM I there was 75 ha of intensive settlement at Knossos: P.M. Warren, “The Minoan Roads of Knossos,” in Evely et al. (supra n. 31) 209.

for excavated remains of this date, in the immediate vicinity of the palace one can really only refer to the area of the Southwest Houses³⁵ and the Royal Road.³⁶ A little further from the center, there are Middle Minoan I–II deposits from the Aqueduct Well, Hogarth's Houses,³⁷ the area behind the Stratigraphical Museum,³⁸ Trial KV,³⁹ and the field north of the Villa Ariadne.⁴⁰ Even where there are major town complexes excavated such as at Malia,⁴¹ the nature of the relations between the town and palace are far from well understood.⁴² However, the site of Malia provides the best evidence available for us to ascertain the nature of a town surrounding a Middle Minoan palace.

MALIA

It seems fair to assume that all three⁴³ of the palatial centers for which there is evidence in the Old Palace period would have had associated territories. Malia is in one sense unique as a palatial center in that concerted attempts can be made to define its associated territory through analysis of the closely comparable pottery styles⁴⁴ of sites such as Myrtos

Pyrgos, Gournia, Vasiliki, and Pseira. These particularities of Malia's regional position are discussed below, but at this stage of the discussion the focus is restricted to the palace and the town.

A unique feature of the site of Malia itself is that it has extensively excavated town complexes (fig. 4). Despite this fact, the nature of the palace itself at this time is poorly understood. A series of soundings, directed by Pelon over the last thirty years, has served to demonstrate that beneath the substantial Neopalatial structures an early palace did exist⁴⁵ in MM II. Protopalatial remains in the immediate vicinity of the Palace, such as the Agora and Crypte Hypostyle,⁴⁶ and "Les Abords Nord-Est du Palais,"⁴⁷ testify to the obvious presence nearby of a central complex, even though few vestiges of the central structure itself have remained. Other major town complexes include Quartier Epsilon,⁴⁸ Quartier Gamma,⁴⁹ and Quartier Mu,⁵⁰ and close to the beach to the west, and at a slightly smaller scale, is Quartier Theta, alternatively known as "La Maison de la Plage."⁵¹ Quartier Mu (fig. 5) is of course enormously important for a number of reasons⁵²—

³⁵ C.F. Macdonald, "Protopalatial Development South West of the Palace of Minos," in 8th *CretCong* (Heraklion, in press).

³⁶ M.S.F. Hood, "Stratigraphic Excavations at Knossos," *CretChron* 15/16 (1961–2) 92–97.

³⁷ M.S.F. Hood, "Knossos," *AR* (1958) 18–21.

³⁸ P.M. Warren, "Knossos Stratigraphical Museum Excavations, 1978–80: Part I," *AR* (1980–1981) 73–92.

³⁹ M.R. Popham, "Trial KV (1969), a Middle Minoan Building at Knossos," *BSA* 69 (1974) 181–94.

⁴⁰ Here a deposit of MM IB pottery has been found in excavations by K. Wardle, mentioned in R.A. Tomlinson, "Archaeology in Greece, 1995–1996," *AR* (1996) 1–47. The deposit is also briefly described in J.A. MacGillivray, "Knossos: Pottery Groups of the Old Palace Period," *BSA Studies* 5 (London 1998) 52.

⁴¹ H. van Effenterre, *Le palais de Malia et la cité minoenne* (Rome 1980).

⁴² J.-C. Poursat, "Le début de l'époque protopalatiale à Malia," in *Eilapinè, Mélanges N. Platon* (Paris 1987) 461–66; J.-C. Poursat, *Guide de Malia—Quartier Mu* (Athens 1992).

⁴³ Notwithstanding the fact that further research at Zakros, as well as Petras, Galatas, Gournia, and Monastiraki, and even Chania and Rethymnon, may reveal the presence of yet more Old Palace period palatial centers.

⁴⁴ One supposes that Knossos and Phaistos would also have had such territories, but there are far less data from subsidiary sites in their regions to support the hypothesis; for a recent attempt to define a Knossos Old Palace state, cf. G. Cadogan, "An Old Palace Period Knossos State?" in Evelyn et al. (supra n. 31) 57–68.

⁴⁵ Moreover, Pelon argues that a central complex of palatial type may even have existed as early as EM IIB, cf. O. Pelon, "Un dépôt de fondation au palais de Malia," *BCH Chron* 110 (1986) 3–19; Pelon, "Malia—le palais," *BCH Chron*

Chron 115 (1991) 726–35; Pelon, *Guide de Malia—Le Palais* (Athens 1992); Pelon, "La salle à piliers du palais de Malia et ses antécédents: Recherches complémentaires," *BCH* 117 (1993) 523–46.

⁴⁶ H. and M. van Effenterre, "Malia. Le centre politique, 1. L'agora (1960–1966)," *Études Crétoises* 17 (Paris 1969); M.-Cl. Amouretti, "Malia. Le centre politique, 2. La crypte hypostyle (1957–62)," *Études Crétoises* 18 (Paris 1970).

⁴⁷ C. Baurain, P. Darcque, and C. Verlinden, "Malia—abords nord-est du palais," *BCH Chroniques* 110 (1986) 816–22; Baurain C. and P. Darcque, "Malia—Les abords nord-est du palais," *BCH Chroniques* 117 (1993) 671–75.

⁴⁸ O. Pelon, "Fouilles exécutées à Mallia: Exploration des maisons et quartiers d'habitation (1963–66), III fascicule," *Études Crétoises* 16 (Paris 1970).

⁴⁹ P. Demargne and H. Gallet de Santerre, "Mallia: Exploration des maisons et quartiers d'habitation (1921–48), 1 fascicule," *Études Crétoises* 9 (Paris 1953).

⁵⁰ J.-C. Poursat, "Fouilles exécutées à Malia: Le Quartier Mu I," *Études Crétoises* 23 (Paris 1978); B. Detournay, J.-C. Poursat, and F. Vandenabeele, "Mallia. Le Quartier Mu II," *Études Crétoises* 26 (Paris 1980); Poursat, "Artisans Minoens: les maisons-ateliers du quartier Mu. Fouilles exécutées à Malia: le Quartier Mu III," *Études Crétoises* 32 (Paris 1996).

⁵¹ H. and M. van Effenterre, "Maisons IV: Le Quartier Theta (1959–60)," *Études Crétoises* 21 (Paris 1976).

⁵² For lucid and concise discussion of the nature of the Malia town, and the possible place of Quartier Mu within it, cf. J.-C. Poursat, "Ateliers et sanctuaires à Malia: Nouvelles données sur l'organisation sociale à l'époque des premiers palais," in O. Krzyszkowska and L. Nixon eds., *Minoan Society* (Bristol 1983) 277–81; J.-C. Poursat, "La ville minoenne de Malia: Recherches et publications récentes," *RA* (1988) 61–82.

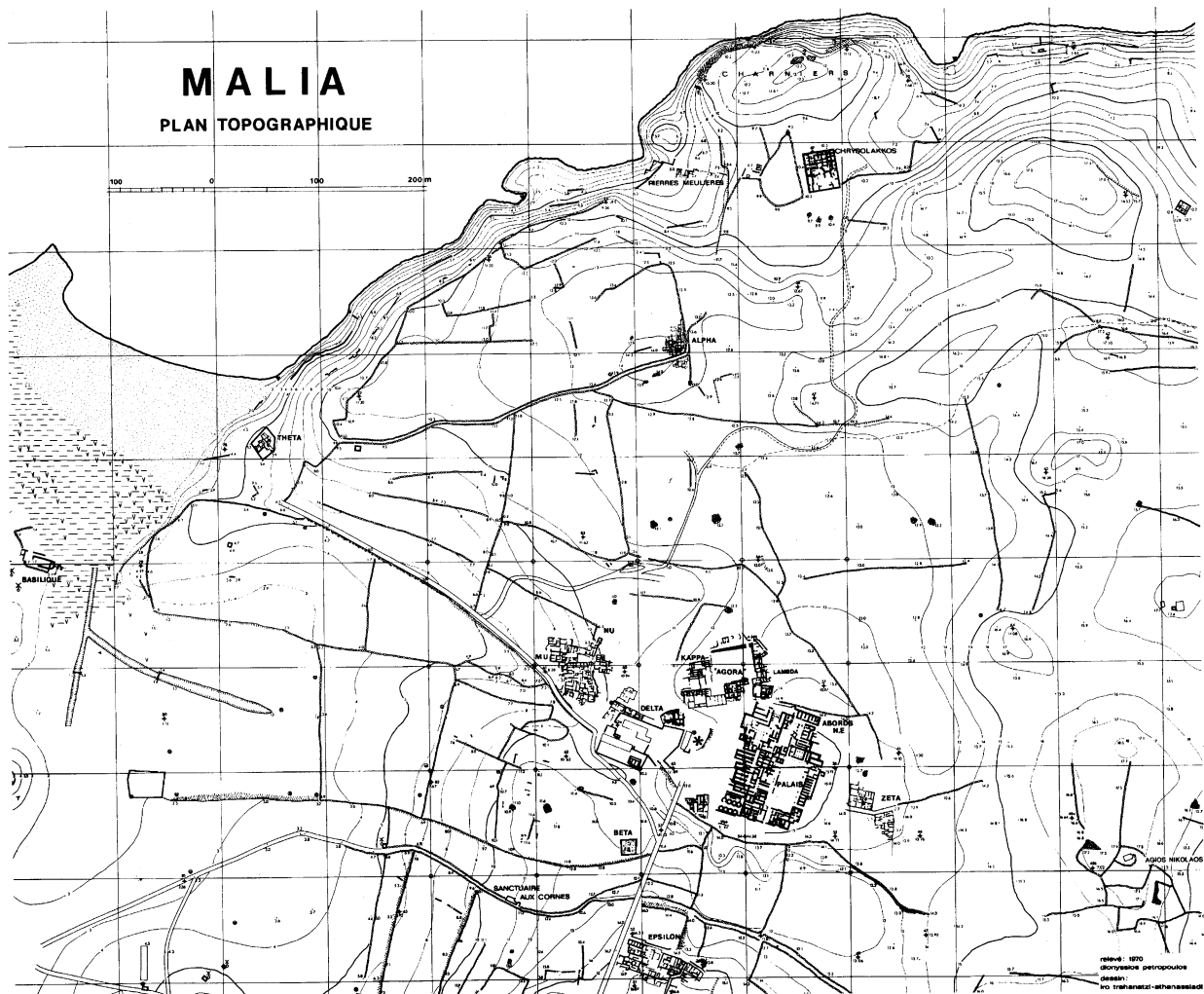


Fig. 4. Plan of Malia. (After J.-C. Poursat, *Guide de Malia—Quartier Mu* [Athens 1992] foldout)

the discovery of Cretan Hieroglyphic administrative documents;⁵³ the group of workshops for seal-stone production, bronze production, and pottery manufacture;⁵⁴ the extensive storage capacities including specialized magazines with very large pithoi, some imported; the integration of a sanctuary into the main building, building A;⁵⁵ and the incorporation of various “palatial” architectural features, such as a lustral basin, lightwells, and an ashlar sandstone facade.⁵⁶ Soundings beneath the

recently excavated LM III floors of nearby Quartier Nu⁵⁷ have revealed deposits of complete MM II vases, suggesting the probable existence of an intense MM II occupation in this area just to the north of Quartier Mu. Other notable features of the Malia town include the presence of independent town sanctuaries, such as the MM II Sanctuary⁵⁸ to the south of Quartier Mu and the Sanctuaire aux Cornes, a little further to the south (although this is not very securely dated). The burial complexes to

⁵³ Poursat 1978 (supra n. 50); I.M. Schoep, *Minoan Administration on Crete: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Documents in Cretan Hieroglyphic and Linear A (MM I/II–LM IB)* (Diss. Univ. of Leuven 1996).

⁵⁴ Poursat 1996 (supra n. 50).

⁵⁵ G. Gesell, “Town, Palace and House Cult in Minoan Crete,” *SIMA* 67 (1985).

⁵⁶ R. Treuil, “Le Quartier Mu à Malia: Découvertes et

problèmes en architecture minoenne,” in M. Rochi and L. Vagnetti eds., *Consigli Nazionale delle Ricerche Istituto per Gli Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici, Seminari anno 1990* (1991) 173–177.

⁵⁷ J.M. Driessen and A. Farnoux, “Quartier Nu,” *BCH* 117 (1993) 675–82.

⁵⁸ J.-C. Poursat, “Un sanctuaire MM II à Malia,” *BCH* 90 (1966) 514–51.



Fig. 5. Plan of Quartier Mu. (After J.-C. Poursat, *Guide de Malia—Quartier Mu* [Athens 1992] foldout)

the north of the palace, including the renowned Chrysolakkos,⁵⁹ the “charniers” (ossuaries), the cemetery of Pierres Meulières, and the pithos burials of L’Ilot du Christ exhibit a variability of format rarely matched at other Minoan sites in this period.⁶⁰ Lastly, the intensive surface survey recently undertaken promises to add yet more to our understanding of the town of Malia.⁶¹

⁵⁹ The ceramic material from which has recently been placed in MM IIB by V. Stürmer, “La céramique de Chrysolakkos: Catalogue et réexamen,” *BCH* 117 (1993) 123–87. His analysis is clearly erroneous, however; for valid criticisms and a revised date for much of the material to MM IB, see J.-C. Poursat, “Notes de céramique Maliote à propos de ‘La Céramique de Chrysolakkos,’” *BCH* 117 (1993) 603–607. For consideration of the function of the Chrysolakkos complex, cf. G. de Pierpont, “Réflexions sur la destination des édifices de Chrysolakkos,” in R. Laffineur ed., *Thanatos: Les coutumes funéraires en Égée à l’Age du Bronze*

A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE — PALACE, TOWN, AND TERRITORY

Not only should a palace have an associated town but also a surrounding hinterland to administer and by which to be supported (fig. 6). The existence of a palace is inseparable from its associated domain. Poursat makes the case succinctly: “Il serait intéres-

(Aegaeum 1, Liège 1987) 79–94.

⁶⁰ P. Demargne, “Malia: Exploration des nécropoles (1921–1953),” *Études Crétoises* 7 (Paris 1945); C. Baurain, “Les necropoles de Malia,” in R. Laffineur ed., *Thanatos: Les Coutumes funéraires en Égée à l’Age de Bronze* (Aegaeum 1, Liège 1987) 60–73; J.S. Soles, “The Prepalatial Cemeteries at Mochlos and Gournia, and the House Tombs of Bronze Age Crete,” *Hesperia* Suppl. 24 (1992).

⁶¹ S. Müller, “Prospection de la plaine de Malia,” *BCH* 116 (1992) 742–53.

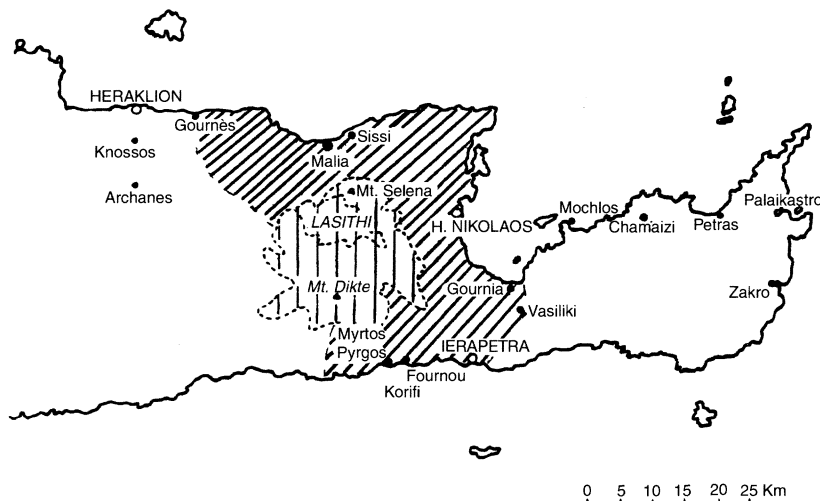


Fig. 6. Possible regional extent of the Protopalatial Malia state

sant de pouvoir saisir le fonctionnement interne de l'administration territoriale, les relations entre les différents sites, et, naturellement, les rapports entre les différents territoires palatiaux."⁶² One doubts if any study on the Old Palace period has successfully addressed itself to the sorts of questions Poursat poses.⁶³ Van Effenterre has considered at length the various possibilities in terms of the Malia palace's relationship to its hinterland, particularly viewing the Lasithi plateau as a breadbasket for Malia in the light of palatial storage capacities and the projected productivity of the surrounding land.⁶⁴ However useful his contribution as an exercise in coming to terms with the problem of the palatial domain, it remains hypothetical. More recently, Watrous has conducted a detailed survey of the Lasithi plain,⁶⁵ and it seems that its high productivity is only a relatively recent phenomenon resulting largely from heavy alluviation. In fact there is very little hard evidence regarding ancient agricultural production patterns in this period, and nothing to suggest that the Lasithi plain was anything more than self-sustaining, and certainly not a bread-basket for the coastal zone below. The possibility that Lasithi maintained a degree of politi-

cal independence emerges still further in the work of Nowicki;⁶⁶ his detailed investigations of the upland areas have revealed a series of defensible sites datable to MM II, the location of which suggests that Lasithi may not have been controlled from Malia.

Another attempt to look beyond palaces to their hinterlands is represented in a brief article by Branigan, in which he concludes that the primary economic function of the Old Palaces at Knossos and Phaistos was the regulation of local exchange.⁶⁷ Like the work of van Effenterre, it is largely conjectural and, moreover, the scope of "local" is barely considered. In the same vein, Palaima is also guilty of vague conjecture on the economic nature of the old palaces at a regional level, stating that, "on a purely regional basis, the early palaces functioned both as places for the storage of surplus foodstuffs, and as organizers and facilitators of the exchange of foodstuffs and other goods."⁶⁸

Indeed, relations between palace and territory are frequently assumed to be of a certain fixed character once the term "state" is invoked. Therefore it would be worthwhile to examine more thoroughly the territorial extent and character of the state thought to

⁶² Poursat 1988 (supra n. 52) 79.

⁶³ See also Cadogan pointing out that work needs to be done on the hinterlands of the palaces and towns—G. Cadogan, "Some Middle Minoan Problems," in E.B. French and K.A. Wardle eds., *Problems in Greek Prehistory* (Bristol 1988) 95–99; this he follows up with short studies aiming to define the territory of Malia (Cadogan 1990, supra n. 25), and the Knossos hinterland (Cadogan 1994, supra n. 44).

⁶⁴ van Effenterre (supra n. 41); also Y. Dewolf, F. Postel, and H. van Effenterre, "Géographie préhistorique de la région de Mallia," *Etudes Crétoises* 13 (1963) 28–53.

⁶⁵ L. V. Watrous, *Lasithi: A History of Settlement on a Highland Plain in Crete* (Princeton 1982).

⁶⁶ K. Nowicki, "Report on Investigations in Greece VII. Studies in 1990," *Archaeologia* 42 (1991) 143–45; K. Nowicki, "Report on Investigations in Greece X. Studies in 1993 and 1994," *Archaeologia* 46 (1995) 63–70.

⁶⁷ K. Branigan, "The Economic Role of the First Palaces," in R. Hägg and N. Marinatos eds., *The Function of the Minoan Palaces* (Stockholm 1987) 245–49.

⁶⁸ Palaima 1990 (supra n. 29).

center on Malia. Mention has already been made of the relationship between the Lasithi plateau and Malia, but it is difficult to be any more precise about this owing to the limited nature of the evidence. Other sites that may fall within a Malia state, on the basis of geography, site distributions, and patterns in the material culture, include Gournia, Vasiliki, and even Chamaizi and Petras (fig. 6). Walberg⁶⁹ draws a line between an East-central and an Eastern region along the Isthmus of Ierapetra, a natural topographical division used also by Cherry (1986), but fails to specify in which zone sites along the Isthmus (Gournia and Vasiliki) actually belong. Andreou⁷⁰ has portrayed the sites in the Isthmus (i.e., Gournia, Vasiliki) as falling within the Eastern group (i.e., with Zakros and Palaikastro) on the basis of ceramic stylistic similarity. Cadogan, on the other hand, has stressed how similar the pottery from Gournia is to that of Malia and Myrtos Pyrgos, thereby linking the Isthmus to the East-central group. It may appear from these differing views that one can just as easily associate Gournia and Vasiliki with Zakros and Palaikastro. The recent evidence from Petras,⁷¹ a site close to Siteia in the east of the island, serves to complicate matters still further: some of the fine pottery published (in preliminary form) shows very strong similarities to typical examples from Malia and Myrtos Pyrgos, while some other fineware types exhibit close stylistic connections with Palaikastro examples. It is not at all clear where a boundary between eastern and east-central zones may lie, if indeed one can talk of a boundary as such. Cadogan has wondered if Ayia Photia may turn out to mark the eastern limit of the Lasithi region but with the core of the region still being on and around the Lasithi massif.⁷² One is reminded of Pendlebury's almost prophetic statement: "Some sites in the eastern half of Central Crete, such as Gournais [Gournes] and Malia, seem to link on to the eastern group at this time."⁷³ Renewed excavation at Gournia, with greater emphasis on Protopalatial material, and the publication of the Petras material, may shed further light on this difficult problem.

⁶⁹ G. Walberg, *Provincial Middle Minoan Pottery* (Mainz 1983); Walberg, *Kamarens: A Study of the Character of Palatial Middle Minoan Pottery*² (SIMA Pocketbook 49, Göteborg 1987).

⁷⁰ S. Andreou, *Pottery Groups of the Old Palace Period in Crete* (Diss. Univ. of Cincinnati 1978).

⁷¹ See Tsipopoulou and Wedde (supra n. 30).

⁷² See Cadogan 1996 (supra n. 25).

⁷³ Pendlebury 1939 (supra n. 31) 114.

To the west, Cadogan has attempted to define the extent of a Knossos state, an exercise hindered by the lack of published material from sites in the Knossos hinterland. Clearly the Knossos Middle Minoan II pottery is very different from that of Malia, and it is argued that the boundary between the two falls at Gournes, with its combination of styles from both regions.⁷⁴

The site that has attracted most attention as a candidate for inclusion within an east-central Malia state is the village site of Myrtos Pyrgos on the south coast. Myrtos Pyrgos probably did fall within the domain of a state and, of the state centers we know, Malia is the best candidate, judging by the strong similarities in material culture at least. As a working hypothesis I shall here make the basic assumption that Myrtos Pyrgos does fall within some sort of state or polity centered at Malia.⁷⁵

MYRTOS PYRGOS

The site of Myrtos Pyrgos (fig. 7) is located on the south coast of Crete, about 15 km to the west of the modern town of Ierapetra. Although only 35 km from Malia as the crow flies, the two sites are separated by the imposing Lasithi mountains and plateau. Myrtos Pyrgos is located on a low conical hill with steep sides, just 1 km to the east of the village of Myrtos, at the mouth of the once perennial Myrtos river. Although there is very little Protopalatial (Period III) architecture on the summit of the hill at Myrtos Pyrgos (apart from a cistern), where the Neopalatial country house was eventually constructed, there are Protopalatial structures on the north and west slopes, such as the defensive tower, terrace (defensive?) walls, and a second cistern.⁷⁶ There is also a house tomb, actually constructed and in use during the Prepalatial period, continuing down through the Protopalatial and into the Neopalatial period. Protopalatial pottery has been recovered from a number of contexts—the house tomb, both cisterns, possible house levels on the north slope near the defensive tower, and from a huge mass of clearance debris a little further to the west on this same north-facing slope. The majority of the pottery comes from this redepos-

⁷⁴ Cadogan 1994 (supra n. 44); cf. also A. Zois, *Problēmata Chronologias tis Minoikis Kerameikis—Gournes, Tylissos, Mallia* (Athens 1968).

⁷⁵ The possibility remains that there exists another site that we have yet to recognize as a Middle Minoan palatial center (e.g., Gournia?), or yet to discover at all (Ierapetra?), that may have formed a state with Pyrgos in its territory.

⁷⁶ G. Cadogan, "Pyrgos, Crete, 1970–77," *AR* (1977–1978) 70–84.

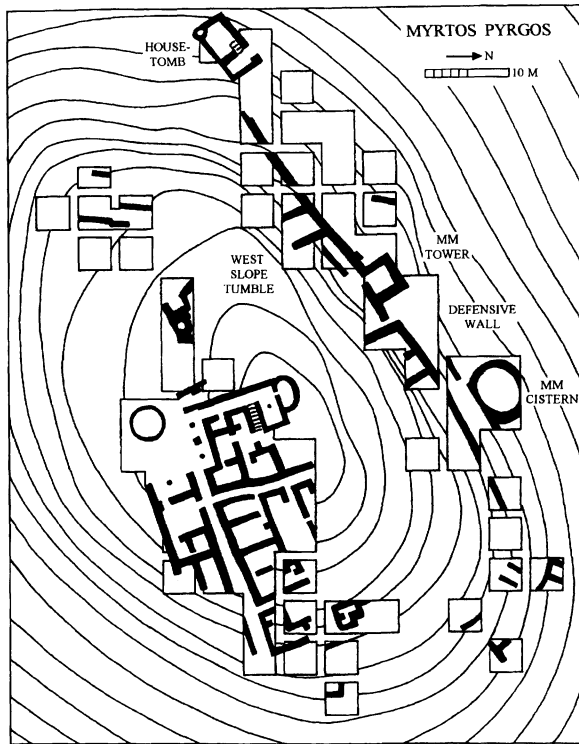


Fig. 7. Plan of Myrtos Pyrgos

ited context, presumably having tumbled down from a Protopalatial building complex on the very top of the hill,⁷⁷ the nature of which is unknown. Despite its secondary/tertiary context, it represents a coherent body of material with many complete or nearly complete vessels, stratigraphically overlying in situ deposits of Period IIC–d (MM IA–B). This stratigraphic separation is supported by clear stylistic differences between the material of Pyrgos II and Pyrgos III. There is no later material overlying the Pyrgos III deposits, and neither does there appear to be, according to stylistic assessments, any later pot-

tery within the Pyrgos III deposits that must be later than MM IIB (i.e., MM IIIA).

Cadogan⁷⁸ reports that the initial impression, during the excavation of the Protopalatial material from the site was that the pottery was similar to the “Early Gournia Style” described by Harriet Boyd-Hawes.⁷⁹ Subsequently it became clear that there were also strong affinities to the pottery from Quartier Mu being excavated and studied by Poursat.⁸⁰ This methodology of drawing comparisons to form regional groupings has marked Cadogan’s work on this subject.⁸¹ It is widely agreed that Pyrgos III and the Malia Town Group (especially Quartier Mu) are closely comparable.⁸²

CERAMIC REGIONALISM AND BEYOND

The main evidence for some sort of connection between Malia and Myrtos Pyrgos is the pottery and, more specifically, the fine tablewares.⁸³ There have been studies of pottery style distributions in the Old Palace period,⁸⁴ but they have tended to place dots on a map rather than consider explicitly the processes by which artifact style may diffuse, and hence the internal organization, economic or otherwise, of palatial domains. However, the extensive ceramic deposits from Myrtos Pyrgos⁸⁵ and Quartier Mu,⁸⁶ which have been exhaustively studied by the respective excavators and are in the process of being published, provide us with a unique opportunity to study fully the patterns of stylistic and technological similarity and difference between the sites and to explore the possible reasons behind these patterns. We may then be in a position to evaluate systematically the idea that there was a state territory centered at Malia stretching across the Lasithi region as far as the south coast.⁸⁷

In so doing, however, we must be careful not to accept uncritically the equation between a cultural unit

⁷⁷ Cf. G. Cadogan, “The Role of the Pyrgos Country House in Minoan Society,” in R. Hägg ed., *The Function of the “Minoan villa”* (Stockholm 1997) esp. 103.

⁷⁸ Cadogan 1996 (supra n. 25).

⁷⁹ H.A.B. Hawes, B.E. Williams, R.B. Seager, and E.H. Hall, *Gournia, Vasilike, and Other Prehistoric Sites on the Isthmus of Hierapetra, Crete* (Philadelphia 1908).

⁸⁰ See Poursat (supra n. 25) 46–48.

⁸¹ Cadogan 1988 (supra n. 62); 1990, 1996 (supra n. 25).

⁸² Andreou 1978 (supra n. 77).

⁸³ There are other, more minor (in quantitative terms) categories of evidence, too, summarized by Cadogan 1996 (supra n. 25) 100–101. First, there is metallurgical evidence found only in the Malia region, such as hoards of

carpenter’s tools, rare examples of metal plate (e.g., silver kantharos from Gournia), and a shoe-socket spearhead from Malia (and a mold for one at Pyrgos). Secondly, there are some minor similarities in administrative practices, such as the stamping of seals on the handles of coarse jars and amphorae, and the occurrence of potmarks. Thirdly, built tombs in the form of houses seem to be characteristic of the region, even in the Prepalatial period.

⁸⁴ Andreou 1978 (supra n. 70); Walberg 1983 (supra n. 65).

⁸⁵ Cadogan 1977–8 (supra n. 76).

⁸⁶ Poursat 1978, 1996 (supra n. 50).

⁸⁷ Cadogan 1990, 1996 (supra n. 25); Poursat 1988 (supra n. 52).

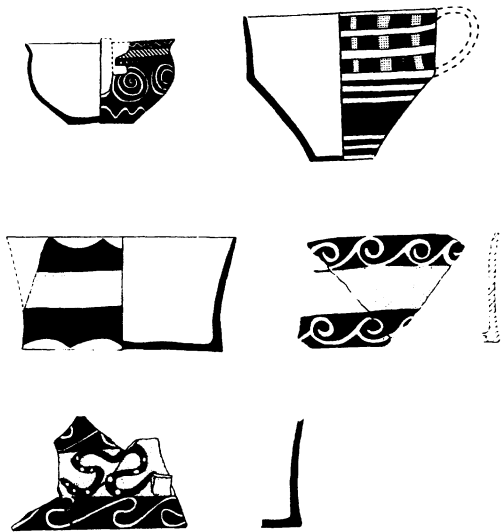


Fig. 8. Fine tableware, Quartier Mu. (Courtesy EFA; I. Athanassiadi)



Fig. 9. Hemispherical cups, Myrtos Pyrgos. (Courtesy BSA; J. Clarke)

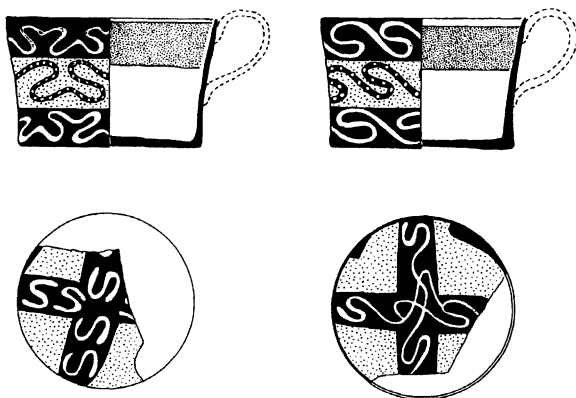


Fig. 10. Straight-sided cups, Myrtos Pyrgos. (Courtesy BSA; J. Clarke)

(formulated primarily according to ceramic styles) and a sociopolitical unit such as the state.⁸⁸ To date in Minoan archaeology, ceramic regionalism studies have proven unsatisfactory for the purposes of reconstructing the dynamic relations between a palace and its domain. One must keep those factors in mind in any attempt to characterize the nature of Minoan societal complexity. For example, the idea of a continuum of variation between centralized and decentralized states is important, as is the conceptual division of the state into its economic, ideological, and political activities, roles, and institutions. One must also consider the degree of control inherent in the various implied relationships. This division into three separate though overlapping organizational variables allows us to characterize better the Malia-Pyrgos relationship without being forced into predicating a state centered at Malia, with complete economic and political control over sites such as Myrtos Pyrgos, at the distant edges of what is assumed to be its territory. We may instead entertain the possibility that, for example, Malia may have had considerable ideological influence upon Pyrgos, moderate political control (Malia may only have been making decisions for Pyrgos in certain spheres of activity), and relatively little economic impact.

NEW APPROACH, NEW DATA

The discussion to date has been based largely on pottery. Eventually one would hope that such an issue might be tackled using diverse forms of archaeological and other evidence. But as a first attempt at a more explicit consideration of the question the focus here will continue to be on pottery, albeit from a number of angles. There are essentially three forms of ceramic evi-

⁸⁸ For dangers inherent in this procedure, cf. J.W. Ball, "Pottery, Potters, Palaces and Politics: Some Socio-economic and Political Implications of Late Classic Maya Ceramic Industries," in J.A. Sabloff and J.S. Henderson eds., *Lowland Maya Civilization in the Eighth Century A.D.* (Washington, D.C. 1993) 243–72; and I. Hodder, *The Spatial Organisation of Culture* (London 1978). Ball in particular warns against the use of ceramic interaction spheres for the casual mapping of political geography. Ceramic spheres, he claims, tend rather to be the products of common cultural traditions. On the other hand, on the basis of ethnographic work amongst the Kalinga, Graves argues that the territorial extent of social units can correspond very closely to material culture groupings. He too is against a "casual" equation of one with the other, stressing how important an influence the particular cultural context has on the nature of the correspondence: M. Graves, "Kalinga Social and Material Culture Boundaries: A Case of Spatial Convergence," in W.A. Longacre and J. Skibo eds., *Kalinga Ethnoarchaeology* (Washington, D.C. 1994) 13–49.

dence emerging from the current program of research that may be pertinent in trying to decide what sort of state Malia may have headed, and in what ways Myrtos Pyrgos may have been incorporated into it.

First, there is the evidence represented by the material styles of the finished products. The great similarities in the artifactual style of fine tablewares found not only at Malia and Myrtos Pyrgos, but also at Gournia and Vasiliki (and now Petras), have been used to demarcate the territory of the state presumed to be centered on Malia. Examples of such pottery include straight-sided cups, hemispherical cups, carinated cups, and bridge-spouted jugs of various kinds (figs. 8–14). There are around 25 different fineware types that are practically identical at both Malia and Myrtos Pyrgos, while being produced locally at each site.

Second, we have the evidence provided by reconstructions of craft production activities and their institutional settings.⁸⁹ There are different ways of defining production modes, but the scheme used here is derived from the work of Sinopoli, in which a distinction is made between *administered*, *centralized*, and *noncentralized* modes.⁹⁰ In brief, administered production tends to involve attached specialists producing fine tableware for elite conspicuous consumption.⁹¹ This is the only ceramic production mode identified at both Malia and Myrtos Pyrgos. When pottery is manufactured in a centralized mode, the craftsperson is independent rather than attached to an elite patron. Decisions are made in response to market conditions, supply and demand processes, and tradition, and production tends to focus on essential household craft products. This mode is very well represented in the pottery from Malia, and absent at Myrtos Pyrgos. Noncentralised ceramic production is not witnessed at Malia yet is common at Myrtos Pyrgos, particularly for domestic wares. This third sort of production mode does involve craft specialists, but occurs

⁸⁹ This approach is pursued in some detail in the author's doctoral thesis: C. J. Knappett, *Pottery Production and Distribution in Protopalatial Crete: Technological, Economic, and Social Perspectives* (Diss. Univ. of Cambridge 1997).

⁹⁰ C. Sinopoli, "The Organization of Craft Production at Vijayanagara, South India," *American Anthropologist* 90 (1988) 580–97. The tripartite scheme recently sketched by Wattenmaker, of *administered*, *nucleated*, and *small-scale specialized* production, appears to be broadly equivalent, cf. P. Wattenmaker, *Household and State in Upper Mesopotamia* (Washington, D.C. 1998) 4.

⁹¹ Sinopoli 1988 (supra n. 90) 581 defines the administered mode as "production that is directly regulated by some powerful nonproducing group or institution under the control of the political and/or religious elite. Craft producers are . . . spatially and economically bound to the institutions that control production."



Fig. 11. "Tartan style" straight-sided cups, Myrtos Pyrgos. (Courtesy BSA)



Fig. 12. Ribbed carinated cups, Myrtos Pyrgos. (Courtesy BSA)



Fig. 13. Tall carinated cups, Myrtos Pyrgos. (Courtesy BSA)



Fig. 14. Carinated bridge-spouted jugs, Myrtos Pyrgos. (Courtesy BSA)

on a smaller scale and in more dispersed locations than either of the other two production modes.

Third and finally, there are the distribution patterns of imported vessels, identified through petrographic analysis of ceramic fabrics sampled from both sites. For example, in the Quartier Mu pottery there are considerable numbers of storage and transport vessels imported from the Mirabello area. This type of import is also well represented in the Myrtos Pyrgos material. A significant number of storage and transport vessels seem, according to the petrographic results, to be imported to Malia from a site on the south coast (and this site was probably not Myrtos Pyrgos). A specific amphora type is imported to Malia from the Mesara, and also in minor quantities to Myrtos Pyrgos. A separate fabric type also from the Mesara is found at Myrtos Pyrgos but not at Malia.

It is accepted as a working hypothesis that Malia is at the head of a state that in some way includes Myrtos Pyrgos. This state must fall somewhere on the continuum between centralized on the one hand, and decentralized on the other. The following discussion assesses pottery, in combination with other evidence, in order to evaluate the nature of the relationship between the two sites and to contribute to an understanding of the Malia state.

ECONOMIC FEATURES — CENTRALIZED AND DECENTRALIZED

Pottery Production

The detailed research conducted to date suggests that many classes of pottery used at Malia were produced within what has been described above as a centralized mode of production.⁹² This is relatively clear from the wide range of vessel types in a local semifine to coarse red fabric that were manufactured with a high degree of skill and standardization, yet with low levels of labor investment (all such types are plain and untreated). Examples of such types, such as wide conical bowls, trefoil jugs, tall piriform jugs, spouted carinated cups, and big-handled cups, can be seen in figures 15–19. The combination of high standardization with low labor investment in the plain red wares indicates that efficiency and competition may have been major concerns for the potters. It should be noted that to talk of a centralized *mode* is not to infer that there was a single central *workshop*—there may have been a number of production units all organized in a centralized way, as defined by Sinopoli.⁹³ Such workshops may have been located alongside workshops for other crafts, as is the case with the *maisons-ateliers* of Quartier Mu,⁹⁴ or



Fig. 15. “Pichets,” Quartier Mu. (Courtesy EFA; Ph. Collet)



Fig. 16. Tripod jugs, Quartier Mu. (Courtesy EFA; J.-C. Poursat)



Fig. 17. Trefoil-mouthed jugs, Quartier Mu. (Courtesy EFA; J.-C. Poursat)

agglomerated into quarters comprised exclusively of potters’ workshops, or possibly dispersed throughout the town, and perhaps beyond it.

⁹² Knappett 1997 (supra n. 89) 204, 214.

⁹³ Sinopoli 1988 (supra n. 90).

⁹⁴ Poursat 1996 (supra n. 50).



Fig. 18. Big-handled cups, Quartier Mu. (Courtesy EFA; E. Séraf)



Fig. 19. Carinated cups, Quartier Mu. (Courtesy EFA; Ph. Collet)

However, none of these types mentioned above is at all common at Myrtos Pyrgos, and indeed many of them are completely absent from the assemblage. Not only this, but there is little evidence for any alternative shapes that were manufactured with high standardization and low labor investment, that is, in a centralized production mode. In contrast, the kitchenwares at Myrtos Pyrgos exhibit considerable diversity in fabric, forming technology, and surface treatment. Standardization is only moderate compared to the situation at Malia, and labor investment is highly variable. Indeed, all the patterns point to the prevalence of noncentralized pottery production at Myrtos Pyrgos, without a centralized mode as seen at Malia. When one notes also how different some of the Pyrgos kitchenware is to that produced at Malia, everything seems broadly consistent with the sorts of economic patterns expected of a decentralized state, that is, low levels of administrative intervention in the day-to-day economic affairs of dependent populations. Not only is the production of kitchenware of a noncentralized character, it is also dispersed, with products from a number of nonlocal workshops finding their way to the settlement of Myrtos Pyrgos.⁹⁵ It would be extremely useful for comparison to have data from other spheres of the rural economy too, such as agricultural production, but at present such evidence is not forthcoming.

Pottery Distribution

The occurrence of fine tableware at Myrtos Pyrgos very similar to that at Malia has been taken by some as an indication of redistribution, with the superior workshops of the central palatial site supposedly circulating their craft products to smaller sites in the rural sector.⁹⁶ However, the fine tableware at Myrtos Pyrgos is nearly all of local production, albeit within an administered mode of production seemingly very close, in organizational terms, to that at Malia. An administered mode is indicated by the high levels of

skill, standardization, *and* labor investment. Moreover, these fine tableware are consciously elaborated in some details of decoration, such that each individual example is very subtly unique (figs. 8–11). In addition to the organizational parallels, these pouring and drinking vessels presumably had a function in elite conspicuous consumption and therefore may represent a strong link in elite ideology between Malia and Myrtos Pyrgos. This, however, is not necessarily an indication of an administratively centralized state; as mentioned already, decentralized states tend to develop strong ideological links across a region in the absence of strong political or economic power.⁹⁷

There are stylistic links between Malia and Myrtos Pyrgos in other vessel types, for example pithoi and oval-mouthed amphorae. These too might at first sight be attributed to close links between the two sites, with Myrtos Pyrgos sending storage and transport vessels to the redistributive center at Malia, the latter perhaps loaded with agricultural produce as tribute or tax. However, petrographic analyses reveal that imports specifically from Myrtos Pyrgos are very rarely found at Malia and, vice versa, very few Maliate products have been discovered at Myrtos Pyrgos. If these two sites were linked in a redistributive economic system (centered at Malia), then one might expect to see far more movement of products. The very limited nature of the exchange between the two sites becomes even more striking when compared with the much larger scale of exchange involving other sites within and beyond the region, to which we now come.

Pottery Consumption

A third key economic aspect is represented by the storage and transport vessels found at Malia and Myrtos Pyrgos that have been imported from other sites on Crete. One area that is a particularly common

⁹⁵ Knappett 1997 (supra n. 16). Petrographic analysis on a range of cooking pots from the site showed a diversity of fabrics, many of which are not local to the Myrtos valley. Possible source areas for some of these fabric types include the Lasithi plateau, the Pediada region, and the Mesara.

⁹⁶ J.A. MacGillivray "Pottery workshops and the Old Palaces in Crete," in R. Hägg and N. Marinatos eds., *The Function of the Minoan Palaces* (Stockholm 1987) 273–79.

⁹⁷ For those Mayan archaeologists who are keen to stress the centralized character of the Mayan state (the so-called "centralist" stance), Fox et al. 1996 (supra n. 2) 797 states the argument clearly: "State organizational structure went beyond ideology, ritual and kinship; centralized states evinced substantial administrative and economic control."

source of imports, as established through petrographic analyses, is the area around Gournia in the northern part of the Isthmus of Ierapetra. Oval-mouthed amphorae, pithoid jars, and pithoi from this area are found in significant quantities in Quartier Mu, and in lesser amounts at Myrtos Pyrgos. Are the vessels found in Quartier Mu—manufactured not only in the Mirabello area, but also on the south coast and in the Mesara—actually being sent to Malia on demand? Does Malia have a degree of regional economic control?

The patterns of consumption and distribution suggest that in fact Malia probably did not exercise any particular authority in this sphere of the economy. We cannot say if the amphorae imported from the Mesara actually came from the central site of Phaistos or from some other site in its domain, such as Kommos or Apodoulou. Either way, it seems improbable that Malia could have “demanded” amphorae (and perhaps their contents) from Phaistos, considered to be at least independent from and possibly more powerful than Malia. There is additional evidence to suggest that the distribution of storage and transport vessels in the Malia-Lasithi region was not controlled by Malia; amphorae from the Mesara⁹⁸ (fig. 20), identified according to stylistic and petrographic features, are found not only at Malia, but also at Myrtos Pyrgos. Furthermore, some storage vessels imported from the Mesara to Myrtos Pyrgos are in a specific and distinctive fabric that has not as yet been seen at Malia. These patterns imply that exchange was occurring along the south coast between the Mesara and Myrtos areas independently of, and not apparently routed through, Malia.

Let us consider still further the evidence from Myrtos Pyrgos, where thin section analysis has helped identify amphora imports not only from the Mesara, but also from the Mirabello area. This surely cannot be a question of economic or political control, of Pyrgos demanding products or produce from the Mirabello area, any more than it could be the result of Maliote economic control. Instead, the data point more convincingly to an independent economic pattern in which goods were exchanged along various routes irrespective of political authority.

Furthermore, there is more than ample evidence

⁹⁸ It is not as yet possible to say if these vessels came from Phaistos itself or from one or more of any number of sites, known and unknown, in the Mesara. These amphorae, so distinctive in their shape and decoration, have been found not only at Phaistos, but also at Kommos, Apodoulou, and Monastiraki.

⁹⁹ T.M. Whitelaw et al., “Ceramic traditions at EM IIB Myrtos, Fournou Korifi,” in P. Betancourt and R. Laffineur



Fig. 20. Mesara amphora, Quartier Mu. (Courtesy EFA; E. Séraf)

from Prepalatial periods of storage and transport vessels moving at a regional level, for example the Mirabello fabric storage jars found in EM IIB contexts at Fournou Korifi.⁹⁹ Indeed, Whitelaw et al. argue that this pattern is not seen in the EM IIA material at the site, and so the start of a relatively intense process involving the regional distribution and consumption of commodities may only start in EM IIB. We also have evidence for a continuation of such distribution patterns in EM III/MM IA, both at Malia and Myrtos Pyrgos; at each site a pithos has been found in a granodiorite (i.e., Mirabello) fabric, seemingly of early date—at Pyrgos possibly in a Prepalatial context, but at Quartier Mu in situ in one of the magazines of building A. One might also note that many of the EM III East Cretan White-on-Dark Ware sherds from Malia are in a distinctive Mirabello fabric;¹⁰⁰ moreover, it has now been shown that, even in the EM I–II periods, decorated pottery was exchanged regionally, for example, from the Mirabello area to Malia and to other sites.¹⁰¹ In short, certain types of pottery were involved in large-scale distribution and consumption at a regional level significantly before the emergence of palatial authority.

There also exists sound evidence from MM II Myr-

eds. (supra n. 16) 265–74.

¹⁰⁰ As observed by the author during the study of pottery at Malia.

¹⁰¹ E. Kiriati et al., “Παράγωγή και διακίνηση της κεραμικής και κοινωνικοπολιτική οργάνωση: η περίπτωση της γραπτής κεραμικής της ΠΜ ΙΙ περιόδου στην Ανατολική Κρήτη,” 8th *CretCong* (Heraklion, in press).

tos Pyrgos to show that cooking pots (and tripod bowls in particular) were being exchanged, possibly from noncentralized, dispersed workshops.¹⁰² It is illuminating in the context of this discussion that even cooking pots, presumably the epitome of the domestic economy, are imported and exported from site to neighboring site, free of any political intervention by a central authority.

Other Economic Evidence

If we look at some of the evidence from the center at Malia, rather than taking a view from Myrtos Pyrgos in the rural sector, we may be more inclined to take up a "centralist" stance, with Malia at the hub of a unitary state. The large storage capacity for agricultural produce and the evidence for a specialized administration represented by sealings, nodules, and documents in the Cretan hieroglyphic script, both suggest the existence of a centralized, administered economy. The possible storage capacities of the Malia town have been calculated and correlated with what is hypothesized to have been the agricultural yield of the Malia plain.¹⁰³ It is suggested that the agricultural needs of the town could not have been met by the plain alone, and supplementary goods must have come from the upland Lasithi plain. All the requirements of Malia could have been met by the produce from the upland and lowland plains combined. It would seem, therefore, that there is no need to see central *economic* control stretching across the entire territory, down the Isthmus of Ierapetra and along the south coast to Myrtos Pyrgos. The calculations of DeWolf et al. are by no means infallible, and it is not beyond the realm of possibility that Malia did not extract agricultural surpluses from Lasithi but only from its immediate hinterland, that is to say, the coastal area from Sissi to Chersonissos, although the lack of known sites in this area makes this a difficult proposition to assess.

The administrative documents found at Malia do not, unfortunately, paint a more detailed picture; the complex bureaucratic system they are deemed to represent is also insufficiently understood in terms of regional involvement.¹⁰⁴ The level of economic

centralization within Malia (i.e., at the community rather than the regional level) is also doubted by Poursat,¹⁰⁵ due to the presence of considerable storage and administrative controls outside of the palace in Quartier Mu, suggestive that the palace was not the sole organizer of economic activity, and that therefore economic centralization was not total. This relies on the assumption that the spatial disjunction between the palace and Quartier Mu also involves a degree of organizational independence; it is not impossible, however, that both Quartier Mu and the palace were instruments of a single central authority.

The evidence for bureaucratic organization at Myrtos Pyrgos is not substantial, with two four-sided Cretan hieroglyphic prism seals and a number of amphora handles impressed with hieroglyphic seals before firing.¹⁰⁶ There is nothing to suggest the presence of anything more than a local accounting system,¹⁰⁷ but this may be more an accident of preservation, seeing as there was very little in situ Middle Minoan II material from the top of the hill, where it is presumed that the central building was located.¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, the survival of massive amounts of incredibly well-preserved pottery and other artifacts means that there is every chance that, had there existed numerous administrative documents, some proportion of them should also have been preserved. Was there a system involving many administrative documents as at Monastiraki, which has simply not survived in the archaeological record due to differences in destruction and preservation contexts, or was the accounting system at Myrtos Pyrgos genuinely small-scale? The present evidence suggests that the latter may be possible; if so, this would imply that Malia had very little impact upon the economic workings of sites such as Myrtos Pyrgos at the outer limits of the rural sector.¹⁰⁹

IDEOLOGY, RITUAL, POLITICS, AND . . . POTTERY

We have already argued that the strong similarities in the fine tablewares at sites across the territory, and at Quartier Mu and Myrtos Pyrgos especially, suggest a common link across the state in elite consumption

the existence there in MM IIB of a working archive and a developed bureaucratic system (Tsipopoulou and Wedde, [supra n. 30]). It seems likely that Petras was a regional center of some sort, running the day-to-day economic management of its domain. However, the document types and the use of Cretan hieroglyphic show that the administrative techniques used at Petras are very similar to those found at Malia (Quartier Mu). This similarity may be more a function of the ideological and cultural influence held by the palatial center at Malia, rather than of any direct economic control.

¹⁰² Knappett 1997 (supra n. 16).

¹⁰³ DeWolf et al. 1963 (supra n. 64).

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Schoep 1996 (supra n. 53).

¹⁰⁵ Poursat 1987 (supra n. 25).

¹⁰⁶ Cadogan 1977-8 (supra n. 76).

¹⁰⁷ J. Weingarten, "Three Upheavals in Minoan Sealing Administration: Evidence for Radical Change," in T.G. Palaima ed. (supra n. 29) 105-20.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Cadogan 1997 (supra n. 77) 103.

¹⁰⁹ The discovery of a number of administrative documents at Petras, such as tablets and medallions, indicates

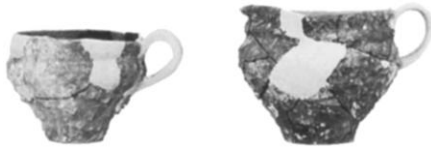


Fig. 21. Barbotine cups, Quartier Mu. (Courtesy EFA; J.-C. Poursat)

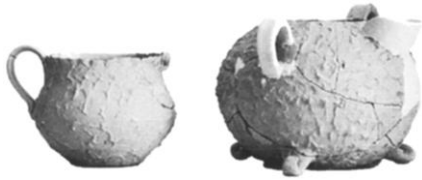


Fig. 22. Barbotine cup and jar, Quartier Mu. (Courtesy EFA; J.-C. Poursat)



Fig. 23. Carinated cups with offset base, Myrtos Pyrgos. (Courtesy BSA)

practices and thus presumably in some aspects of elite ideology. When considered in the light of the economic arguments presented above, this is still entirely consistent with what one would expect of a decentralized state: given the weak infrastructural penetration of such a state, regional-level political centralization is achieved through ritual and ideology. Peripheral areas may recognize the ritual and political legitimacy of the central authority, but provide it with little tribute.

Yet we may point out that not all fine tableware types seen at Malia—for instance, certain forms of bridge-spouted jug,¹¹⁰ jugs with cylindrical neck, and specific sorts of barbotine jugs and cups (figs. 21–22)—occur at Myrtos Pyrgos. On the other hand, certain types which are reasonably well represented at Myrtos Pyrgos are never found at Malia. Moreover,

these latter types, such as the squat bevelled cup, the carinated cup with offset base (fig. 23), and the carinated cup with white band (fig. 24), seem to be more characteristic, stylistically, of Middle Minoan IB-II at Palaikastro.¹¹¹ Other types of fineware found at Myrtos Pyrgos, such as a straight-sided cup with a small tooled bevelled base and white-on-dark decoration, show strong stylistic affinities to types from the Mesara.¹¹² The presence of such styles, albeit in very minor quantities, suggests that there was not a simple dyadic link between just Myrtos Pyrgos and Malia, but that the smaller site at the periphery was able to link itself to other major sites in different regions, possibly through elite preferences for certain styles. This, too, may be interpreted as characteristic of a decentralized state; Southall, in his work on segmentary states (discussed below), asserts that, since territorial sovereignty declines from center to periphery, subordinate authorities can change allegiance the more they are situated at the periphery.¹¹³ If we think of Myrtos Pyrgos as situated at the periphery of the Malia state, then one can certainly envisage how it might have maintained links with other sites, perhaps via elite consumption practices.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, the principal links in the fine tablewares of Myrtos Pyrgos remain overwhelmingly with Malia.

We have spoken above of ideology and ritual in the same breath, although the evidence for any ritual link between the two sites of Malia and Myrtos Pyrgos is strictly limited. In terms of pottery, there are a number of vessels at Quartier Mu to which we may loosely ascribe a ritual function, such as offering tables, and pedestaled and tripod braziers (figs. 25–26). Such types are rarely, if ever, present in the Protopalatial assemblage of Myrtos Pyrgos. We shall discuss other evidence below that indicates a lack of any convincing commonality between the two sites in the sphere of ritual and religion.

Ideology, Ritual, and Politics—Other Evidence

There are a number of finds from Malia that we may broadly associate with elite ideology and/or ritual that are entirely absent at Myrtos Pyrgos. Egypt-

¹¹⁰ E.g., those shown in J.-C. Poursat, “Potiers et peintres à Malia (Quartier Mu), Crète: Le Camarès provincial entre tradition et innovation,” in P. Betancourt and R. Laffineur eds. (supra n. 29) 301–304.

¹¹¹ J.A. MacGillivray et al., “Excavations at Palaikastro 1991,” *BSA* 87 (1992) 121–52.

¹¹² Levi 1976 (supra n. 32).

¹¹³ A.R. Southall, *Alur Society: A Study in Processes and Types of Domination* (Cambridge 1956).

¹¹⁴ Petras (Tsipopoulou and Wedde [supra n. 30]) has

yielded fine tableware identical to that seen at Malia and Myrtos Pyrgos, as well as other sorts of fine pottery more similar to types found at Palaikastro. It is surprising that Malia style pottery has been found in abundance as far east as Petras. This suggests that the ideological influence of Malia spread further east than has often been anticipated, except of course by Pendlebury (supra n. 31). The common elements between Petra and Palaikastro suggest that Petras’s cultural relations with Malia was not exclusively dyadic.

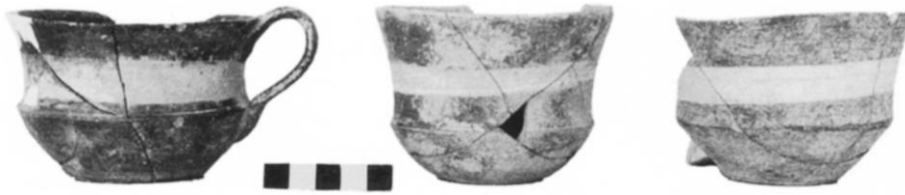


Fig. 24. Carinated cups with white band, Myrtos Pyrgos. (Courtesy BSA)

tianizing features, such as a relief ceramic sphinx,¹¹⁵ alongside other indications of foreign contact point to a palatial involvement in international exchange¹¹⁶ that could probably not be matched by smaller sites. Ceremonial equipment, such as bronze swords, are found in the palatial center of Malia but not elsewhere in the region; town sanctuaries are another phenomenon specific to Malia.¹¹⁷ By the same token, the house tombs of Myrtos Pyrgos and Gournia are not evidenced at Malia (at least not in MM II), and the sacred caves of Psychro and Trapeza on the Lasithi plateau represent yet another form of ritual practice not seen in the lowland areas of Malia, Gournia, or Myrtos Pyrgos. The relative absence of peak sanctuaries in the east-central area, admittedly little more than evidence in absentia, is the only suggestion of any commonality uniting the Malia-Lasithi region.

FROM SOCIAL TYPES TO AXES OF VARIATION

Is it possible that the opposition between centralized and decentralized arguments is misguided? We certainly seem to encounter elements of both in the Protopalatial Malia “state,” depending in large part upon one’s viewpoint, rural or urban. It is interesting to note that a very similar situation has been reached in Maya archaeology, whereby Maya states are considered by some specialists to have been centralized in nature, while others believe them to have been decentralized.¹¹⁸ Debate appears to have polarized into two camps, the “centralists” on the one hand and the “decentralists” on the other; the former approach tends to be taken by those working at major centers, the latter by those focusing on the rural hinterland. However, it seems that there is some truth in both ap-

proaches, which makes the polarization of debate rather unfortunate. The creation of rigid and polarized social types is unhelpful. Instead, it should be possible to conceive of the variation between different forms of state (Minoan, Maya, or other), as a continuum. Stein has proposed that rather than struggling to classify a social group as one state type or another, we ought to examine the axes along which state organization varies (i.e., scale, complexity, and integration), thereby conceptualizing decentralized and centralized states as two idealized extremes of a continuum.¹¹⁹

Further comparison with the work on Maya states by Fox et al. serves to raise another important point. In their contribution, the terminology of centralized and decentralized states seems to be used interchangeably with, and considered equivalent to, the terms *unitary* state and *segmentary* state, respectively. This deserves further attention here, although this is not the place for a detailed investigation of what these terms mean. “Segmentary state” is in fact a term developed by the anthropologist Aidan Southall during the 1950s to try and characterize the political system of the Alur of East Africa, believing neither “state” nor “chiefdom” as then defined to be satisfactory classifications. He delineated a number of features that epitomized his notion of the segmentary state. Although not commonplace in the anthropological literature, other scholars have since elaborated upon Southall’s ideas.¹²⁰ Fox, for example emphasized that ritual, prestige, and status would loom large in the cohesion of a segmentary state,¹²¹ in the absence of effective political centralism.

There are relatively few archaeological studies in which the segmentary state features, and those that do exist tend to be in Mesoamerican contexts.¹²² For

¹¹⁵ S.A. Immerwahr, “A Possible Influence of Egyptian Art in the Creation of Minoan Wall Painting,” in P. Darcque and J.-C. Poursat eds., *L’Iconographie Minoenne* (BCH Suppl. 11, Paris 1985) 41–50; J.-C. Poursat, “Iconographie Minoenne: Continuités et ruptures,” in Darcque and Poursat 51–57.

¹¹⁶ As pointed out by Watrous 1994 (supra n. 6) 748–50.

¹¹⁷ Poursat 1966 (supra n. 58).

¹¹⁸ Fox et al. 1996 (supra n. 2).

¹¹⁹ Stein 1994 (supra n. 12).

¹²⁰ B. Stein, “The Segmentary State in South Indian History,” in R.G. Fox ed., *Realm and Region in Traditional India*

(New Delhi 1977) 3–51; R.G. Fox, *Urban Anthropology: Cities in their Cultural Settings* (New Jersey 1977).

¹²¹ A point also made by Cherry 1987 (supra n. 22), and Manning 1995 (supra n. 21).

¹²² For example, Fox et al. 1996 (supra n. 2); De Montmollin 1989 (supra n. 2); Ball 1993 (supra n. 88); J.W. Fox, *Maya Postclassic State Formation* (Cambridge 1987). For a lone example in a Mesopotamian context, cf. G. Stein 1994 (supra n. 12). Up until now the segmentary state has not been considered in Minoan contexts.



Fig. 25. Pedestaled lamp, Quartier Mu. (Courtesy EFA; J.-C. Poursat)



Fig. 26. "Coupe tripode," Quartier Mu. (Courtesy EFA; E. Séraf)

the archaeologist there are certain features of the segmentary state that are particularly conspicuous and distinctive. First, the political and the ideological become strongly intertwined, such that ideological power is the source of political cohesion.¹²³ Second, the segmentary state is characterized by a lack of central intervention in the economic activities of the state periphery. To quote Ball, segmentary states "exercise little meaningful control over the more mundane day-to-day economic affairs of their dependent populations."¹²⁴ The concept of the segmentary state is extremely useful since it allows archaeologists to separate the economic from the ideological and political.¹²⁵ The utility of the segmentary state concept in this regard has not been fully realized.

However, for most prehistorians the segmentary state model has some notable drawbacks, notably that kinship is considered to be a central organizing principle. In some contexts, for example the Maya, there is evidence that does allow the archaeologist to reconstruct lineages and kin relations to some extent. But in Minoan Crete, there are very few pertinent archaeological data upon which to draw, notwithstanding the attempts of Dabney and Wright¹²⁶ to argue from the Mesara tombs for the continuing importance of kinship in the states of the Protopal-

tial period. Until it is possible to argue with greater confidence that kinship played an enduring structural role in the Minoan Protopalatial states, we cannot safely use the term "segmentary state." At present the evidence from the Malia-Lasithi area with regard to kinship is simply insufficient. Therefore, it would be more fitting to assess the Malia state using the terminology of "centralized" and "decentralized."

At what point on this continuum should the Protopalatial Malia state be placed, as it appears to combine both decentralizing and centralizing features? The clearest evidence for a commonality across the region is in what may be called the material symbols of elite ideology: economic patterns are complex and often operate on a large-scale, but they are not obviously administered from the center to the extent that one would expect of a centralized state. Even the evidence from Petras, which initially seems to indicate close economic control by Malia, can be more convincingly interpreted as an ideological relationship. Thus it would be most accurate to describe the social entity with which we are confronted as a form of state organization that, in terms of certain axes of variation, is aligned more closely towards the decentralized end of the continuum than towards the other extreme. This in itself stands as a considerable

¹²³ Cf. Fox 1977 (supra n. 122); Cherry 1987 (supra n. 22); Ball 1993 (supra n. 88); M.D. Coe, "Religion and the Rise of Mesoamerican States," in G.D. Jones and R.R. Kautz eds., *The Transition to Statehood in the New World* (Cambridge 1981) 157–71; R.W. Keatinge, "The Nature and Role of Religious Diffusion in the Early Stages of State Formation: An Example from Peruvian Prehistory," in Jones and Kautz 172–87.

¹²⁴ Ball 1993 (supra n. 88) 264.

¹²⁵ Cf. C.J. Knappett, "The Production of Domestic Pottery from Middle Minoan Myrtos Pyrgos," 8th *CretCong* (Heraklion, in press).

¹²⁶ M.K. Dabney and J.C. Wright, "Mortuary customs, palatial society and state formation in the Aegean area: a comparative study," in R. Hägg and G. Nördquist eds., *Celebrations of Death and Divinity in the Bronze Age Argolid* (Stockholm 1990) 45–53.

modification to the centralized, redistributive state model usually assumed,¹²⁷ and potentially challenges us to look at other evidence for the Protopalatial period from a different perspective.

BROADER PERSPECTIVES

Future study of pottery production, distribution, and consumption at other Protopalatial period sites perhaps lying within the Maliote state, such as Kastellos Tzermiadhō on the Lasithi plateau, and Vasiliki, Gournia, Mochlos, and Pseira in the Mirabello area, would allow evaluation of the degree to which the situation documented here for Myrtos Pyrgos was typical, and would provide a more subtle assessment of the nature of the Maliote "state." This has been done to some extent with the evidence from Petras, and further publication of the fascinating material from this newly excavated site is eagerly awaited. Renewed excavation of Protopalatial deposits at a site such as Gournia might also yield new insights into the nature of regional interactions. Sites in the immediate vicinity of Malia have not been excavated, although such work may one day follow from Müller's survey of the plain of Malia.¹²⁸ This may allow assessment of the degree of economic control that Malia may have exercised over sites within the plain itself. One could also examine material from sites in another region, such as Phaistos, Monastiraki, Apodoulou, and Ayia Triadha in the Mesara, for possible variations from region to region in economic organization. It is by no means certain, after all, that the organization of the Malia state was the same as that of the Phaistian or Knossian states in this period. Knossos, for example, was a much larger center than Malia, in the order of 75 ha. Although little is known of its territory (what, for example, was the relationship between Knossos and Archanes?), it may actually have been smaller in area than that of Malia,¹²⁹ though possibly more highly integrated economically. These patterns of structural variation from state to state need much more investigation.

Prepalatial Origins

Having characterized the Malia state as decentralized, with ideology more significant than economy

in terms of regional political control, there are major implications for our understanding of how such a state grew out of its Prepalatial background. First, it is easier to conceive of decentralized states developing from small-scale Prepalatial chiefdoms than to imagine the emergence of full-fledged, centralized, bureaucratic states from such a background. Second, we may be forced to reevaluate explanations of why such a change actually took place at all. Over the past 25 years the emergence of these regional polities on Crete has been consistently attributed to economic and/or ecological factors.¹³⁰ Increasingly, however, state emergence, both on Crete¹³¹ and further afield,¹³² is explained by social theories in which much greater interpretative weight is placed upon the role of ideology and human agency.¹³³

There are strong empirical grounds, as shown with the case of Malia, to suggest that ideology was at least as important as (political) economy in the initial emergence of states on Crete. To put it another way, could the real root of elite power in MM I have been control over the *imaginary means of production*, perhaps even more important than control over the *material means of production*?¹³⁴ This suggestion challenges certain assumptions, for example the assumption that economic control was the most important dynamic, and that ideology only served to consolidate and legitimize power after the fact, a view expressed best in the work of Cherry on peer polity interaction.¹³⁵ To recharacterize the first Minoan states, one must reevaluate the nature of their emergence, as Halstead himself has declared: "Serious misconceptions as to the nature of palatial civilization have led, and continue to lead, to major problems in the explanation of palatial origins."¹³⁶

The Neopalatial Period

One might also consider the implications of such a reassessment for the Neopalatial period, assessing whether states in Minoan Crete become more unitary and centralized through time. Economic organization is better understood for the Neopalatial than for the Prepalatial period, and can be more fruitfully debated thanks to a greater and more varied body of evidence. Furthermore, discussion is set firmly within

¹²⁷ Supra n. 26.

¹²⁸ Müller 1992 (supra n. 61).

¹²⁹ Contra J. Bennet, "Knossos in Context: Comparative Perspectives on the Linear B Administration of LM II–III Crete," *AJA* 94 (1990) 193–211.

¹³⁰ E.g., Renfrew 1972 (supra n. 3); Halstead 1981 (supra n. 26).

¹³¹ E.g., Manning 1995 (supra n. 21); Y. Hamilakis, "Wine, Oil, and the Dialectics of Power in Bronze Age

Crete: A Review of the Evidence," *OJA* 15 (1996) 1–32.

¹³² Cf. Scarre and Fagan 1997 (supra n. 2).

¹³³ E.g., with the idea of "factional competition," cf. E.M. Brumfiel and J.W. Fox eds., *Factional Competition and Political Development in the New World* (Cambridge 1994); Hamilakis 1996 (supra n. 131).

¹³⁴ Southall 1991 (supra n. 24).

¹³⁵ Cherry 1986 (supra n. 5).

¹³⁶ Halstead 1988 (supra n. 26) 530.

a regional political context; the issue of the extent of Knossian hegemony is at the core of most arguments. Recent studies on the regional organization of Neopalatial Crete have considered evidence such as Linear A documents,¹³⁷ coarse pottery,¹³⁸ settlement hierarchies and distributions,¹³⁹ inscribed stone vessels,¹⁴⁰ and even bull iconography on flat-based nodules.¹⁴¹ By no means do all authors agree, with some envisaging Knossian supremacy while others argue that there were small independent local polities. I would suggest that these differing conclusions may actually be complementary, with local autonomy in some (economic?) activities coexistent with an overarching (Knossian) control in other (ideological) spheres. Driessen and Macdonald have shown that treating the Neopalatial as a single period with no significant internal differentiation obscures some key political differences between LM IA and LM IB.¹⁴² It would appear that there may indeed have been a degree of both economic and ideological control from Knossos across large parts of the island in LM IA, but that by the LM IB period, after the socio-economic disruptions accompanying the Thera eruption, local power groups chose to manage their own economic affairs.¹⁴³ A certain degree of island-wide ideological power, centered on Knossos,¹⁴⁴ may have continued.

The Mycenaean Era

Mycenaean scholars have been equally keen to broach the issue of the palaces' regional position, most commonly at an economic level. It is widely held that the Mycenaean palaces on the mainland

in the LH IIIA-B periods were the foci of centralized states.¹⁴⁵ The evidence represented by the Linear B tablets points to an elaborate official hierarchy, with economic control as the basis for political power. Nevertheless, Halstead has been able to throw some doubt on the assumption that the palatial economy was all-pervasive.¹⁴⁶ By playing the evidence for economic activity derived from archaeobotanical analyses against the economic picture that emerges from the Linear B archives, he shows that there were some forms of economic activity either beyond the reach of, or simply not of direct interest to, the palatial authority. Other studies in Mycenaean scenarios notable for giving serious consideration to the political role of the palaces in managing the regional economy include those of Morris¹⁴⁷ and Bennet.¹⁴⁸

FINAL REMARKS

The Minoan Protopalatial period has been commonly depicted as the era in which Minoan society first reached the level of statehood. One such Protopalatial state is thought to have centered on the palatial site of Malia, which some scholars have suggested exercised both economic and political control over its entire territory. However, it has been argued here that there are good grounds for casting doubt upon this assumption—certain patterns in the evidence¹⁴⁹ suggest that Malia may have held ideological rather than economic power over sites such as Myrtos Pyrgos, at the periphery of a possible Maliote territory. In seeking to make sense of these patterns, the notion of a decentralized state has been shown to make

¹³⁷ Schoep 1996 (supra n. 56).

¹³⁸ P.M. Day, *A Petrographic Approach to the Study of Pottery in Neopalatial East Crete* (Diss. Univ. of Cambridge 1991).

¹³⁹ J.M. Driessen and J.A. MacGillivray, "The Neopalatial Period in East Crete," in R. Laffineur ed., *Transition: Le Monde Égéen du Bronze moyen au Bronze récent (Aegaeum 3, Liège 1989)* 99–112.

¹⁴⁰ I.M. Schoep, "Ritual, Politics and Script on Minoan Crete," *Aegean Archaeology* 1 (1994) 7–25.

¹⁴¹ B. Hallager and E. Hallager, "The Knossian Bull—Political Propaganda in Neo-palatial Crete?" in R. Laffineur and W-D. Niemeier eds., *Politeia: Society and State in the Aegean Bronze Age (Aegaeum 12, Liège 1995)* 547–56.

¹⁴² J.M. Driessen and C.F. Macdonald, *The Troubled Island: Minoan Crete before and after the Santorini Eruption (Aegaeum 17, Liège 1997)*.

¹⁴³ Driessen and Macdonald 1997 (supra n. 142).

¹⁴⁴ For the idea of Knossos as a cosmological center, see J.S. Soles, "The Functions of a Cosmological Center: Knossos in Palatial Crete," in Laffineur and Niemeier (supra n. 14) 405–14.

¹⁴⁵ J.C. Wright, "From Chief to King in Mycenaean Society," in P. Rehak ed., *The Role of the Ruler in the Prehistoric*

Aegean (Aegaeum 11, Liège 1995) 63–82; C.W. Shelmerdine, "Review of Aegean Prehistory VI: The Palatial Bronze Age of the Southern and Central Greek Mainland," *AJA* 101 (1997) 537–85.

¹⁴⁶ P. Halstead, "Agriculture in the Bronze Age Aegean: Towards a Model of Palatial Economy," in B. Wells ed., *Agriculture in Ancient Greece (Stockholm 1992)* 105–19.

¹⁴⁷ H.J. Morris, *An Economic Model of the Late Mycenaean Kingdom of Pylos (Ann Arbor 1986)*.

¹⁴⁸ J. Bennet, "'Outside in the distance': Problems in Understanding the Economic Geography of Mycenaean Palatial Territories," in J.-P. Olivier and T.G. Palaima eds., *Texts, Tablets and Scribes (Salamanca 1988)* 19–41; cf. also Bennet 1990 (supra n. 129).

¹⁴⁹ The main evidence used has been pottery, partly because it is the most abundant Minoan material recovered archaeologically, and partly because of the bias of my own research in pottery. Other forms of evidence have also been considered (cf. also n. 83), such as administrative documents, ritual and burial practices, and architecture, and ideally multiple sources of evidence should be evaluated, wherever possible, from the perspectives of production, distribution, and consumption.

good sense of the data at hand, providing some stimulating alternative hypotheses.

Earlier generations of archaeologists tended to assess the evolutionary level of a past society through the presence or absence of a number of salient features, and thence to assign it a position within a social typology. It has been the express aim in this paper not to accept the term "state" as a given, but rather to explore the manifest organizational possibilities that the "state" encompasses. In this regard the introduction of the concept of the "decentralized state" has been effective, particularly when placed at one end of an organizational continuum, with "centralised

state" at the other extreme. The ensuing advantages of examining political institutions in terms of "axes of variation" (or "bundled continua of variation")¹⁵⁰ are apparent; by not suppressing variability through a rigid classification into social types such as "state" and "chiefdom," we may achieve greater subtlety and resolution in our interpretations of early complex societies, such as those of Minoan Crete.

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¹⁵⁰ Cf. De Montmollin 1989 (supra n. 2).