POLEMOS LE CONTEXTE GUERRIER EN ÉGÉE À L'ÂGE DU BRONZE

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FROM LOCAL CENTRE TO PALACE: THE ROLE OF FORTIFICATION IN THE ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION OF THE SITEIA BAY AREA, EAST CRETE*

Στον Michael Wedde για τα πέντε χρόνια της φιλίας μας.

I. Introduction

The popular image of a peaceful Minoan palatial society, so prominent in the writings of earlier scholars, has rightly been questioned. Manifestedly this conception derives from the near-total absence of battle scenes in Crete. This fact that astonished the first scholars to turn their attention to the island, conditioned as they were by the dominant cultures of the Near East, where representations of war are common, and the written sources abound in campaign narratives and the attendant propagandistic use thereof, a constant of all major powers, ancient and modern. It cannot be excluded that this particularity of Minoan civilisation is connected with the virtual absence of leader imagery. It is probable that the seafaring Minoans, marginal to their much more powerful, and distant, neighbours, did not, at least in the time of their acme, need to confront external enemies within their own territory. It has been plausibly argued that the few known representations of sieges depict events which occured outside the island, in other areas of the Aegean, and, thus, refer to offensive undertakings by the Minoans.

It must, nevertheless, be remarked that the existence within so small a territory as Crete of many central places and palatial buildings indicates that there must have existed problems and antagonisms of an essentially - and perhaps exclusively - *internal* nature. The absence of written sources hinders an understanding of living conditions and political organisation of the Minoans, leaving the scholarly field open to frequently contradictory speculations and opinions. Moreover, the Victorian shadow cast by A. Evans still clouds the view of whosoever contemplates Minoan civilisation. In various historical periods as in different geographical areas, state-formation is often violent, potentially implying forced processes and opposition. In the course of the present Symposion, several papers dealing with Cretan matters present fresh data, or reconsider the already known from a different angle, contributing to a new synthesis. Significant gains in this direction would ensue if, at least, an attempt was made at

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Cf. J. CHERRY, "Evolution, Revolution, and the Origins of Complex Society in Minoan Crete," in Minoan Society, Proceedings of the Cambridge Colloquium 1981 (1983) 33-45, esp. 36.

See, e.g., C. DAVARAS, Guide to Cretan Antiquities (1976) 341-342, where the customary views regarding weaponry are repeated: "Their weapons (...) show that although Minoan society possessed arms they were rather unwarlike as a whole (...) towns were unfortified (...) a fact illustrating the existence of internal peace." One senses the obligation of many scholars to reconcile prevailing opinions, at least in a handbook. Of interest to the topic is the approach of J. CHERRY, "Polities and Palaces: Some Problems in Minoan State Formation," in Peer Polity Interaction and Socio-political Change (1986) 19-45, who proposes a very useful model for the study of the Minoan administrative system. Even if he accepts the idea that "the allegedly peace-loving nature of Minoan society can be seen as an instance of modern myth making," although without offering sufficient evidence to the contrary, he examines the concept of the "pax minoica" on the basis of published data: "Yet it remains true that the sorts of hostilities between rival warring city-states (...) are hard to see in the Minoan world - no walled cities or fortified citadels (...) no defensive earthworks or border fortifications, little military equipment." All the same, he concludes by stating that "It may be suspected that the archaeological record has more to reveal here" (p. 27). Cf. also the opinions of O. DICKINSON, The Aegean Bronze Age (1994) 198-201, stressing the quite advanced technology, but also the profusion of weapons, especially in the Middle Minoan period.

eshewing the time-worn *topoi* that hobble the discipline. A necessary precondition is the promotion of studies focused on entire regions, and not merely on single "sites", combining excavation, survey, and reexamination of research conducted by our predecessors.

S. Alexiou, in particular, argued against the old misconception of a peaceful Minoan society in his oft-quoted papers of 1979 and 1980 on fortifications. He, however, could not refer to extensive and completely excavated structures, but correctly observed that the earliest fortified settlements date from Early Minoan II to the end of the Prepalatial period, and that there are scattered instances throughout the island in Protopalatial times. Alexiou collected evidence for the defensible location of settlements in Early Minoan IIB to Middle Minoan I, and for the subsequent appearance of fortifications, even in the lowlands, particularly at Malia. Even if a number of sites were never walled, their positioning on prominent hills, headlands or islands provided natural defences: for example Myrtos-Phournou Korifi, Gournia, Mochlos, Pseira, Palaikastro-Kastri, and so on in Eastern Crete. Further examples could be provided from the rest of the island.

The existence of these early fortifications cannot have been unrelated to the substantial changes within the community which led to the construction of the palaces. On the contrary, we cannot sense in Middle Minoan Crete, not only just prior to the creation of the palaces, but also during their existence, any signs of external menace, or at least pressing threat, let alone invasion. The emergence of inequality between various settlements in Crete begins, based on various indicators, in an advanced phase of the Early Minoan period and intensifies at the beginning of the Middle Minoan. Hierarchical relationships between both people and sites superseded an "essentially egalitarian society", in Branigan's words, 5 with the inevitable result being friction between the different social classes, particularly the less fortunate, within specific regions as well as between neighbouring communities. The walls constitute the strongest indication for restlessness. Either they were in fact quite necessary due to open conflict, or they contributed by discouraging confrontation. Finally, another parameter requiring serious consideration as a contributing factor towards unrest is, as J. Soles stresses, the confrontation between the two fundamentally different provinces or cultural areas, coming into being in the Early Minoan period: Southern Crete and East Crete. It cannot be excluded that the competition between them and the movements of population groups particularly from the south towards the eastern parts of the island are related to the emergence of the palatial centres. It is probable that the existence of walls at numerous points across the island, especially in the eastern-most regions, is connected with this confrontation.⁶ Evans himself states clearly that he excavated fortification walls connected with the earlier palace at Knossos.⁷

S. ALEXIOU, "Τείχη και ακροπόλεις στη μινωική Κρήτη. (Ο μύθος της μινωικής ειρήνης), Κρητολογία 8 (1979) 41-56; ID., "Προανακτορικές Ακροπόλεις της Κρήτης," in Acts of the 4th International Cretological Congress (1980) 9-22. Alexiou modifies his views on the pax minoica, which he had previously embraced, placing the word "myth" in the title itself, and cites the relevant bibliography. He congratulated the present author most flatteringly "for the discovery of the acropolis of Aghia Photia," a site which he believed supported his view. The term "acropolis," however, charged in Greek with a particular meaning, is difficult to reconcile with this walled building, even with any of the existing walls in Eastern Crete. This must be attributed to the status of Minoan archaeology as a still young science, seeking, albeit not always with success, to shake off the ideological weight of the past and thereby develop a voice of its own.

⁴ ALEXIOU (supra n. 3) 51-52 and 17-19.

⁵ K. BRANIGAN, "Social Transformation and the Rise of the State in Crete," in *Politeia. Society and State in the Aegean Bronze Age, Proceedings of the 5th International Aegean Conference, Aegaeum* 12 (1995) 33-39, esp. 34.

⁶ Cf. the observation by J. SOLES in the discussion of BRANIGAN (supra n. 5) on p. 41.

A. EVANS, The Palace of Minos I (1921) 139-140: "From what has been said above it is clear that the area of the Palace site at Knossos was laid out in the course of the first Middle Minoan Period and fenced around with enceinte walls which, on the North and East sides, at any rate were of the most massive constructions (...). Both in the massive walls and in the tower-like structure we see the obvious design of fortification (...). Open and exposed to attacks as seem to have been the great Palaces both at Knossos and Phaestos in their later phases, we can hardly avoid the conclusion that defensive considerations entered largely into their

The key to the interpretation of these social changes is to be found in the study of the advanced phases of the Early Minoan period. Of interest to the question are also the changes in burial customs which coincide or slightly precede the appearance of the palatial centres: the tholos tombs relate directly to the agrarian organisation of non-hierarchical settlements, 8 and their use essentially ceases with the construction of the palaces.

II. The Siteia Bay Area

Fourteen years of research in the Siteia Bay area, with excavations at Aghia Photia and Petras, and surveys in the surrounding areas, necessitate a re-examination of the specific topic of fortifications. The existence of walls at these two sites probably reflects conditions analogous with those in other areas of Crete, but requires a focused analysis within the general study of the eastern-most extremity of the island. In the first place, the existence at these sites of substantial walls, not part of houses or other buildings, and dating to Middle Minoan times (Pre- as well as Protopalatial), contradicts the view that Crete required no defences. In symphony with indications from so many other sites in Crete they signal that even if the sea constituted for the Minoans the stoutest of shields against external enemies, walls were needed to protect them against their fellow-countrymen in case claims were made on a fertile valley or plain, or perhaps even on flocks of sheep.

It is useful in the present context to undertake the analysis of the data relative to the Bay of Siteia, taking as starting point the first appearance of social elites as materialized in the architecture. Of particular interest to the present discussion is that Aghia Photia and Petras represent two separate phases of the phenomenon, each with a different historical significance, but a probable evolutionary relationship between them. The existence of walls appears to be connected with the establishment of a centre in the area, most probably independent of other centres in Middle Minoan times. The area, thus, provides an opportunity to consider the wider subject of geographically restricted concentrations of power, produce, prestige items, and technological know-how, at administrative centres, and the requirements placed thereby on the architecture.

The reason's behind the construction of fortifications by a specific community are numerous, complex, and intimately interrelated, 10 but all converge on the preservation of the social structures belonging to the particular group.

- 1. *Economical*: protection of stored resources, both agrarian produce and manufactured products and prestige artefacts.
- 2. Territorial: provision in case of need of safe havens for population groups sharing common beliefs and goals.
- 3. Political: protection of a community's built-up space.
- 4. Ritual: protection of sacred places of significance to the community.

With the exception of the fourth parameter, for which data are lacking in the cases studied here, the above aspects are applicable to an analysis of the phenomenon in the area.

The observations by M. Dabney relative to the reasons for state formation in palatial Crete are of particular use in understanding the existence of walls and their use in protecting Protopalatial sites.¹¹

original plans." Cf. also ID., *ibid.* IV (1935) 48-56 for the discovery of further fragments of early fortification walls of Protopalatial date to the west of the palace. This locus should not be overlooked, nor the need felt by Evans of presenting Minoan civilisation in a light commensurate with Victorian England, in the sense that the "subjects" accepted uncomplainingly the "all-powerful absolute central power."

⁸ Op. cit. 46

⁹ Cf. the papers by S. CHRYSSOULAKI, N. SCHLAGER and K. NOWICKI (this volume).

M.J. ROWLANDS, "Defence: a Factor in the Organisation of Settlements," in Man, Settlement and Urbanism (1972) 447-462.

M.K. DABNEY, "The Later Stages of State Formation in Palatial Crete," in *Politeia. Society and State in the Aegean Bronze Age, Proceedings of the 5th International Aegean Conference, Aegaeum* 12 (1995) 44-47.

- 1. The chief characteristic of the period is the *local developments* which took different forms at different times in each region.
- 2. The first palaces constitute the tangible architectural evidence for a new level of centralized labour resource organisation.
- 3. The existence of *storerooms* provides one of the chief focal points in the function of the Minoan palaces.

The construction of fortifications is significant for the protection of local wealth, particularly in periods of failed crops and resultant shortage, or in areas which, for topographical reasons, do not possess extensive possibilities of intensified production, for redistribution and/or exchange. The regulators of exchange become the local elite, in charge, on the one hand, of the conservation of communal and economical gains, and, on the other, of the mobilisation of the community at large in communally advantageous undertakings. The construction of fortifications needs to be considered within such a consensual framework, without which it becomes impossible to mobilize the prerequisite workforce.

Attempts at understanding the Middle Minoan period, both Pre- as well as Protopalatial, frequently stumble on the absence of architectural remains adequate for a historical analysis. The case of the Siteia Bay area offers significant advantages. Not only has it provided a surely exceptional building - Aghia Photia - but also a Protopalatial palace at Petras, whose significance is underlined not only the architectural data, but also by the discovery of the hieroglyphic archive (even if, admittedly, the floor plan of the latter cannot be restored). 12

II.1 Aghia Photia

The site was excavated in 1984 and 1985 (Pl. XXVIIIa, Pl. XXXa-b). ¹³ On the low hill rising 26 metres above the bay to the north, and the sole plain between Siteia and Palaikastro to the south, a unique rectangular building enclosed by a wall was discovered. It is dated to the Middle Minoan IA period. The plan is largely symmetrical, and includes interesting and sophisticated details, such as the strengthening of the external walls, particularly at the corners (Pl. XXXIa); the wide central space open to the sky, previously unknown in Minoan architecture of so early a period, and clearly the predecessor to the central court of the later palaces (Pl. XXXIIa); one of the earliest known κουλούρες (Pl. XXXIb); and the encircling wall (Pl. XXXIc-XXXIIc). This substantial wall was followed along the entire western and northern sides of the building, before work was interrupted. ¹⁴ In 1997 it was possible to undertake an extensive surface cleaning in view of preparing the final and corrected drawings.

This uncovered the eastern run of the wall (Pl. XXXIIb), and revealed that the southern side, where the main entrance is to be sought, has been lost - as could be suspected - given the poor soil coverage in this area and the presence of a modem quarry in the southern flank of the $Kou\phi\omega t\dot{\alpha}$ hill.

The wall's oval shape echoes that of the hill itself and the rectangular building it encircles. Although the southern limit is lost, the minimum surface enclosed can be estimated

<sup>It should be noted that the excavations at Petras have not brought to light evidence for storage space in the palatial building in Protopalatial times. The substantial transformations connected with the building of the Neopalatial palace, in many places involving deep excavation into the bedrock, have removed all traces of Protopalatial storage areas. It cannot be excluded that they occupied the same areas as the impressive Neopalatial North Magazines, the construction of which had recourse to the reuse of numerous older building blocks. On the stratigraphical continuity within the palatial building, cf. M. TSIPOPOULOU and M. WEDDE, "Διαβάζοντας ένα χωμάτινο παλίμψηστο: στρωματογραφικές τομές στο ανακτορικό κτίριο του Πετρά Σητείας," in Proceedings of the 7th International Cretological Congress (in press), and, in particular, M. TSIPOPOULOU, "Before, During, After: Stratigraphical Phases of the Palatial Building at Petras, Siteia," forthcoming in Aegaeum 20.
M. TSIPOPOULOU, "Αγία Φωτιά Σητείας: το νέο εύρημα," in Problems in Greek Prehistory. Papers</sup>

¹³ M. TSIPOPOULOU, "Αγία Φωτιά Σητείας: το νέο εύρημα," in Problems in Greek Prehistory. Papers Presented at the Centenary Conference of the British School at Athens 1986 (1988) 31-47; EAD., "Aghia Photia," in The Aerial Atlas of Ancient Crete (1992) 66-69.

¹⁴ Consequently, the plan already published (cf. *supra* n. 13), and reproduced by others, is not complete. The present paper publishes the correct plan, established after the completion of surface cleaning.

at 1800 square metres. The average wall thickness is 1.2 metres. It is constructed with rough field stones, and has an external and internal facing of larger stones, with the fill consisting of smaller ones (Pl. XXXIc-XXXIIc). It stands to a height of one to two courses. In many areas along its length it is built directly onto bedrock. In three places along the northern side there is a roughly semi-circular projection, a larger one near the centre of its length, a smaller at each extremity (Pl. XXXIIc). The eastern projection is extremely damaged. The other two are very imperfectly faced as excavated, but it may be noted that here the wall stands on a layer of soil close to the edge of the plateau, which may have caused their facing to collapse. It is clear that they are posterior to the construction of the wall - but by how much is not known. The interior is filled, thus differing from the Early Bronze Age buttresses at, for example, Lerna and Chalandriani. Their purpose is to support the wall, which along the northern side is built on the compact soil characteristic of the region. The absence of contact with bedrock may have created static problems for the wall, leading to this make-shift solution. In addition, the larger central semi-circular projection is placed - as was revealed in 1997 - in front of a thinner section of wall (Pl. XXXIc). Two reconstructions may be proposed: either the point marks a blocked entrance, or a partial collapse led to a refection, involving the addition of the semi-circular projection. In neither case a convincing explanation results for the inferior thickness. It may also be noted that this section is not faced quite as conscientiously as is the wall in general although it can be clearly distinguished from the stones of the projection.

The southern run is, as already noted, entirely lost. The remains of walls in the area cannot be associated with it, due to their inferior thickness and different construction technique, which essentially omits the facing with larger stones (Pl. XXVIIIa). Since the rectangular building shares the trait of clear facing in its exterior walls, it may be suggested that the minor walls along the south belong to a different construction phase - although it must be underlined that stratigraphical and ceramic evidence is not available. An association with the circular construction is likely. The situation in the south-western corner remains unclear at the point past the small gate close to the corner of the rectangular building.

Whether the settlers at Aghia Photia raised the building before constructing the wall, or whether a hostile climate necessitated the establishment of a fortified camp, within whose perimeter more permanent quarters were created, cannot be determined on stratigraphical or archaeological grounds. Such evidence would be a precious aid in determining if local opposition was declared shortly after arrival, or if a gradually evolving dominant economic position led to an increased need to protect the amassed wealth.¹⁵

II.2 Petras

It has long been clear that the main plateau of Petras, 40 metres above sea-level, was to some extent surrounded by a strong wall, a bastion constructed of "cyclopean" masonry being visible at the south-eastern edge. The area was excavated in 1994 and 1995 (Pl. XXIX, Pl. XXXIIIa-c). The bastion, roughly 12 by 8 metres, and preserved to 1.3 metres, extends as an artificial platform from the bedrock of the plateau (Pl. XXXIIIa, c). It is part of a massive wall running along almost the entire eastern flank, starting at the southern edge of the bastion, and including the stretch of wall north of the bastion, and a deep cutting into the bedrock which was partially refilled with carefully positioned large boulders (Pl. XXIX). This latter feature may have served as foundations for a small tower-like structure. The wall, set on a shelf cut into the bedrock, is extant to a height of 4-6 courses, but does not rise above the surface of the plateau and thus only preserves the external face. To what height it may be

Unfortunately there is no vertical stratigraphy including both the building and the wall. Limited amounts of fragmentary and badly preserved pottery came to light during the cleaning of the latter. It does not appear to differ from that of the former. In any case, this cannot constitute a criterion for or against any one view. Even if the wall was built first, the intervening time period before construction of the building was undertaken need not have been of a sufficient length to have a stylistic impact on the pottery. Nor does the manner in which the building is inserted within the area encircled by the wall offer means, at least to the eyes of the excavator, of deciding in favour of the one or the other interpretation.

reconstructed as free-standing above this level is unknown. It remained in use as long as a palace existed at Petras, at least as a retaining wall. ¹⁶ Pottery from these three features - bastion, wall, and refilled cutting - provides a Protopalatial date, thus contemporary with the large rectangular building immediately to the west of the bastion. ¹⁷ It would appear - but it remains a hypothesis - that this architectural complex constituted one of the entrances to the administrative Protopalatial centre. ¹⁸ Nowhere else on or in the immediate vicinity of the plateau have walls of a similar nature been observed, but it should be noted that excavation has been restricted to the central building and the houses of the settlement in three sectors to the northeast.

Below the modern road leading past the site, and, therefore, at the lower edge of Hill I, immediately above the ancient coastline, there stands a second wall relevant to the present discussion (Pl. XXVIIIb, Pl. XXXIIId-XXXIVa). The first to excavate in the area was Richard Bosanquet in 1901. His report speaks of "a well-built wall 17 m. long and 1.50 m. high running north and south; a return-wall projected at either end, and two others between them divided the long front into three nearly equal compartments." Two large pithoi in the middle compartment and other vases led him to conclude that he had excavated part of a two-storey (Middle Minoan?) building which continued into the cutting under the road. ¹⁹

The general area was re-examined in 1989. An imposing wall of "cyclopean" ²⁰ masonry was visible on the surface, and was excavated down to the foundations, for a total height of ca. 3.0 metres (Pl. XXXIIId-XXXIId). It has two or three rectangular towers preserved, constructed with very large unworked stones 1.0-1.2 metres in length by 0.6-0.8 metres in height. Along the eastern side of the extant projection the foundations of smaller stones were placed directly in an artificial depression in the bedrock (Pl. XXXIVc-XXXIId). On the northern face an additional two courses of smaller stones descend further down to compensate for a fall in the bedrock. Whether this wall also had an interior face could not be ascertained due to the presence of the modern road. A test trench into the volume of the main projection produced evidence for fill. The wall itself, therefore, cannot be considered part of a house, against which also argues the obvious retaining function. The sherds in immediate connection with the structure did not allow a sure dating, whereas the soil north of the wall was richly strewn with Neopalatial sherds, to be associated with the Neopalatial building partially excavated in the area in front of the wall.

A certain confusion reigns regarding these two major wall complexes. The new material cannot be recognized in Bosanquet's description, despite a comparable topographical position - allowing for imprecisions in his sketch-plan, and similar overall length. Yet, the "cyclopean" wall examined in 1989 would appear to be identical with that observed by Evans in 1897, making it unlikely that Bosanquet would have missed it and excavated nearby. What may be retained for the present discussion is that the existence of Bosanquet's Middle Minoan structure, combined with the construction technique of the "cyclopean" wall, resembling as it

After the abandonment of the palatial building the upper part of the wall collapsed and numerous blocks, having rolled down the slope, were reused in Late Minoan IIIA buildings in Sector III.

¹⁷ Cf. TŠIPOPOULOU, "Before, During, After" (supra n. 12).

The confirmation of this hypothesis, which at present appears logical since it is probable that there was direct access to the palace also from the smaller harbour to the east, would require an extension of the excavation down the eastern slope of the hill. An additional indicator is a stretch of paved road running south out of Sector I, i.e. in the general direction of the bastion.

19 R.C. BOSANQUET, "Excavations at Petras," BSA 8 (1901-1902) 282-285. This road, the only to serve the

R.C. BOSANQUET, "Excavations at Petras," BSA 8 (1901-1902) 282-285. This road, the only to serve the modern village of Petras, is tar-topped, hindering all further work in the area. Of particular interest is the fact that exploratory trenches in 1996 by N. Papadakis further down from the road uncovered significant finds, both architectural and ceramic, which, it appears, are to be dated to the Protopalatial period. 13 years of research in the wider area confirm that Petras was not only an important Protopalatial centre, but suggest also that the extension of the occupation may have been superior to that which followed in Neopalatial times. To which extent this supports a reading of the data as indicating an independent establishment in the earlier phase, whereas in the later Petras was subordinate (perhaps to Knossos?), remains for the time being a matter of speculation.

The term is employed in an entirely conventional manner, as is usual in Crete. The author would prefer to express the size of the boulders and the manner of construction of the wall with a more neutral term.

does that of the bastion on the plateau, would argue for a Protopalatial date for the "cyclopean" wall. If correct, the previously published Neopalatial dating should be discarded, ²¹ and Bosanquet's building and the wall considered part of the large-scale reorganisation of the built-up space which took place at Petras in the Protopalatial period.

III. Discussion

The appearance of substantial walls wholly or partially encircling the two major sites in the Siteia Bay area during pre-Neopalatial times, argues, in symphony with the nearby oval building at Chamaizi, ²² for an intensification of asymmetry in power relationships in the region. These walls are best understood as having fullfilled a defensive function - although this need not be their sole effect. However, a single blanket explanation for all three sites would require excessive simplification. First of all, there is a chronological factor: Aghia Photia dates exclusively to Middle Minoan IA, and would have co-existed partially with Chamaizi, which was abandoned in MM IB-IIA. ²³ It is probable that the relatively remote position of Chamaizi from the centre, but also its strategic siting at the limits of the geographical and most likely administrative dominion of Petras, contributed to its occupation over a long timespan. ²⁴ In contrast, up until this point in time, Petras does not show traces of walls assignable to anything but houses, although the restricted surface examined for Prepalatial remains should be underlined. ²⁵ Middle Minoan IIA constitutes a period of radical changes, finding its architectural expression in the extensive replanning of the plateau, and construction of the central building.

Secondly, each site, when enclosed by a wall, or, in the case of Chamaizi, built with an exterior wall filling a protective function, seems to have had a different raison d'être. Aghia Photia appears suddenly, and intrusively, to dominate the plain from behind its wall. It is also significant that the architectural form the construction took is both imposing and un-Minoan in its regularity, but there are no obvious parallels upon which to develop further this line of thought. The problem of architectural forerunners or parallels, within or without Crete, must, in any case, remain outside the present undertaking. To seek an origin outside Crete for the people who settled the Kou ϕ hill conflicts with the entirely Minoan ceramic evidence.

²¹ For the Neopalatial date, cf. M. TSIPOPOULOU, "Ερευνα στον Πετρά και τον κόλπο της Σητείας," ArchDelt 41 (1986) 340-400, esp. 350-352, employed by colleagues in more general analyses, e.g., J. DRIESSEN, "Some Observations on the Modification of the Access System of Minoan Palaces," Aegean Archaeology 2 (1997) 67-85, esp. 73-74.

Archaeology 2 (1997) 67-85, esp. 73-74.

22 S. XANTHOUDIDES, "Προιστορική οικία εις Χαμαίζι Σητείας," ArchEph 1906, 117-155; C. DAVARAS, "Νέαι έρευναι εις την ελλειψοειδή οικίαν Χαμαιζιού," in Proceedings of the 3rd International Cretological Conference (1973-1975) 46-53.

The necessity of a re-examination of the material from Chamaizi towards a complete publication must be stressed. Even if the article by XANTHOUDIDES (supra n. 22) constitutes a brilliant effort at so early a moment in the history of Minoan archaeology, the MM IA dating (cf., e.g., P. WARREN and V. HANKEY, Aegean Bronze Age Chronology [1989] 18). should be questioned in the light of recent finds from the area. An emphatic desideratum would be a clarification of the stratigraphy at the site. The discovery of polychrome pottery and Linear A inscriptions should seriously strengthen the possibility that the site is to be dated in MM IB-IIA. A comparison between the pottery of Chamaizi and that of the last Prepalatial phase at Petras (dated to MM IB-IIA) would be most interesting. This period at Petras (Petras IV) has produced a significant body of material in terms of quantity and quality from the dump ("λάκκος") in Sectors I and III, a deposit which resulted from the reorganisation of space, involving the levelling of the plateau, where the palatial building of Petras was subsequently raised.

A further topic of interest is the presence or absence of further buildings on the hill at Chamaizi. The oval house has entered the bibliography as an isolated structure, and it is upon this assumption that all further studies of the site are based. A systematic examination of the Σουβλωτό Μουρί does not appear to have been undertaken. The rectangular building at Aghia Photia, on the other hand, does not seem to have been anything but isolated, a fact which must serve as basis for the present examination.

The stratigraphical trenches in the palatial building at Petras, by necessity restricted in scope, produced sufficient amounts of pottery and other finds, but, unfortunately, very few architectural remains. Thus it is not known whether the occupation of the hill in MM IA-B was constituted by several smaller buildings, or whether it was centered on a single major structure, as is the case of Aghia Photia and Chamaizi.

Newcomers from elsewhere in Crete, would best explain the various characteristics of the site-particularly the lack of similarity with the pottery produced in the wider Siteia Bay area. ²⁶ If interpreted as a farmstead, its function is only partially examined. The existence of the wall and the plan of the building argue for a more extensive involvement with the immediate region. The encircled surface, leaving some 1200 square metres for outdoor activities, has revealed evidence for metalworking in the south-western part, and traces of obsidian-knapping in the south-eastern. It would also provide space for a herd in time of peril.

Chamaizi better represents the Minoan farmstead of limited economic scope. 27 The diversity of the finds tends towards creating the impression of autarchy, but there are sufficient objects of a nature congruent with a designation as prestige items, such as bronzes, stone vases, and clay vessels of particular shapes, in addition to idols and a potter's wheel. Nonetheless, the site probably derives its positioning on the hill of $\Sigma \circ \nu \beta \lambda \omega \tau \circ M \circ \nu \circ \Gamma$ from an attempt to control the main western entry into the Siteia lowlands. Its defensive character, both in terms of topography and architecture, would argue in this sense. It is likewise significant that the stratigraphical trenches of C. Davaras brought to light parts of "Early Minoan houses" underneath the oval building. Further information concerning the form and exact dating of these remains is required so as to enable clarification concerning the number of architectural phases, and the existence or not of a break in the occupation.

The character of Middle Minoan Petras prior to Middle Minoan IIA is largely unknown. The pottery, in particular, both from the stratigraphical trenches within the palatial building and from the dump in Sectors I and III, argues for wide ranging contacts, and its very quality is a clear indicator of importance, but no major buildings have been excavated. The Early Minoan II occupation, on the other hand, is extensive, both on the plateau and on the slopes. Much information was lost when the plateau was prepared for the central building: whereas the Early Minoan II levels lay deep enough to remain untouched, the possibly even more substantial presence in Middle Minoan I-IIA was almost entirely destroyed. By Middle Minoan IIB the economic, political and architectural landscape of the Siteia Bay area had changed completely. Aghia Photia and Chamaizi had ceased to exist, and the only site of consequence was the palatial establishment at Petras - as far as can be determined on the basis of the evidence available today. The appearance of the wall and bastion at Petras signals the change, during Middle Minoan IIA, from a flourishing settlement to the administrative centre of an entire region.

The short distance between Petras and Aghia Photia (2 km) and the abandonment of latter site before the building of the palace at the former, argues for a relationship of cause and effect: the architectural model and organisation evidenced at Aghia Photia, adequate for the concentration and protection of the local wealth, is superceded by a more complex economic and administrative system centered on Petras, where the appropriate architectural expression appears to have been initially lacking. Thus, it is possible that Aghia Photia provided, to a certain extent, and after a chronological hiatus, a model for Petras.

As a palace, the central building at Petras contained the obligatory spaces for storage and redistribution, and the inescapable prestige architectural features such as a prominent position, a central court, a monumental staircase, and representative areas - all on the scale of the region it commanded. In this context, the massive wall along the eastern flank, while initially defensive, contributed to the expression of an ideology based on plentitude and splendour, but also fear and enforcement. The impression is one of power concentrated in expressive architecture going beyond the immediate needs, and embodied by preferential

Entirely characteristic, but also most puzzling, is the fact that the pottery from Aghia Photia is unpainted or brown to dark-brown monochrome, while the light-on-dark and dark-and-light styles are wholly absent. The EM III-MM IA pottery from Petras, in contrast, enters comfortably into the patterns known from elsewhere in East Crete, and includes a number of imports, particularly from the Isthmus of Ierapetra.

An attempt has been made to connect the building with the Neopalatial "villas," cf. W.-D. NIEMEIER, "The Origins of the Minoan "Villa" System," in *The Function of the "Minoan Villa." Proceedings of the 8th International Symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens 1992* (1997) 15-19. The present author considers this an oversimplification.

access to technology and extra-regional contacts, combined with a readiness to defend material gains.

Clearly, this constitutes an image potentially falsified by a lack of research. Whereas the Aghia Photia survey did not bring to light Pre- or Protopalatial occupation elsewhere in the area, 28 the small excavation conducted by Lucia Vagnetti and the author at Achladia uncovered a Protopalatial phase.²⁹ Our knowledge of the Middle Minoan period in the eastern extremity of the island remains, however, very fragmentary. A scrutiny of the bibliography up to 1995 by the author, beginning at Malia and covering the prefectures of Mirabello, Lasithi, Ierapetra and Siteia, provided evidence for 126 sites in addition to Malia, Zakro, Aghia Photia, and Petras. Unfortunately, the exploitation of these data is problematic because neither the results of surveys nor the summary initial reports provide a basis for exact datings within the Middle Minoan period. Thus some of the above-mentioned sites are Pre-, others Proto-, others still early Neopalatial in date. 30 This raises the spectre of a more extensive occupation in the region, with possible predecessor phases at the various local Neopalatial "villa" sites,³¹ making for a more complicated process than one centered on a mere three sites. Any reconstruction has to take a certain proportion of invisible evidence into consideration. If it may ever be shown, through the completion and full publication of excavations, that the "villas" in the hinterland of Petras were constructed exclusively in the Neopalatial period on sites previously unoccupied, this would not mean that other constructions, probably smaller in quantity and size, did not play an intermediary role between palace and villages, even if the Protopalatial system of secondary centres was much less developed and less standardized.

If the leading site in Protopalatial times was Petras, the same cannot be claimed for the Prepalatial period. Making allowance for the intrusive nature of Aghia Photia, and thereby not exaggerating the importance of its encircling wall, and the position of Chamaizi on the border of the region, which may have necessitated the architectural form the establishment took, it would seem that the earlier period was more egalitarian and less stressful. Admittedly this reconstruction suffers from being based on a single major site forming the putative norm. Funerary evidence for the social differentiation and concomitant concentration of wealth involved in this process is lacking from the Siteia Bay area. The two circular structures, one built partially on top of the abandoned rectangular building at Aghia Photia, are interpreted as tholos tombs, but cannot provide material indications since they were empty when excavated. The processes involved, however, are documented in the Mesara, as well as at Mochlos and Acharnes. Despite these shortcomings, the proposed reconstruction, summarized as a gradual concentration of the economic means on a single site, resulting in a rise in social tension and the erecting of a protected establishment, and ultimately leading to the dominance of this one site, is supported by developments elsewhere in Crete.

The Siteia Bay and its hinterland constitute a small region within Minoan Crete, restricted in its ability to develop by the topography. Yet, the natural barriers were insufficient to keep the area from taking part in the general trends better known from the larger centres. The much-quoted fragmentation of the Protopalatial period expressed in many forms of art and architecture should not be a hindrance to seeing that throughout the island the same

²⁸ Exception made of small quantities of pottery from the cave north of the hill, cf. M. TSIPOPOULOU, Archaeological Survey at Aghia Photia Siteia (SIMA Pocketbook, 1989) 33. N. PLATON, "Αγία Φωτιά," PraktArchEt (1959) 266 mentions having collected MM pottery there, which was not kept (Platon, pers. comm. 1986), and could therefore not be examined by the present author.

M. TSIPOPOULOU and L. VAGNETTI, Achladia. Scavi e ricerche della Missione Greco-Italiana in Creta Orientale (1991-1993) (1995) 22, 195, 199.

The obvious problems involved in tallying "sites" based on anything from sherdscatter to graves to major excavations need not be discussed here, but should remain firmly in mind.

N. Platon did not undertake stratigraphical trenches in the "villas" excavated by him. He refers to some Middle Minoan material, but the context, and possibly the identification, remain unclear.

³² The architect P. Belli, specialized in the study of Minoan tholos tombs, and currently examining the circular structures at Aghia Photia for the final publication, stresses that their architecture does not differ from that of circular or tholos tombs in Crete (pers. comm.).

social changes and the same economic developments can be traced at about the same time. The limited size of the area studied here offers an opportunity to document the finer nuances involved in the transition from local centres to palaces. For a better understanding of the processes leading to this important development, it is necessary to factor in the existence of walls at some of the relevant sites.

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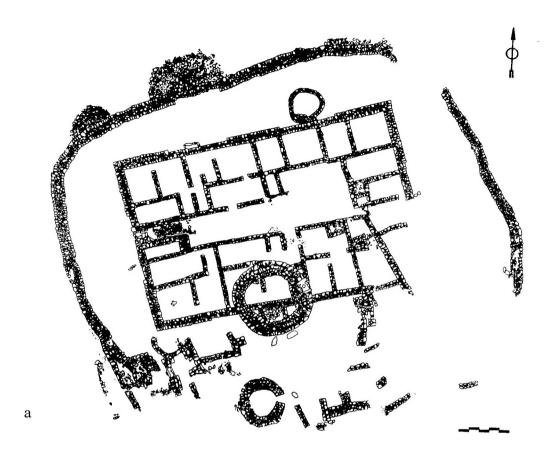
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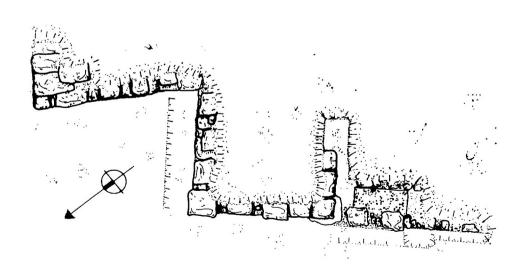
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AGHIA PHOTIA - KOUPHOTA 1997 STATE PLAN

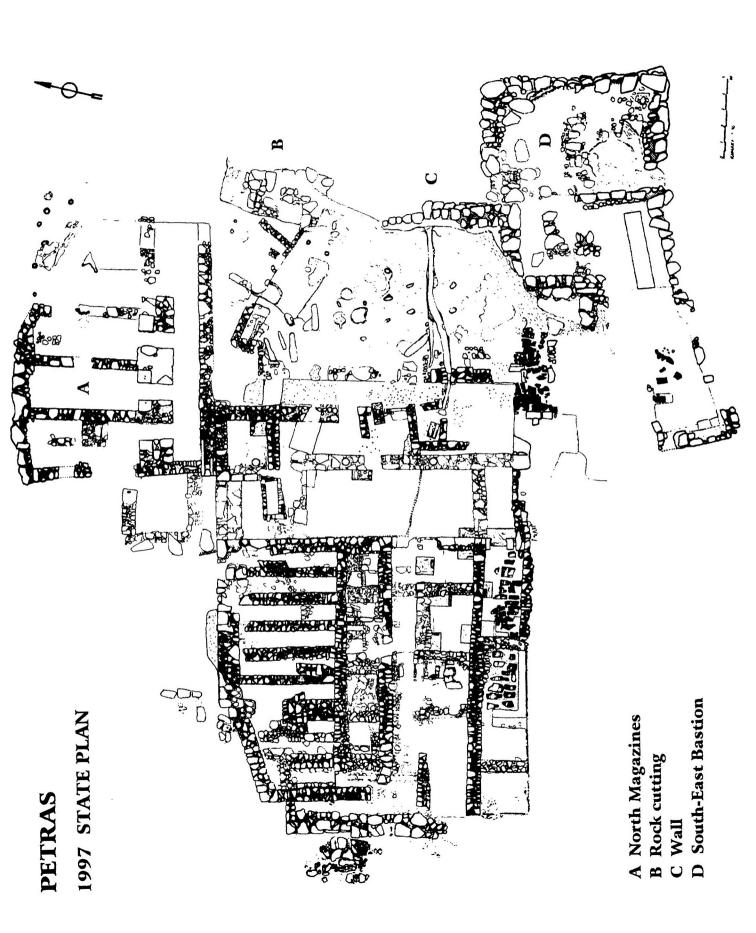


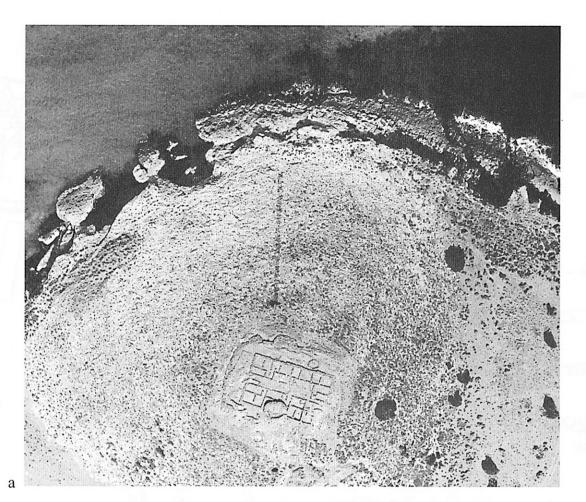


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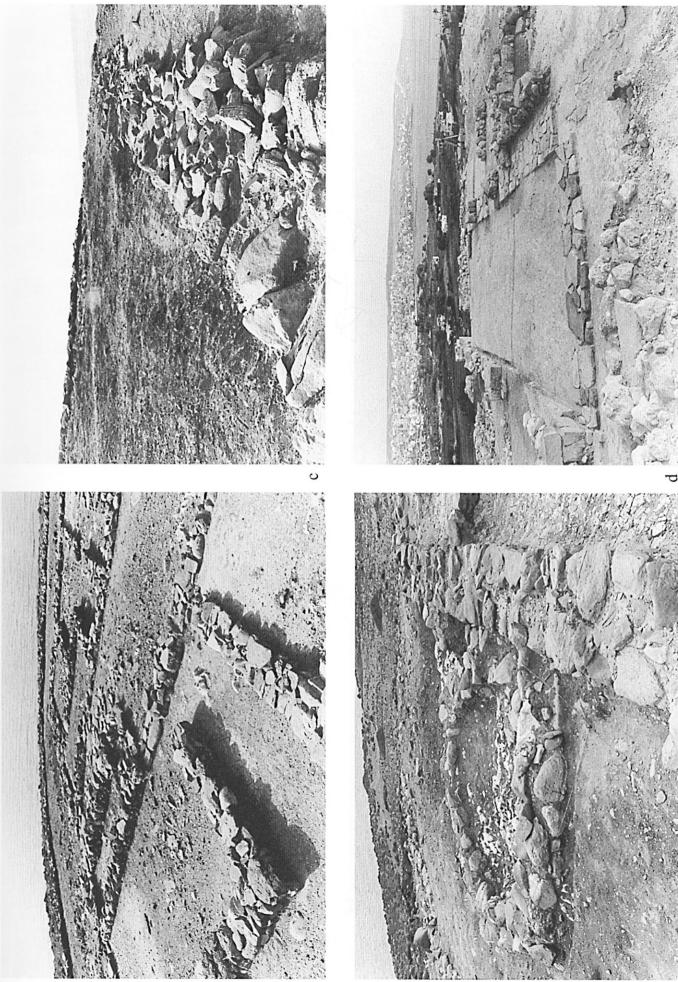
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