

3.

SPIRIT OF PLACE, MINOAN HOUSES AS MAJOR ACTORS

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There is no simple relationship between people and the space they inhabit
(Whitelaw 2001, 16)

The difference between space and place is human experience (Moore 2005, 1)

Minoan Political Economy?

This paper starts with the assumption that any political economy is a reflection of the *social* organization of production, exchange and consumption and that it is not possible to talk about *Minoan* political economy as long as no serious progress is made on its societal organization. This implies that we cannot elucidate economic aspects of production, exchange and consumption without first identifying the *social parameters* that form their basis and the *scale* at which economic activities essentially operated, i.e. whether this was at the level of the individual household or domestic unit (the nuclear family), at a supra-household level, which we may call a corporate group, or at an even higher level such as a settlement, region or state (Feinman 2004, 2; see also the useful discussion by M. Smith 2004. But we can, of course, also use certain economic aspects to reconstruct the societal organization, as illustrated by Day, Relaki, and Todaro [this volume]). Identifying the elementary unit of production, distribution, transmission and reproduction, implies then a proper definition of the social basis of Minoan society – the topic of my concern – but, unfortunately, relatively little progress has been made since Evans's days (Steadman 1996). Granted, a volume with exactly this title – Minoan society – was published in 1983 (Krzyszkowska and Nixon 1983, especially Blasingham 1983; Cherry 1983; Hallager 1983; Kanta 1983; and Whitelaw 1983; see also Marinatos and Betancourt 1995), but very few studies therein or afterwards effectively address the question of how Minoan society was actually composed. In recent years, there has been an increase of good work on Neolithic and Minoan households, especially by people such as Halstead (1999), Tomkins (2004), Whitelaw (2001), and Glowacki (2004), and the soon-to-be-published proceedings of the STEGA conference may also advance our knowledge (Glowacki and Vogeikoff-Brogan forthcoming). But the only thing we can perhaps safely affirm today is that Minoan society qualifies as a middle-

range society, a community somewhere on the continuum between egalitarian and highly-stratified (Blanton 1995, 109–110). The major obstacle to progress is that some researchers have argued, on the one hand, for recognizing autonomous nuclear families as the basic mode of social production as represented by some of the archaeologically preserved architectural configurations but, on the other hand, have failed to think this line through in accepting *all* architecturally delineated entities as autonomous residential households. Whitelaw, for instance, took Neopalatial Gournia as the basis for an argument for identifying standardization in house size, reflecting “nuclear or minimally-extended stem families of about 4–5 individuals or so” (Whitelaw 2001, 18, but on 2001, 21 an average household of 5–6 individuals is also proposed). He and others have claimed that, from the Neolithic onwards, and throughout the Early and Middle Bronze Age into the Neopalatial period, *nuclear families* formed the basic social and residential unit of Crete. Larger architectural units were, following this line of thinking, seen as wealthier households with more specialized and larger rooms, but not necessarily of more people or as multi-family residences (see, e.g., Cutting 2006 for a critique). But in truth, rather few Minoan sites, from the Neolithic period onwards, effectively consist of small-scale structures that can easily be translated into such an interpretative framework. Having worked at sites that are striking because of the size of their buildings (Palaikastro, Malia, Monastiraki, Vathypetro, Myrtos), I am puzzled by the massive available residential space for the average Minoan residential unit. If we consider the so-called standardized Minoan house size, for example, which is said to be between 60 and 100 m², we should also take into account the upper floor which many if not most houses possessed and where in fact the essential domestic functions may have taken place (Driessen 2005). But this would mean that normal households had between 120 and 200 m², which is more than double the house space available in rural Cretan areas after World War II (Albaugh 1953, 89–91; Cutting 2006 for the difficulties and variations). I find this difficult to accept. My frustration is probably not sufficient to doubt the existence of nuclear families entirely but enough to question whether it was the *only* or even essential social basis for the political economy.

The sites that have served as the corner stones for the entire argument for the nuclear family hypothesis, Gournia and Myrtos Fournou Korifi, are perhaps not such good test cases after all. Where Gournia is concerned, it is a pity that no detailed stone-by-stone plan and find distribution account has ever been published, but some observations may perhaps allow us to doubt the usual equation: street entrance = house as the only possible explanation. Indeed, it can be shown that the street system was fixed from at least the early Protopalatial period onwards and so were the quarters or town blocks. Most of the blocks were laid out as a unit and double walls are very rare (Fig. 3.1). This may then perhaps rather suggest that a supra-household level was responsible for the neighborhood. Moreover, as Privitera has recently suggested, certain “communal, group-reinforcing” ceremonies involving several households took place within the different neighborhoods of the town at Gournia and “houses, separated on the ground floor level, may have been joined on the upper floor...” (Privitera 2005, 197). Neighborhoods seem to have had their own communal open space for ritual action and some economic features such as shops may have catered for the *vicus* only (Fig. 3.2). If this intermediate level between the nuclear family and the settlement is



Figure 3.1. Outline plan of Gournia with indication of double walls (redrawn by P. Hacıgüzeller).

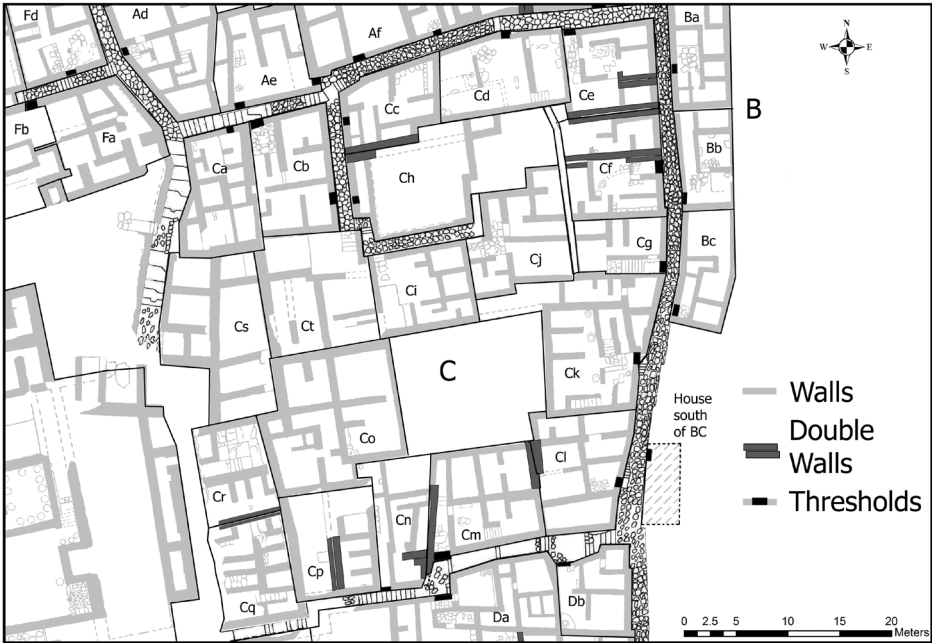


Figure 3.2. Gournia, Block C with indication of double walls, entrances and open space (redrawn by P. Hacıgüzeller).

accepted, it will have to be backed up by a more refined archaeological study. Work by Kathryn Keith, following that by Stone, on second millennium Mesopotamia also showed that *neighborhoods* constituted a significant level of social and spatial patterning in Old Babylonian cities since it was these that decided their social interaction and gave them a sense of common identity (Keith 2003, 58). In this case, proximity imposes social and economic interaction and may have also have had political consequences. The Palio in Renaissance Sienna is perhaps a good parallel with the different *contradas* or neighborhoods of the town competing against each other.¹

In the case of Myrtos Fournou Korifi (Fig. 3.3), it is well known that Todd Whitelaw² argued for an organic and progressive accretional growth of this settlement with constructions being added when children created new households. He assumed that “the households within the community were probably very closely related” (Whitelaw 1979, 74) and that the different households were linked through kinship but that there was no evidence and no need for a higher level of organization. Leaving aside Branigan’s view that the complex was a big-man’s house or some proto-palace (Branigan 1970, 47–49) or Tenwolde’s stress on the communal aspects of the site (Tenwolde 1992), the excavator, Peter Warren had a different opinion, and although he has more or less accepted that the site housed different families, he still regards it as some kind of clan building with a lot of sharing within the complex (Warren 1983). Despina Catapoti has also recently stressed the importance of communal activities taking place outdoors, linking these to others taking place indoor (Catapoti 2005, 172–175).³ Thus, the evidence is not unequivocal, so the answer cannot be simple and using Fournou Korifi to state that nuclear families were the norm is perhaps not such a good thing to do. We may compare with the frustration that filters through the account M. Shaw gives for Middle Minoan Kommos noting that “the problem between ‘aggregations of rooms’ and ‘multiroomed houses’ seems to be endemic to small MM towns or hamlets” and “it is almost impossible to isolate individual dwellings” (Shaw 1996, 361) or indeed Wright and McEnroe in the same Kommos volume (Wright and McEnroe 1996, 195–198, Pl. 3.5 for the difficulty identifying separate households) or A. Zoīs where Vasiliki is concerned (Zoīs 1990, 93, excluding the possibility that certain large Neopalatial houses were the result of the investment of single families). Add to this the contrasting opinions on what kind of societal segment was represented by the Prepalatial and Protopalatial tholos and house tombs – nuclear families, clans, lineages, tribes – and we realize that we are still at infancy where Minoan societal organization is concerned (Karytinos 1998). Indeed, although many researchers stress the possibility that Minoan burial customs accentuate group rather than individual status and affiliation, others are reluctant to express their views on the precise kinship relations represented. Maggidis (1998, 95) suggests the use of Burial Building 19 at Phourni to have been by a lineage during some 450 years “descending either from two nuclear families of five individuals, or from an extended family of 10 individuals; it seems, therefore, to be comparable to several house tombs in East Crete ... but rather different from the Messara tholos tombs, which have been viewed as tribal or clans tombs...” Many simply use the word “elites” or “elite groups,” avoiding the problem (Schoep this volume).

I here offer an alternative view that starts off with a few premises. First of all, we have to acknowledge that “the mortuary process was part of a community strategy”

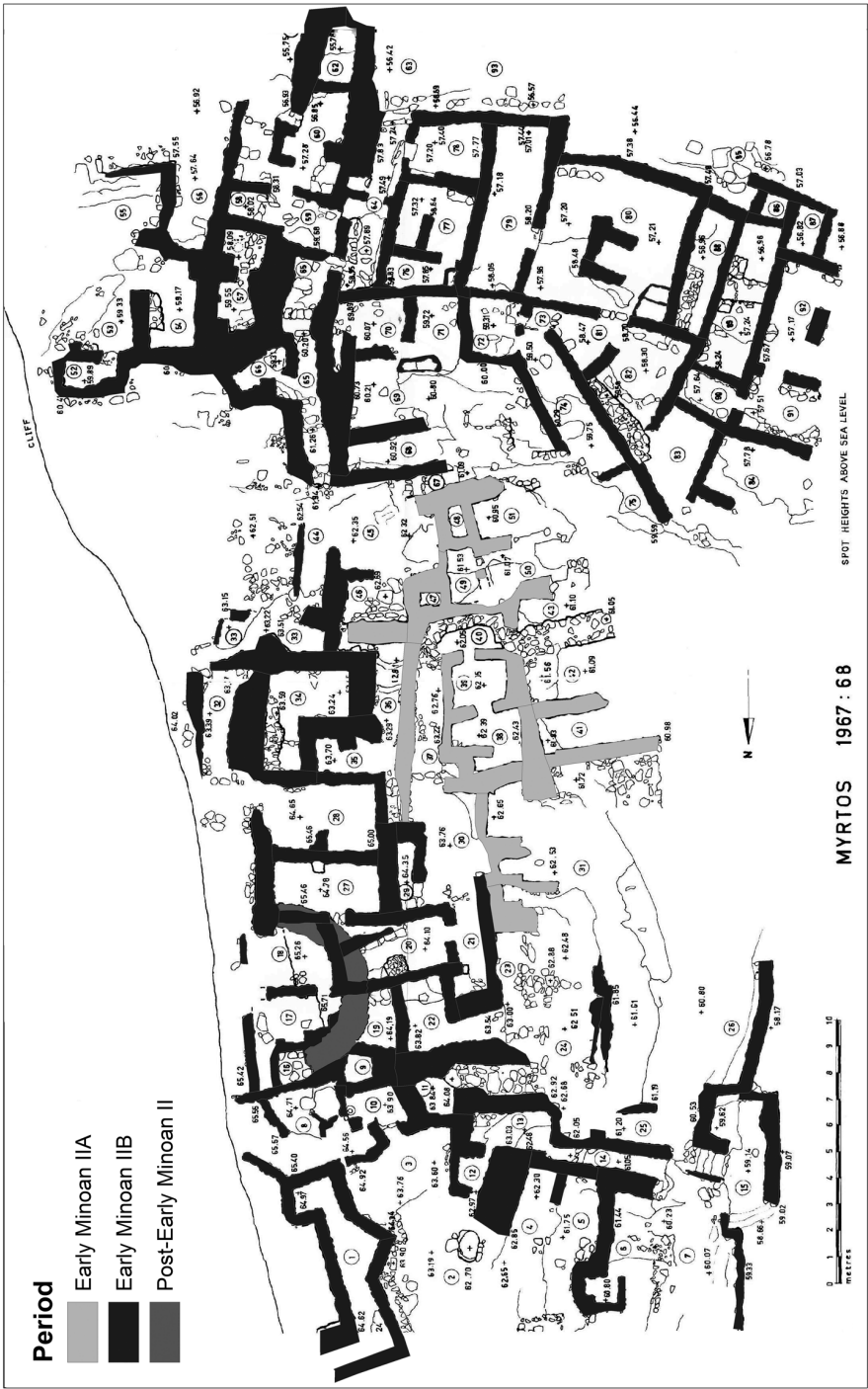


Figure 3.3. Myrtos, Fournou Korifi (redrawn by P. Hacıgüzeller)

Lineage	Kin group of persons whose membership is based on actual descent
Clan	Kin group of persons who claim (putative or fictive) descent from a common ancestor, sometimes mythological; clans may be organized in lineages
Household	Co-resident kin and co-resident dependents

Table 3.1. *Anthropological kinship relations.*

(Fowler 2004, 75), whatever the social segment represented within the tombs and whatever selection process it underwent. Secondly, since the “archaeological record of the built environment” remains “our main line of evidence for inferring the order of community life” (Mehrer 2000, 45), we have to recognize that it remains singularly difficult if not impossible to distinguish in our archaeological data specific kinship relations which are imposed by anthropological theory, so that we should perhaps better avoid to talk of such categorization at all (Table 3.1). Thirdly, we should bear in mind that people “in past societies were not necessarily individualized in the same way as in those of modern people, ... past identities may have been temporary, contextual, and community concerns” (Fowler 2004, 3).

With this in mind, our basic archaeological data will be re-examined and it will be explored to what degree we can use the architectural evidence to reconstruct social structures. My main argument will be to see an *intimate personal relation between buildings and people*, in fact to regard the different architectural structures themselves as living bodies, but with an intergenerational quality which made them socially relevant to a succession of people organized in a community with an internal hierarchical organization, perhaps based on age and ritual experience, and perhaps also differentiated into different households but presenting themselves to the outside world as what is now often called *a House*.

In Fair Verona....

Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
(Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Prologue)

The feud between the households of the Capulets and the Montagues, so expressively portrayed by William Shakespeare, was not so much a dispute between two families or factions but between two groups of people made up of kinsmen, both by blood and alliance, that rallied around what current anthropologists would – perhaps somewhat unfortunately because easily prone to misinterpretation – designate as *Houses*.⁴ It was Claude Levi-Strauss who first coined this term, using it to identify

a corporate body holding an estate made up of both material and immaterial wealth, which perpetuates itself through the transmission of its name, its goods, and its titles down a real or imaginary line, considered legitimate as long as this

continuity can express itself in the language of kinship or of affinity and, most often, of both (Levi-Strauss 1982, 174).

First revitalized and scrutinized by Carsten and Hugh-Jones (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995), the Levi-Straussian concept of the *House* was recently reassessed and redefined as a useful model for anthropologists and archaeologists in different parts of the world in a volume edited by Rosemary Joyce and Susan Gillespie (Joyce and Gillespie 2000) and I will quote the latter study extensively (see also Beck 2007):

Groups referred to by the term “house” are corporate bodies, sometimes quite large, organized by their shared residence, subsistence, means of production, origin, ritual actions, or metaphysical essence, all of which entail a commitment to a corpus of house property, which in turn can be said to materialize the social group. Houses define and socially reproduce themselves by the actions involved with the preservation of their joint property, as a form of material reproduction that objectifies their existence as a group and serves to configure their status vis-à-vis other houses within the larger society (Gillespie 2000a, 1–2; Colloredo-Mansfeld 2002 for a review).

Indeed

Houses link social groups with architectural units that facilitate their physical delimitation and position in a society thereby integrating the social with the material life in its pragmatic and semiotic aspects (Gillespie 2000a, 2).

The attractive part in this concept is that *houses* as communities leave sufficient space for agency, practice, structuration and interaction, allowing individual actors to manipulate their place within multiple social contexts at the same time as it de-emphasizes certain elements of affiliation (kin) – so difficult to identify by archaeologists – whereas stressing others (place) – so easy to identify by archaeologists. Gillespie insisted on the fact that the houses “turned all ... classificatory assumptions on their head. Although houses, like clans and lineages, are long-lived corporate entities to which persons belong and from which they construct their identities and configure their social interactions, there is no singular form of affiliation” (Gillespie 2000a, 7). The *House*, in this paper, should then not be seen primarily or solely as an architectural form but as the *objectification or materialization* of an “enduring social group that is materially represented by a physical structure and the objects that go with it – furnishings, curated heirlooms, and graves – within a designated locus in the landscape” (Gillespie 2000a, 2–3). Heirlooms and rituals serve in-house integration but also claims to more elevated status. By definition, a *House* is multigenerational. Indeed, its survival depends on the consolidation and maintenance of the estate and its own social reproduction. This historical dimension is evidently one of the aspects that is most easily detected by archaeologists. I want to stress that both the intergenerational and locus-bound aspects are fundamental differences between the *House* and what Yannis Hamilakis and Jim Wright have called *factions* (Wright 2004, 70–75). Indeed factions are

functionally and structurally similar, informal, leader-focussed organisations. One of [their] main characteristics ... is the competition for material and social resources within a larger social unit such as kin, village or ethnic group ... The faction develops a loose corporate identity which in the end, results in emphasising

more the differences between factions rather than the differences between the members of each faction. Competition for retinue is one of the main aims of the factions (Hamilakis 2002, 186).

Hamilakis further stresses that factions are extremely fragile formations and that membership fluctuates, all features that distinguish this type of organization from *Houses*. But within a *House* factions may develop or, at a particular time period, a *House* may behave like a faction. But as Gillespie notes

Utilizing the house model eliminates the problem of trying to interpret what configuration of kin or descent group occupied physical houses or house compounds, with the understanding that the house is an institution that used multiple strategies to recruit members whose everyday practices integrated kinship, economics, religion and politics (Gillespie 2000a, 15).

Jerry Moore recently added that “House societies may be found in a wide range of societies, but the institution is most evident among ranked societies transitional between kin-based and territorial-based systems” (Moore 2005, 184).

I may add that the label “House” remains very specific in our own times, especially in French where it is used to denote corporate groups that are involved mainly in production such as the House of Rothschild or as “Maison établie en 1875,” a “House established in 1875,” e.g., for the production of sweets for the royal court! But James Clavell’s novel *Noble House* or Edgar Allan Poe’s *House of Usher* are also examples! Indeed, present-day *Houses* are foremost producers, retaining names for prestige. Perhaps it would be easier to speak of *Houses* or *estates* ress the difference between a house as a domestic unit or architectural construct and a *House* as an intergenerational locus-bound social group. It is important to stress that hierarchy is present within the *House* itself and between the different *Houses*, with high-ranking or noble *Houses* and lower-ranking *Houses*. This hierarchy is partly a result of the success with which alliances have been forged; hence wife-taking *Houses* are usually higher ranking than wife-giving *Houses* – although this particular aspect may be worth pursuing in the Cretan case – but all basic exchange systems will have resulted in asymmetrical relations.

Researchers have in the mean time, successfully I feel, applied the notion on Mesoamerican, Austronesian, Levantine (Chesson 2003; also Stein 2004) and Mediaeval social formations (Heers 1974, 49–53, notices that in Genoa they are called “alberghi” but their kin-crossing characteristics and property related characteristics make these very similar to “houses”; see Wheaton 1977) and I suspect that the idea will soon be appropriated for Homeric society, of the Greek *oikos* or the Roman *gentes* (C. Smith 2006; see already González-Ruibal 2006 for Iron Age Europe and compare with Lehner 2000 for a related approach to Pharaonic Egypt and the patrimonial household model, also examined by Schloen 2001 for Ugarit and the ancient Near East). I would like to suggest that re-interpreting the Cretan Bronze Age evidence along these lines offers fascinating new insights and helps to explain some particularities of our evidence, namely the scarcity of clearly identifiable single-household architectural units and the proliferation of estate-like structures. I do not intend the model to last forever, however. DNA analysis and more detailed archaeological research may help to identify real (i.e. kinship) rather than optative or fictive relationships between the people that made

up these *Houses*.⁵ I first list some of the characteristics of *Houses* or estates that are archaeologically visible since others such as names, titles or oral narratives stressing descent and precedence are not as easily detectable and others such as sacred songs, dances, ritual performances can perhaps only be reconstructed indirectly through our archaeological data or iconographical material (Gillespie 2000a, 11–15), an element I intend to pursue elsewhere.

The main characteristic and aim for *Houses* or estates is evidently the objectification of perpetuity (see also Moore 2005, 183). Maintaining the links between the past and the present could take many different forms.

Continuity of Place

Permanence of place may probably be regarded as the most easily identifiable archaeological characteristic with *Houses* often replacing earlier structures on the same spot. This rebuilding time and time again reinforces the localization of the group and a continuity of place. One could speak of palimpsests, the reuse of the same spot during several centuries, creating a *house* genealogy. This also takes the character of bounded space. Our Cretan archaeological record abounds with examples. Leaving aside the palaces, I simply highlight a few cases. In Crete, one finds both vertical superimposition and horizontal displacement of subsequent constructions (cf. Tringham 2000, 117–119) but both are equally important for the continuity of place. The Neolithic tell of Knossos is of course our best example since here one notices a striking continuation over several millennia of residential units on the same spot⁶ (Fig. 3.4). But Building 4 at Palaikastro likewise shows such a continuation for over 500 years between the early Protopalatial and the Postpalatial period (Fig. 3.5) and the same can be observed at Tylissos (Fig. 3.6). A horizontal displacement can be remarked at Phaistos where the Second Palace was located 20 m or so more to the east from the First. There are a few other examples. The Oval House at Chamaizi has at least four architectural phases (Davaras 1972; the building was recently restudied by Lenuzza [forthcoming]) and the hill was used, time and time again, along similar lines within the Prepalatial period. Town blocks at Palaikastro date back to at least the early Middle Bronze Age but their parameters remain basically identical till the advanced Late Bronze Age, a time span of more than 600 years. It is of course well known that many Minoan tombs were used for more than a 1000 years.

Putting people behind these years is not easy but assuming that every 25 years a generation is renewed, even a site which was “only” occupied during a single archaeological phase easily counts up to 150 to 200 years or 6 to 10 generations as is the case for Myrtos Fournou Korifi (Whitelaw 1979, 97, n. 2).

The Life Cycle of Houses

Moreover, the *House* itself is seen as a having a spirit, a living body of which the cycle differs from that of the life cycle of the individuals that happen to live in it during a particular generation.⁷ The architectural container represents stability even if it is modified, embellished, enlarged or even moved from one spot to another. Humans die,

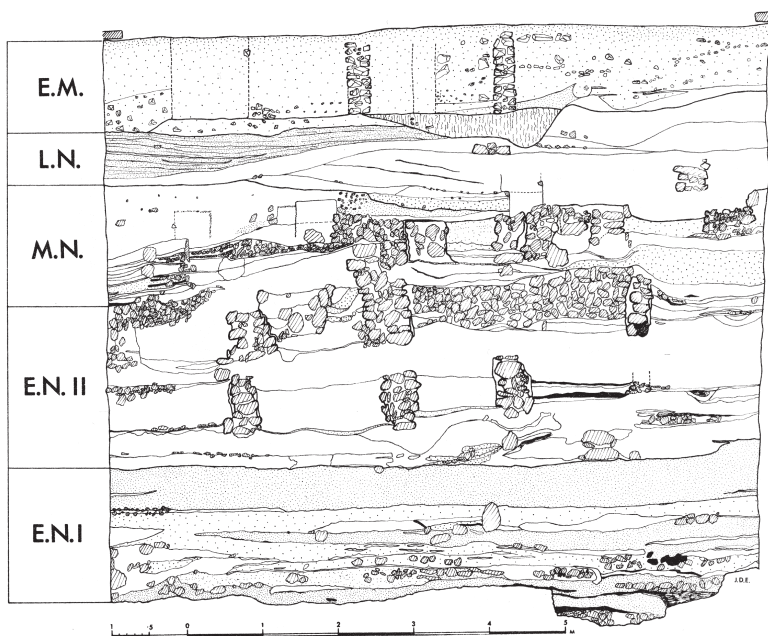


Figure 3.4. Knossos. Section of Neolithic and Early Minoan Occupation in West Court (after Evans 1972, 118 fig. 3).

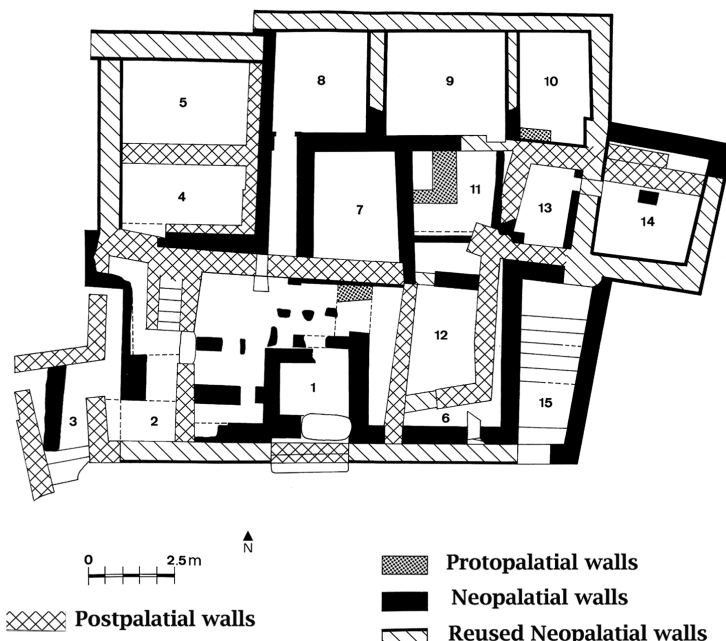


Figure 3.5. Palaikastro. Plan of Building 4 with remains of earlier and later phases indicated.

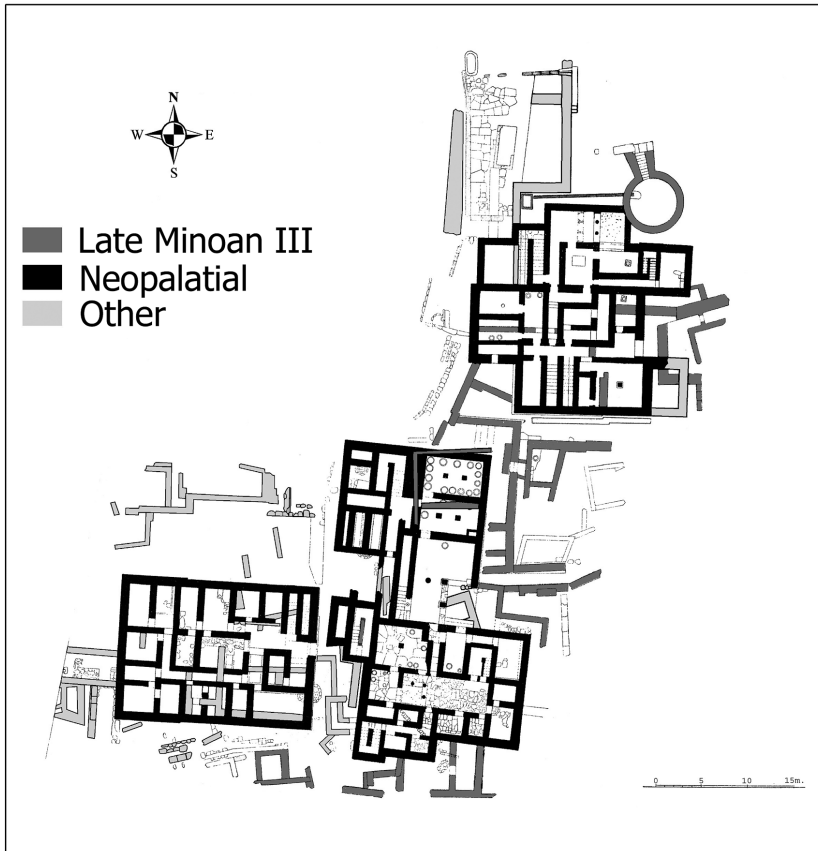


Figure 3.6. Plan of the Houses at Tyliссos with remains of earlier and later phases indicated (redrawn by P. Hacıgüzeller).

the *House* does not – but at the same time it offers its inhabitants a sense of immortality. It becomes hence important to write the biography of a *House*.⁸ Moreover, even a destroyed or abandoned house may continue to live on as a mnemonic device (see the interesting discussion by Tringham 2000). In Çatal Hüyük, for example, it was argued that molded plaster reliefs were moved from the old house to the new to assure continuity (Hodder 1999). Interestingly, anthropological parallels show that houses must be fed, by placing offerings often at the base of pillars representing the ancestors (Kirch 2000, 105), which of course brings to mind the discovery of large deposits of inverted conical cups around a pillar in Hogarth's House at Knossos and similar installations, or the placement of altars at the entrance of the Archanes building. But so-called foundation deposits are very common in Minoan archaeology, as Boulotis (1982) has shown. Vesa-Pekka Herva recently suggested calling these *building deposits*, and argues convincingly that Minoan constructions can be regarded as persons with their own biography (Herva 2005). Independently, Santo Privitera has brought forward arguments that specific cults were organized for the *buildings* themselves during LM III, especially at Aghia Triada-VAP,

Kommos, Malia-Nu and Chondros Viannou (Privitera 2004) with snake tubes serving in this view to “feed” the house directly, whereas La Rosa has explored the presence of building deposits between MM II and LM IB at Aghia Triada and Phaistos with plenty of examples especially of special receptacles with conical cups (La Rosa 2002)! J. Soles has also interpreted some special features of Building B2 at Mochlos along similar lines.⁹ Moreover, the destruction of a house – often by fire – is sometimes a ritual act and a “burial rite” symbolically accompanying the death of the household head (Tringham 2000, 124). In some cases, burning clay implies vitrifying it and hence preserving it. This brings to mind a few Minoan cases that may perhaps be explained as such, like Neolithic Knossos, as also argued by Tomkins (P. Tomkins [pers. comm.]; see also Verhoeven 2007), the Red House at Vasiliki and parts of the West Magazines at Malia. But the pouring of calcestruzzo within the First Palace at Phaistos may perhaps also be seen as such a ritual preservation, turning it into a permanent place of memory (earthquake destructions – not so uncommon on Crete – may have been interpreted along similar lines: Driessen 1987).

Heirlooms

The materialization of the historical memory of the *House* often happens through the incorporation of older building elements but sometimes also takes the form of heirlooms (see already Warren 1968, 190 for a list of sites where the presence of earlier stone vases especially in Postpalatial deposits was noted) of various kinds, including the bones of ancestors, and often kept in specific spaces that are charged, including ritual places and tombs. McKinnon noted: “Associated with the ancestral beginnings of the house, the heirloom valuables constitute the strength and weight of the house” (McKinnon 2000). These heirlooms may be shown on occasion of ceremonies and processions, or worn during sacred dances (see Warren 2006 and Moore 2005, 129–137 for processions). Memory is everywhere, the *House* is history. I give a few examples of Minoan heirlooms but many more surely exist even if they have not always been recognized. In Early Neolithic buildings, for example, the incorporation of axes, mortars, burned mud bricks and querns has been observed at Knossos and similar incorporations of *spolia* occur in later buildings. Economic recycling is usually invoked as explanation but a deliberate linking with ancestors may also have been intended. Within the Kommos village, several Prepalatial stone bowls occur in Middle and Late Bronze Age contexts, three Middle Bronze Age Cycladic nipples ewers come from what is said to be a cult context in the LM IB destruction level at Myrtos-Pyrgos, an Old Syrian haematite sealstone, undoubtedly an import and much older than its LM I context, comes from House A at Tylissos (Cline 1991, 138), a Predynastic Egyptian basalt hearth-shaped jar comes from Block Chi at Palaikastro (Warren 1968, 110, no. P594), etc. Karytinis has also observed the presence of EM sealstones in Protopalatial tombs (Karytinis 1998, 84) and Krzyszkowska discusses the presence of impressions by older seals in the Phaistos archive (Krzyszkowska 2005, 104–105, 150, 165, 180, 194, and for the rings 215, 437). These objects have written their own biography and their importance is clear from the incremental rise of such heirlooms in the mature Late Bronze Age. For example, in the so-called Isopata Royal Tomb, which probably dates to LM II, two lamps of porphyry

were found which are by the same craftsman as one found in the LM IB destruction at Archanes and another at Agia Triada, indicating that the Isopata examples would have to be LM I heirlooms. Later tombs abound in such objects. The presence of body parts may also be interpreted along these lines. We may perhaps call these *extraterrestrials* – fragments of the deceased which had either fulfilled an important part in the life of the *House* and were maintained as a continuous source of power and memory or which perhaps did not even commemorate specific individuals, as some have argued (Fowler 2004, 75–76). Amongst the examples, part of a skull found in room 89 at EM IIB Myrtos-Fournou Korifi should be mentioned as well as the human skull found in a MM IIIA level at Ag. Giorgos/Tourtouloi. Human parts were also found in the LM IA Mansion I at Petras, part of a skull in the villa at Epáno Zakros, a skull of a young woman in a room in mansion B2 at LM IB Mochlos, and Room 12 of the Zakros palace comprised the skull of a child and bones. A baby was found under a pot in a LM IIIA2 annex to Building 3 at Palaikastro. Intra-mural burial is not very common on Crete except in the Aceramic Neolithic stratum XX at Knossos (Evans 1964, 136–141) but Tina McGeorge mentions the discovery of an EM II child in a pithos at Nopigia, of a LM IA foetus buried in an inverted pithos in House I at Petras, another case in a LM II/II context in the Unexplored Mansion at Knossos (McGeorge 2003, 301–302) and a foetus beneath the floor of a LM IIIB house at Chania. Soles has also discussed the possibility of a skull cult in at least some places such as Palaikastro, Archanes, Myrtos-Pyrgos and Gournia (see, e.g., Soles 2001; he also presented a Minoan seminar in Athens in May 2007 on ancestor cults). Related is perhaps the sometimes surprising nearness of tombs to residential areas; the finest example is of course Myrtos-Pyrgos, but in the Messara most tholoi are less than 200 m from the habitation site and some less than 10 m (Branigan 1998, 17–18).

Concentration of Value

Together with heirlooms, concentration of value appears as a common feature of *Houses*. Indeed the cache of valuable material objects within compounds “thereby taking them out of normal circulation and rendering them non-transactable” (Gillespie 2000c, 151) shows a focus on material objects which is in fact also reflected by the size and elaboration of the architectural structures since both serve, in an intergenerational way, to consolidate relations between people. Gillespie also noted that social differences are easily objectified (Gillespie 2000b, 21) and Joyce adds that “in the negotiation of status that typifies house societies, wealth and history serve as validations of each other, permanence in place is transformed into authority over place, and material displays are evidence of the rights to the immaterial property claimed through such display” (Joyce 2000, 211–212). Apart from portable material wealth and immaterial richness or privileges (names, songs, etc.), this is also often shown by the preponderance given to storage areas – clear evidence for corporate wealth (Moore 2005, 204–205).¹⁰ This wealth (including the heirlooms) would especially from LM II onwards end up in tombs (see Whitley 2002 on antiques and heirlooms and their increasing frequency in Late Bronze Age and early Iron Age tombs)¹¹ but is characteristic for Middle and Bronze Age Minoan contexts.

From Space to Place

There is a clear link between the physical place and the surrounding landscape in which the building serves as a localizing hub for a spatial and social network (this aspect is further developed in Driessen and Frankel, forthcoming). This is perhaps most clearly shown by the transformation of residential areas into ceremonial arenas on which more afterwards. Moreover, it is the ties to the land and the locality that essentially create the kinship (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995, 16).

“La mémoire des pierres”

I would add a final characteristic to house societies and that is the importance of *stone* as such. Because of its permanence and antiquity,¹² stone as material embodies best the perpetuation of memory and I wonder whether the fascination Minoans showed for all things stone should not be interpreted in this way: the importance of stone pillars, or of baetyls has attracted the attention of several scholars. But to these may be added how stone, in all its aspects, is one of the most striking features of Minoan civilization: the variety and colors of stone used in architecture, vases and other objects, or imitated on frescoes and terracotta is clearly remarkable and should be seen in this light.¹³ Ashlar, for example, is perhaps a type of construction that was specially coded and only specific *Houses* that claimed a long descent could have been allowed to use this material.¹⁴

With these characteristics in mind let us return to the Minoan world and see how such *Houses* are identifiable in the field.

Minoan Houses

My basic recognition for the existence of *Houses* in Minoan Crete derives from an excavation under the direction of Alexandre Farnoux and myself at Malia (Fig. 3.7) (see Driessen and Fiasse in press). We uncovered an architectural complex, poetically labelled Quartier Nu, of approximately 25 by 32 m or 800 m², organized around a small court of ca. 6 by 12 m, accessible from the north. This complex was laid out in LM IIIA2, probably around 1330 BC or so, and destroyed only two or three generations later. We were fortunate to find many floor deposits and, integrating these in ARCVIEW, suggested the existence of three or four families within the complex, sharing the court as their main ritual area where a pebble mosaic floor was found, as well as a fine stone lamp and a very large terracotta house model, perhaps symbolizing the entire complex. It is also possible that the kitchen – an isolated structure to the east – was also communal as was perhaps the room opposite in which a very large grinding stone was found. Moreover, the material found in the pits around the complex can, in several cases, be linked to the different units. Although the complex shows a series of architectural modifications, its final plan is as much a result of decisions following changes in internal relations as it is a result from intergenerational reuse. Indeed, the very same spot had carried an important Middle Minoan complex, similar to Quartier



Figure 3.7. Plan of Quartier Nu at Malia with remains of earlier and later phases indicated (redrawn by P. Hacıgüzeller).

Mu about 50 m to the south, the material of which was recently published by Schoep and Knappett (Schoep and Knappett 2003). There are some badly preserved MM III remains beneath the east wing and beneath the west wing are tantalizing fragments of ashlar walls, LM I deposits and fresco fragments, implying again a building of some quality. The area remained occupied during LM II–IIIA1 at a more modest scale. It is striking how wall alignments remain identical during this more than 500 year long period and several old ones were still used when the building was finally destroyed. The idea of permanence is hence enhanced by the practice of partial renewal. Two other elements that may be relevant in this discussion may be mentioned: a series of objects – figurines, vases, sealstones¹⁵ – found within the rooms are clearly older than the final period of occupation of the complex and may be regarded as heirlooms. The most obvious is perhaps the figure of a bare-breasted lady – clearly the terracotta cousin of one of the Knossos Temple Repositories ladies! Moreover, a complete skeleton was found within the kitchen building – probably an earthquake victim – but a large skull fragment was also found in the corner of the main hall, X22–23. The latter fragment is difficult to explain – it may be all that is left of an earlier earthquake destruction victim, the rest of which was buried elsewhere, or, the skull fragment, similar to the reuse of older walls and presence of older objects, is also a heirloom, a reference to



Figure 3.8. Plan of Maison Epsilon at Malia with remains of earlier and later phases indicated (redrawn by P. Hacıgüzeller).

some ancestor. These different aspects are all very well represented in other attested anthropological cases of *Houses* and do indeed suggest that these heirlooms embodied a collective memory about the past at the same time serving to distinguish one *House* from another (Gillespie 2000a, 3).

A similar biography can be reconstructed for Quartier Epsilon also in Malia, a few hundred meters to the south (Fig. 3.8): established in Protopalatial times, reconstructed and monumentalized in Neopalatial times (1370 m²) and, after a moderate LM II–III A1 squatter occupation, the site was again used for a Postpalatial establishment, partly reusing some of the rooms, partly reconstructing others. Epsilon seems to have its own intergenerational, circumscribed property which may have grown since Protopalatial times since the east alley was blocked and given up when house EA was constructed. Epsilon has its own set of heirlooms, valuables and integrative ritual space represented by a central hall, a lustral basin, frescoed rooms and ritual areas. It is interesting to note, for example, how one of the east rooms had a built and stuccoed circular pit, 0.75 m deep and 2.50 m diameter, filled with complete and broken conical cups, which reminds one of the Nopigia deposit (Deshayes and Dessenne 1959, 109. Bradfer-Burdet 2005 argues that it was originally a storage *kouloura*, later used as a rubbish pit). Both *Houses*, Nu and Epsilon, serve to stress that the buildings had a dual aspect: they occupy

Site and Structure	Size	Estimated inhabitants
Tylissos, House A	575 m ²	57
Tylissos, House C	451 m ²	45
Palaikastro, House B	525 m ²	52
Palaikastro, House D3	1258 m ²	125
Palaikastro, House G1	352 m ²	35
Palaikastro, House Chi1	357 m ²	35
Palaikastro, House Chi2	238 m ²	23
Palaikastro, House B6	463 m ²	46
Mochlos, House B2	570 m ²	57
Zou	351 m ²	35
Malia, House Zb	421 m ²	42
Achladia	289 m ²	28
Myrtos-Pyrgos	251 m ²	25
Tourtouloi/Ag. Giorgos	527 m ²	52
Klimataria/Manares	486 m ²	48
Kannia/Mitropolis	424 m ²	42
Sklavokampos	396 m ²	39
Nirou Chani	542 m ²	54
Makryghialos	590 m ²	59
Vathypetro	872 m ²	87

Table 3.2. Minoan structures, size, and number of inhabitants (based on 10 m² per person).

physical locations in a spatial network but also a social position as a locus within an arrangement of relationships.

The size of these two complexes, 800 and 1370 m², is large but not so unusual for Minoan architectural structures and simply translating this in people with 1 person for 10 m² gives respectively 80 and 137 people (compare with Schloen 2001, 317–333). Undoubtedly, this is oversimplifying the evidence but then we are not even including upper floor space, which certainly existed, so I think it gives a reasonably good idea of what the situation could have been. Table 3.2 translates a series of well-known Minoan architectural structures into “people” and I have followed Whitelaw’s useful annex given in the Sheffield volume. This table has little reality behind it but it is rather striking how relatively similar sizes are represented within the different settlements. In many of these examples, it can actually be shown that earlier architectural remains exist which sometimes announce to a surprising degree the lay-out of the later architecture.

Moreover, a highly structured spatial arrangement of rooms and courts was coupled to considerable care in the maintenance of exact placement, dimensions, and internal floor plan of the initial structure on the occasion of the refurbishing. But what is especially conspicuous is the surprisingly large size of these architectural structures and the same is manifest on Crete from the early Neolithic period onwards. Indeed extremely large, often agglutinated constructions form the more typical domestic structure and not, as claimed by Whitelaw, the individual small-scale residential unit corresponding to the nuclear family. I fear that the discussion was largely put on the wrong tracks by Dawkins and his so-called but-and-ben shaped house at Magasa. The sheer number of axes found within and around this structure suggests it was a temporary special-function site and not the normal type of dwelling which it is usually characterized as. Evans's discovery of large Neolithic structures beneath the Central Court is a case in point but the structures found by John Evans – although very fragmentary – also suggest that they form the remains of much larger constructs. The Early Neolithic II house in the west court at Knossos is at least 50 m² and includes at least 9 rooms, the Middle Neolithic house in the Central Court is at least a 100 m² and was, because of size and rooms, dubbed the "Great House"; the contemporary house at Katsambas is at least 65 m² and has 9 rooms. Such constructions differ considerably from contemporary Neolithic constructions on the Greek Mainland. In recent papers, Peter Tomkins has characterized the Early and Middle Neolithic at Knossos as the "submerged household" with which he implies that households were part of a larger social grouping that may have been the primary and independent unit of socio-economic organization (Tomkins 2004, 42; 2007). This is perhaps also suggested by the discovery of a large quantity of carbonized grain, interpreted as part of a storage area for a larger group at the edge of the settlement. Tomkins suggests that during the Late Neolithic, households became independent, symbolically represented by terracotta house models. He leaves aside whether these households should be seen as nuclear families or larger groupings. I would choose for the second since the house models, like the Quartier Nu example, may perhaps be interpreted as symbolizing the foundation of *Houses*. Indeed, Evans's Late Neolithic Central Court structures fit within such a hypothesis.

Where Prepalatial Crete is concerned, Branigan has already drawn attention to the size of buildings beneath the later constructions at Tylissos and Palaikastro (block Chi) and we may now add Mochlos to this list. John Evans already assumed that the large EM II building beneath the West Court at Knossos was as large as the "mansion" at Vasiliki (Evans 1972, 127). Incidentally, it also reuses quern stones in its walls, as did the Neolithic buildings (Evans 1972, 117). Vasiliki would, in this hypothesis, have comprised two or three established houses, Fournou Korifi a single one,¹⁶ differentiated internally in several nuclear families but presenting themselves to the outside as a single household.

It is then no surprise that Middle Bronze Age Crete can be seen to be especially rich in large agglutinating compounds. Sometimes it is possible to identify separate residential units within such complexes but the internal boundaries are rarely conclusive and often fuzzy. At Malia, there are several examples such as Quartier Mu, the houses south of the Palace,¹⁷ the so-called Villa Alpha and Quartier Gamma, etc.¹⁸ but similar community compounds exist, e.g. at Monastiraki, Phaistos, Apesokari and Apodulu

in South Crete or at Hagia Photia and Chamaizi in East Crete. The *House* hypothesis perhaps also offers an interesting solution for the presence of specific seal types in Prepalatial and Protopalatial contexts. Indeed Karytinios – following earlier work by Sbonias – links specific seal types to particular burial buildings at Archanes-Phourni: bone seals with cross-hatching to Tholos C, white pieces to Tholos E and seals with lions and spirals to Building 19. The Archanes Script sealstones and bone and ivory seals with leaves mostly come from Buildings 3, 6 and 18, so the association between style groups and specific burials seems real (Karytinios 2000, 131). It has been noted how only a restricted number of style groups exist but that, within each group, none is identical and Karytinios is undoubtedly correct in arguing that they

were probably not used as an individual signature or name, but rather as a way to express personal status that emerged from group identity. Perhaps the leaders of each group in a community possessed a seal that showed both group identity and personal position and status (Karytinios 2000, 131).

Is it possible that each established *House* had its own seal stone type and that either real or putative alliances can be identified within the more discrete presences of other types? The hypothesis is certainly worth pursuing.

Where Neopalatial Crete is concerned, I propose to interpret the so-called “villas” – both urban and rural – as *Houses*, allowing for a difference in status amongst these: high, middle or low but interconnected through a network of alliances. For some *Houses*, we may even play with the idea of *noble Houses*. Within the towns, the recognition of these *Houses* allows, I think, a tantalizing new reading and interpretation of the evidence. Indeed, in the major Neopalatial towns, a number of large constructions distinguish themselves by the presence of what we may call ritual space – courtyards, lustral basins, Minoan halls, pillar crypts, balustrades, etc. If we regard these constructions as the main focus for a localized *House* group, the ritual space becomes more intelligible as an *intermediate* integrating device for group-related ceremonies (compare with Stein 2004, 76), also explaining why there are several of these and why their concentration is usually higher closer to the main ceremonial centre represented by the palace which served the entire community. This seems to be the case at Knossos, Malia,¹⁹ Mochlos, and especially at Palaikastro (Fig. 3.9) where the finest constructions may be considered as forming the core of *noble Houses*, as MacGillivray and I have already argued in 1989 (Driessen and MacGillivray 1989, 107). As with the Peruvian *ciudadelas* or noble estates, these neighborhoods incorporate multiple residences and were the “setting for the maintenance and transmission of memory through ceremony” (Moore 2005, 207). In all these towns, the locations of structures were maintained over long periods and their placement within settlements highly curated. In the case of Palaikastro, for example, Blocks B, Gamma and Delta are striking because of several features:

- each of these blocks carries a Palaikastro Hall in its centre,
- each block has a single larger unit and several smaller units
- the overall sizes of the blocks are similar
- although several entrances exist, it is no easy exercise to distinguish between individual households within the different town blocks.
- ritual equipment was found in each of the blocks



Figure 3.9. Town plan of Palaikastro (J. Driessen).

- although the main unit is externally the most monumentalized by the presence of ashlar or special room types, valuable objects are more evenly distributed throughout the block.

All this suggests indeed that these blocks formed *Houses* which, between the late Prepalatial and the Postpalatial period, served as the locus and focus of corporate groups. Hence, the physical locus “doubles not only as principal residence and key social unit, but also as the main center of ritual action” (Kirch 2000, 106). Cohesion reinforcing rituals then may have taken place within rooms such as the Palaikastro Halls or within enclosed open spaces. The best Minoan iconographic evidence indeed stresses this communal aspect, most often taking the form of feasting in communal meeting places, where ritual activities took place which also implied the distribution of prestige goods and this following a repeated, precise order to be religiously sanctioned. In this view, the Minoan “palaces” represent the ritual architecture by which the ideologies of production, exchange and consumption are articulated and materialized.

Interpreting these town blocks as *Houses* and as long-lived entities means that the locus can be regarded as a major social, political and economic actor at the same time as seeing the *House* as such as the proprietor of perpetual rights and duties. Some of these *Houses* may have regarded themselves or been regarded as *noble Houses* because they owned considerable immaterial and material estates and undoubtedly their own burying grounds and forms, pasturing zones and perhaps even fishing and hunting *terroirs*. Detailed archaeobotanical and archeozoological work may perhaps in the future show whether *Houses* even controlled different types of resources. Where the rural “villas” are concerned, it will have to be decided to what degree these were

really new constructions and not reconstructions of older buildings. More tests are needed since, whenever these have been made, the prior existence of architecture has been established, and, to be correct, I know of very few where an earlier phase does not exist. Interestingly, the evidence for pottery or other artisanal production, e.g. at Zou, Pitsidia, Vathypetro, Zominthos, Nirou Chani, Sklavokampos may suggest that these together with Tourtoulou, Achladia, Kannia-Mitropolis, Nerokourou and others, represent the normal production mode. It is hence not *Domestic Mode of Production* but *House Mode of Production*! The *House* hypothesis also leaves room to interpret some sites perhaps rather differently than has hitherto been the case. For example, Myrtos-Pyrgos is usually seen as a small settlement with an elite building, a series of common houses and a tomb. Seeing the site in its entirety as a *House* blurs such a hierarchical construction to the advantage of a more dynamic situation in which all inhabitants were linked to the place through time and with this link perpetuated through the continuous care given to the House Tomb and the mansion with court serving as their integrative ceremonial zone.

During the Neopalatial Period, rivalries between *Houses* – and perhaps within – seem to have intensified, showing an increasing investment in prestige artifacts. Probably aggravated by natural and economic conditions, these rivalries may have resulted in the LM IB destructions, when several *Houses* may have perished, others survived and others relocated. New *Houses* may have been created, helped by the new sources of wealth and alliances with mainlanders. Most striking, however, is the fact that, especially at Knossos, smaller architectural units exist during LM II–III and that progressively such smaller residential units become more common. I wonder whether this can be interpreted as a deliberate move by the Knossian administration to break down such traditional locus bound associations. In more rural areas, however, some *Houses* are revitalized afterwards as at Malia, Amnisos, and Palaikastro. At the same time, one sees what perhaps may be interpreted as relocated *Houses* in places such as Chondros Viannou and Gouves. It is interesting to see that in our Linear-B tablets, two words especially relate to houses: *wokos* or *woikos* (attested as *wokode/woikode* – to “the house of” [TH Of 36, KN As 1517]) and *don* (attested as *donde* “to the house of” [TH Of 26, 31, 33]). Is it possible that *woikos* still meant estate or *House* and *don* the individual nuclear family house? It would offer an interesting alternative for the “collectors” interpretation that is usually put forward (see the different papers in Olivier 1992). Incidentally, *oikos* is related etymologically to *vicus* – the neighborhood! I believe that many of the *Houses* continued into the historical period and beyond (see already Driessen and Fiasse forthcoming). In fact, Athanassia Kanta has recognized a similar organization in a few traditional Cretan villages even today²⁰ and Moody and Rackham also mention a village in which a supra-household level seems to have been the norm.²¹

Multilocal House Groups?

Finally, I want to offer some preliminary ideas on the possible existence of multilocal *House groups*, dispersed over a series of even nonadjacent communities, and thus contributing to a social and symbolic landscape that exists within and through the

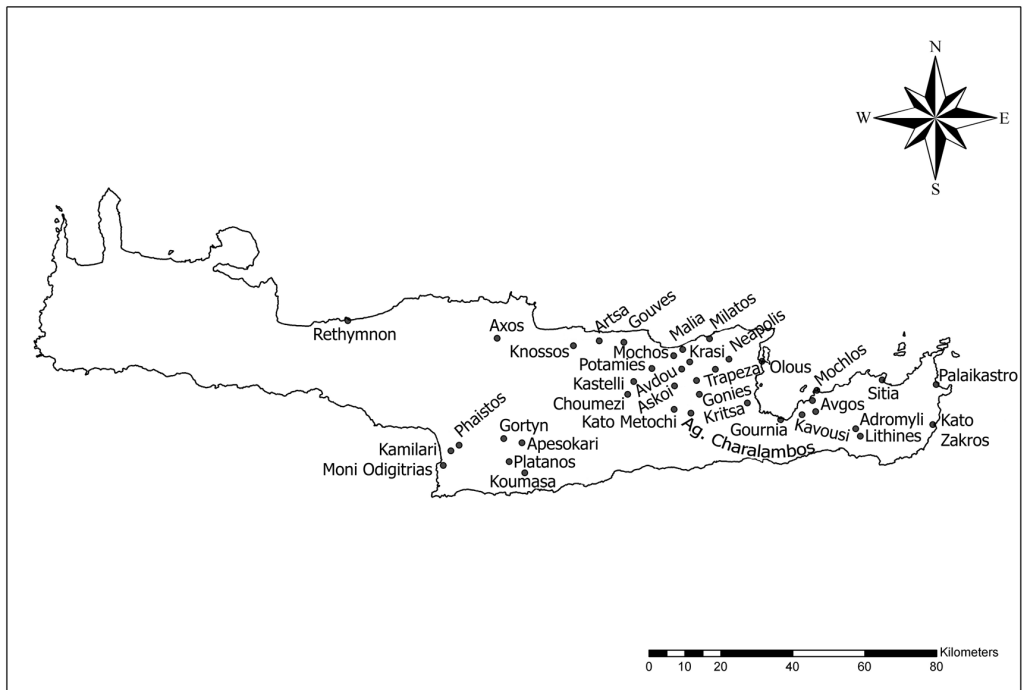


Figure 3.10. Distribution of seals of the Middle Minoan Malia Workshop (redrawn by P. Hacıgüzeller).

identifiable settlement network (Driessen and Frankel forthcoming). Anthropological parallels show that the *House* is

often a residence but is not always shared by all house members, who may be dispersed among various dwellings, even in different localities. Rather than a domicile, it may be a shrine, or as a sacred place it may constitute a fusion of both functional categories (Gillespie 2000b, 47).

This may imply that *House* membership is only explicitly shown on occasion of certain specific ceremonies. This reminds me of one of the major families in present-day Palaikastro: the Kafetzakis family includes about a dozen families in Palaikastro itself – some wealthy, others not – but with branches in Magasa, Roussa Ekklisia, Sitia and a few other nearby villages. They meet for special feasts, especially marriages, funerals and some other occasions. This example may perhaps serve as a parallel for the progressive dispersal of seal types from the core area to surrounding villages during the late Prepalatial and early Protopalatial period, as has been shown by Sbonias for the Messara and by Poursat and Papatsarouha for the Malia seals (Fig. 3.10).²² If seal groups do indeed represent *Houses*, their distribution may then imply proliferation of the *House* group from the core area to peripheral villages or, in some cases, to outlying areas.²³ Iconographic themes may then correspond to *House* groups, remaining important throughout successive periods, and perhaps even becoming dispersed over a town, region or island – if not beyond.²⁴

Conclusion

In this paper I have proposed to regard major Minoan *Houses* as social groups. I certainly did *not* want to argue that the *House* was the *only* form of social production (and reproduction), but I do think it was probably the most important. Less successful *Houses* – or following interventions from some authority – may have fissioned or disintegrated into first extended and eventually nuclear families. I have argued that an intergenerational investment by a corporate group in an estate constituted by an architectural structure, its domain, its heirlooms and valuables formed the basis of Minoan social relations. This common goal ensured the perpetuation of memory. The estate or *House* identified both the group and the individual members. The unity of the architectural form expressed the unity of the corporate group or residential association.²⁵ I have also indirectly argued for a slow evolution and a high degree of conservatism in Minoan society between the Neolithic and the Late Bronze Age in which continuity of place played a major role. Where political economy is concerned, a reconstruction of Minoan communities as essentially *House* societies has important consequences, related to the objectification of perpetuity since valuable objects bestowed prestige on the *House* and its descendants.²⁶ The *House* also inserts a level in the production and consumption process that is larger scale than what has been called the domestic unit of production (and consumption) and smaller scale than the settlement as such (compare with Day, Relaki, and Todaro, this volume). It also allows us to see attached specialists working for a particular *House* or allied *Houses* and to see elaboration as some kind of internal peer interaction, emulation and competition.

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Notes

- 1 I owe this parallel to T. Cunningham.
- 2 Whitelaw 1979 and the paper based on this work: Whitelaw 1983; I thank T. Whitelaw for a copy of his thesis, handed over – perhaps unconsciously – while we were both suffering from an excruciating hangover after the Knossos 2000 closing party in Iraklion.
- 3 I thank D. Catapoti for the permission to mention Catapoti 2006 which she is soon offering for publication.
- 4 For the sake of comprehension, I have consistently italicized and capitalized the word “*House*” when denoting a social rather than an architectural unit (except where it was italicized in the original publication).

- 5 See, e.g., Watanabe's (2004, 160) critique on the application of the *House society* model for the Maya. We remain ignorant about Minoan kinship relations and badly informed about Mycenaean ones; see, for example, Carlier 1999, noticing how kinship mentions are extremely rare in Mycenaean archives; moreover, the so-called "fathers" especially on PY Aq 64+218, may perhaps also be interpreted as *House* names rather than as direct descendants.
- 6 One may even wonder whether intentional burning was not part of a perpetuation act to consolidate *House* remains or as part of "burial rites" when an important person had died (Tringham 2000, 124).
- 7 Anthropological parallels show that houses are often denoted in a similar way as human bodies, much in the same way as later Greek (and many contemporary language) uses body parts to denote vase elements.
- 8 But as Gillespie 2000a, 3 remarks: the constructions that act "as the focal point for group identity often outlive the specific individuals who first created or used them, they are constantly subjected to resignification, and the portable objects and houses may be moved about in the process."
- 9 Soles 1999, 57: "The objects from the building also suggest a ceremonial use. They include a large number of conical ~~cruciform~~ lamps placed in what appears to have been some kind of luminary ceremony on the terrace outside the pillar crypts and near the altar-like structure located on the terrace"; Soles 2004, 159: "The most important of the renovated structures in the main settlement area was the new ceremonial building. Building B.2 was erected on either side of a prepalatial building. It seems to have been designed in such a way as both to honor dead ancestors and provide a cosmological link between the living and the dead. [...] The façade was set back towards the center of the building where the prepalatial remains were located in order to leave an open space above those ruins [...] A small altar was set in this space directly above the area of the prepalatial building."
- 10 It is interesting to observe how on the North Coast of Peru, the larger storerooms of the earlier periods were sometimes replaced by smaller rooms in which more precious elite commodities were kept. The absence of storerooms from most Neopalatial houses around the Palace at Knossos may perhaps be seen in this light.
- 11 See Whitley 2002 on antiques and heirlooms and their increasing frequency in Late Bronze Age and early Iron Age tombs.
- 12 See also Joyce (2000, 200): "Stone is a particularly important medium for materially anchoring history in many house societies ... The most important stones ... mark boundaries and ... may contain the spirit ... of an ... ancestor."
- 13 Joyce (2000, 203) notes how a "Yurok woman retained a grinding stone from the building used by one of the houses in which she claimed membership."
- 14 T. Cunningham informs me that Venetian houses had similar rules during the late Renaissance. Compare with Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995, 12: "... decorative elaboration of the house's external façade, sometimes taken to extreme proportions ... may serve as a sign for the inhabitants' identity, wealth and powers and as a vehicle for the conspicuous display of mythologically sanctioned powers prerogatives reminiscent of the heraldic devices of medieval houses."
- 15 The clearest examples are a Middle Minoan fruit stand reused as "snake tube" together with a small LM I amphora in room 6, a stone offering table, lamp and chalice, Middle Minoan and Late Minoan I seal stones as well as the Lady of Malia who is probably also Neopalatial.
- 16 The EM site of Debla (Warren and Tzedakhis 1974) constitutes a hamlet of two or three independent constructions; these are, however, located so closely to each other that they clearly indicate a close-knitted group; see the remarks by Moore (2005, 9–48) on soundscapes and the link between voice and social cohesion in non-hierarchical societies.
- 17 The presence of fire pit areas within the structures south of the Malia palace may suggest

that each area was occupied by a different social unit, perhaps a nuclear family but this within the larger framework of the *House*.

- 18 Schoep (this volume) calls these “elite groups” but the present hypothesis leaves more room for high *Houses*, intermediate *Houses* and low *Houses*, participating differently in the internal power game.
- 19 Cutting (2006, 226) also mentions unpublished work by D. Romanou at Malia, using syntax analysis, stressing that each structure sheltered “a primary co-residential group.”
- 20 Kanta (1983, 156): “... Selino, where the villages, going back many centuries, are arranged in neighbourhoods scattered over a considerable area. Each neighbourhood corresponds to an extended family or clan.”
- 21 Ethnographic evidence notes that in a chiefly village of about 1000 people there can be as many as 15 *chiefly* families, each with its own *chiefly* residence and associated ritual area; each represents the one of several lineage heads in the village and these may have had political or kinship relations or alliances with other villages (Flannery 1998). It were these elite families that also attracted families that had been less successful into an alliance, partly to intensify production to create economic surplus, which could be used to maintain part-time attached artisans and to organize extra-regional exchange. By attaching production and controlling specific types of objects or vases that were used in specific ceremonies as well as their distribution during these ceremonies, alliances were forged.
- 22 Sbonias (1995, 54–67) for the Lion-Spiral Group made of ivory that occur in Archanes, Moni Odhigitrias and Platanos; Sbonias 2000 for the different groups as well as Poursat and Papatsarouha 2000; further study may help to distinguish between different subgroups amongst these c. 500 sealstones, perhaps with a animal style group, a human figure group and a bucranium group. See already Blasingham 1983, 16–18, noticing how “several motifs appear in two or more tombs of a cluster, leading to the conclusion that either the tombs were not the property of homogenous unilineal descent groups or that the motifs of the seals do not represent kinship per se. In the former case, ownership of the tombs would have to be assigned to villages; and a person’s alliance to his community would have been more powerful than to his kin group in matters of death and burial.” She decides, as Younger does (2000, 355) that the “seal motifs represent political office or social rank, or both at once” (Blasingham 1983, 18).
- 23 Younger 2000, 349. As argued by Younger, larger seal groups probably identify settlements or regions and he adds as examples the Zakro workshop, the Vapheio Lion group (Argolid) or the Spectacle-Eye group for LM II–IIIA Knossos, claiming that seals “like modern coins, were period-specific, country-specific and administration-specific.”
- 24 Younger (2000, 253–355) already hints at this possibility with identical or similar seals being used by officials for the same administration or continuity of office; if an identical seal theme implies the same *House* being involved this may be easier to understand.
- 25 Compare with the *GENS* label given by Hayden 1995, 19 (with *GENS* standing for *group exploitation of nucleated subsistence*).
- 26 See also Carsten & Hugh-Jones (1995, 19): The *House* involves elements of kinship but is “... no less ‘about’ economy and just as much about joint subsistence, production and consumption as it is about property.”

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