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Malia: palace, state, city*

Jean-Claude Poursat

Along with Knossos and Phaistos, Malia is one of the three Minoan sites where a monumental building with central court — a palace — appears towards the beginning of the second millennium and continues until the end of LM I, around 1450 BC. It is also, along with Knossos, the only site where the three pre-Hellenic scripts, Cretan Hieroglyphic, Linear A and Linear B, are all represented. Malia therefore allows us to follow, in parallel with Knossos, the evolution of Minoan political systems, from palace to city.

The position of Malia in Minoan palatial civilisation demands reconsideration, not only due to the new research conducted at Malia over the last 20 years, whether excavation or survey, but also because of changing perspectives in the study of palatial Crete generally. On the one hand, we have to update our ideas about the history of the Minoan palaces: we now learn that the palace of Phaistos lay abandoned during more than a century during the Neopalatial period, while that of Zakros was only in use at the end of this period. New palatial complexes, with diverse histories and uncertain functions, have been discovered, like those of Galatas and Petras. On the other hand, ideas about states, territories, centralisation, political power and regionalism have come under renewed scrutiny. It is in these new frameworks that the history of Malia must be re-evaluated. This reappraisal presents considerable difficulties, because of ongoing chronological uncertainties concerning the development of the palace and town of Malia, where the old excavations did not allow for the precise distinction between successive phases. Paradoxically, however, the case of Malia has been abundantly used in recent studies, either because of its specific and unique features in the Protopalatial period, or because of the stark contrast the site offers with Knossos in the Neopalatial.¹

THE RISE OF THE MINOAN PALACE

The history of the site of Malia (FIGS. 25.1–2) is very different to that of Knossos and Phaistos, each occupied from the Neolithic. Malia did not exist so early: FN pottery has been noted on the low hill of Prophitis Elias south of the site,² and just a few sherds in the recent survey by Sylvie Müller.³ Remains from the start of EM are insufficient to indicate a permanent settlement. The earliest architectural remains are just one or two walls in the central zone of the site, where

some EM IIA pottery has been found.⁴ Compared to the deep pasts at Phaistos and Knossos, Malia is thus late in its first occupation.

The first securely-attested permanent structure dates to EM IIB. A complex of walls in the west wing of the palace (room I 1) could be an EM IIB structure incorporated into the final building. The very characteristic Vasiliki ware is found in quantity in fills from various parts of the town, with both imports from the Mirabello area, as well as local versions in a coarser clay.⁵ This EM II settlement was nothing more than modest in size, and was no doubt little different from those of Vasiliki or Myrtos Fournou Korifi. Like these sites, it too is destroyed by fire at the end of the period. A sealing in local clay, in the form of a *nodulus*, probably comes from this destruction level; it was found in a fill with a majority of EM IIB sherds beneath the pillar room IX 2 of the palace.⁶ Its design, a kind of meander pattern, finds parallels with a whole series of seals from the Cyclades and mainland Greece, and is entirely comparable to the single sealing found at Myrtos Fournou Korifi.⁷ A gold bead found nearby may also be attributable to this period; it would point to the development of social ranking, although Malia has otherwise offered up nothing comparable to the jewellery from Mochlos in eastern Crete.⁸

The following period (EM III–MM IA), well represented in both the Mesara and at Knossos, remains oddly under-attested at Malia, to the extent that one

* It is a great pleasure to offer this contribution in honour of a friend whose exemplary work and scholarship have greatly advanced our knowledge of so many aspects of Minoan history. The paper is a revised version of the Michael Ventris Memorial Lecture given in May 2008 at the Institute of Classical Studies, University of London ('Minoan Palaces and Politics: A View from Malia'). I wish to thank C. Knappett and O. Krzyszkowska for translating and correcting my text.

1 For instance Adams 2004a–b, Knappett 1999a, Schoep 2002, 2004, 2006.

2 Nowicki 2002.

3 *BCH* 122 (1998) 549.

4 Poursat 1988, 65.

5 Pelon and Schmitt 2003.

6 *BCH* 116 (1992) 29–33, figs. 33–34 (not in a MM IA context, as indicated in Krzyszkowska 2005, 78, 284).

7 Warren 1972, 227, no. 134.

8 *BCH* 117 (1993) 529–31, fig. 8a–b, no. 1.

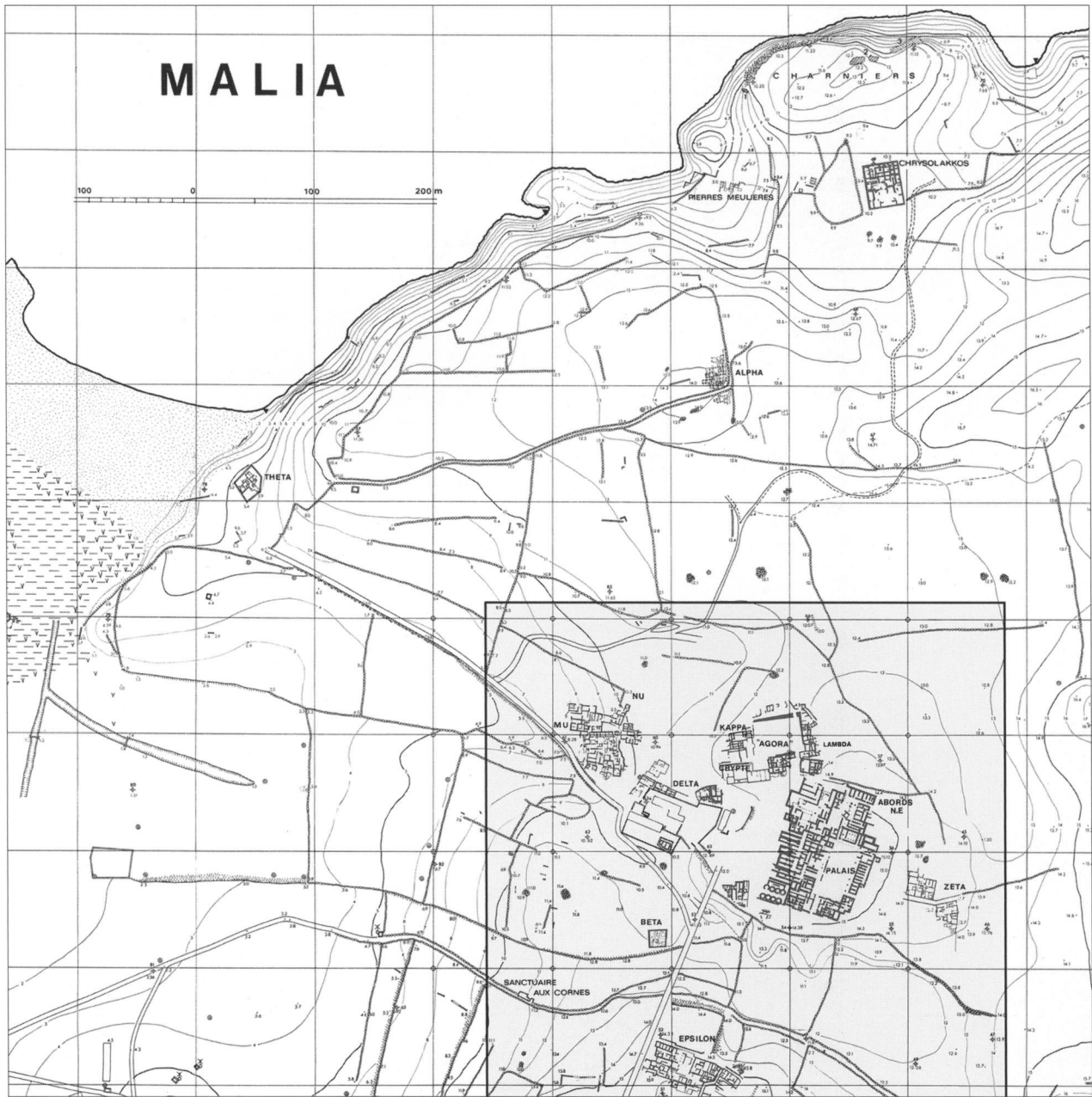


Fig. 25.1. Plan of Malia (after Poursat 1992, foldout).

might even suggest a site abandonment. In the town, a single deposit seems to fall in EM III,⁹ with some rare vases in the cemeteries on the coast (the so-called ‘Charniers’): among these perhaps the well-known anthropomorphic ‘goddess’ vase.¹⁰ Elsewhere and in the palace, we only find fills with sherds of both East Cretan white-on-dark ware and MM IA polychrome styles. It is only in MM IA that the site is truly reoccupied; but the extent and character of this occupation remain elusive. Some houses — the so-called *Maisons Sud* — which extend beneath the palace on the south side, belong at least in part to this period. This picture is similar to that at Petras, where ‘substantial indications ... of an EM IIB presence have been documented for a large proportion of the plateau

upon which was later raised the palatial building’, but where ‘evidence from the EM III–MM IA phase is scarce’.¹¹ At Malia, nothing points to a palatial town at this stage. The very limited importance of Malia at the end of the Prepalatial period finds further confirmation in both the survey of the coastal plain and the study of the Lasithi plateau. A recent study by Philip Betancourt clearly shows that Lasithi has links above all with the Mesara throughout the Prepalatial when it comes to

9 Andreou 1978, 123.

10 Warren 1973, 138, pl. 19.1–2.

11 Tsipoulou 1999, 84.

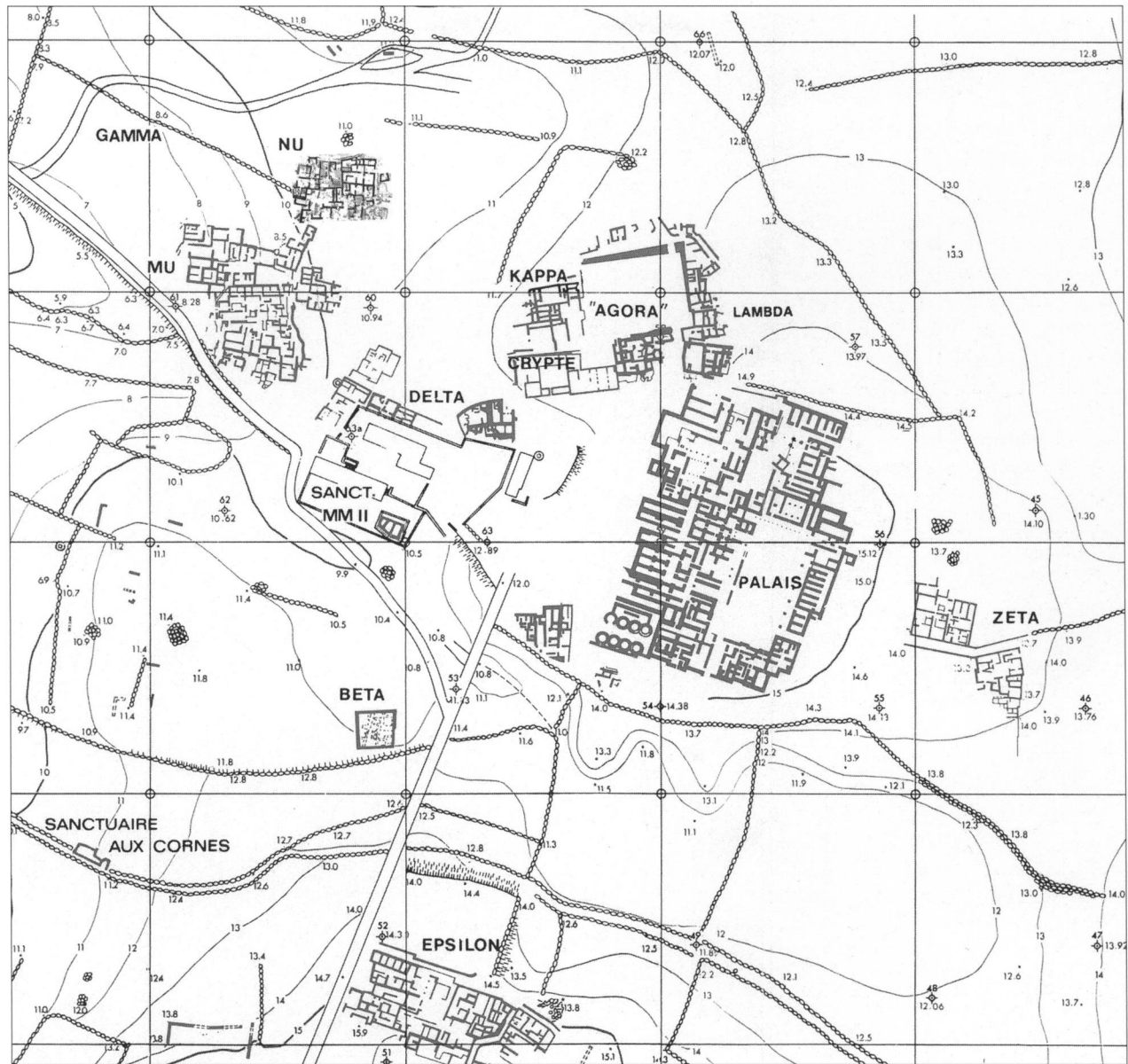


Fig. 25.2. Malia: central part of the site.

prestige objects (imported figurines, ivory seals, etc.) and not with Malia.¹²

At the same time, in Phaistos, a great ramp is built in EM III in the palatial sector and four MM IA levels follow one on the other.¹³ At Knossos also, EM III appears to be 'a point of accelerated growth' with a programme of construction around the future palace. The picture of Prepalatial Malia stands in complete contrast to that shown for Knossos by David Wilson, of 'a process of growth and social change always cumulative but moving at an uneven pace — accelerated in the more innovative and outward-looking EM II A and again in EM III'.¹⁴ On the contrary, it is EM IIB which shows best the development of the site of Malia: one might suppose that these chronological disparities in the growth of sites are an early reflection of regional rivalries.

The first palace at Malia is nevertheless built at the same moment as those of Knossos and Phaistos, in a context where nothing could lead one to expect such a development: here the rise of a Minoan palace certainly seems to be a case of revolution and not evolution.¹⁵ This first palace is only known through very limited architectural remains, but its existence and its size cannot be doubted: in the northwest, a magazine area, levelled in the following period; a fragment of façade; a central court. Its construction date, however, rests on sparse evidence. The *Maisons Sud*, if we accept that

¹² Betancourt 2007.

¹³ Carinci and La Rosa 2002.

¹⁴ Wilson 1994, 44.

¹⁵ Cherry 1983.

they do extend beneath the first palace, suggest construction on the cusp between MM IA and MM IB. The most important element was the discovery of a foundation deposit.¹⁶ The only vase in this deposit is a teapot of a type well known in the Phaistos region (Patrikies type), dated basically to MM IA and continuing until the start of MM IB: one can deduce from this that the construction of the palace at Malia falls in between these two periods, around 1900 BC, at just about the same time as that of the two other palaces. The MM II level is the best known, with a very large room with stuccoed floor in the North Sector. Prestige objects come from the destruction level around 1700 BC: the magnificent swords, of a new type in the Aegean world, one with a pommel of crystal, the other with a representation of an acrobat on the roundel under the pommel.¹⁷

The wider debate on the origin of the Cretan palaces remains open. The theory that they imitated eastern models — a theory that can no longer be sustained — finds itself replaced by one that posits the palaces as the result of processes internal to Crete, a consequence of changes in agriculture, economy and demography. However, there is still no good explanation for how and why, at a certain moment, just three sites construct substantial structures, similar if not identical, all organised around a central court, and bearing witness to a novel form of social and political complexity. The birth of the Minoan palaces remains a limited phenomenon, as indeed the Mycenaean palaces will later be restricted to certain areas of mainland Greece. They appear more or less simultaneously in very varied local conditions. Between 2300 BC and 1900 BC the site of Malia is no more 'developed' than other sites like Gournia, Vasiliki and Petras. Two questions arise: why then a palace at Malia, and not the Mirabello?¹⁸ How did Malia manage to reach the level of Phaistos and Knossos so quickly?

The site of Malia can provide some answers, as this is where the Protopalatial period is particularly well attested, insofar as several sectors of the Minoan town, destroyed in 1700 BC, were never subsequently reoccupied. The whole area is inhabited; entire complexes are built, and a massive phase of construction ends up in the creation of large buildings independent from the palace with an architecture all of their own (Crypte Hypostyle, Quartier Mu), and even small independent sanctuaries (MM II Sanctuary; *Sanctuaire aux Cornes*), a unique feature of the site. In the Crypte Hypostyle and Quartier Mu, ashlar walls appear, as well as columns. Near the sea, the façades of the funerary complex of Chrysolakkos consist of very large dressed blocks of limestone and orthostats.¹⁹ The famous bee pendant, found in this area, probably dates to this period too.

In Quartier Mu, the two main buildings, A and B, unusual in their dimensions (840 and 540 m²) show an architecture which is innovative in many ways, with

the earliest examples of forms that would become characteristic features of the Minoan architecture, such as the *polythyron* or the lustral basin first attested here.²⁰ They are the only structures in Crete, apart from the palaces of Knossos and Petras, to have provided documents in Hieroglyphic script.²¹ The dagger with a handle in gold openwork from Mu echoes the palace swords.²² The history of Quartier Mu, built in at least two phases (at the beginning of MM II and in the middle of this period), allows us to discern some of the reasons behind the rapid rise of the local elites. The two main activities which developed there are bronze-working, attested by stone moulds, copper ore fragments, bronze tools, which imply trade in metal with the Near East or Anatolia for tin and copper,²³ alongside with the production of textiles, most probably for exchange: from the more than 700 loom weights recovered, we can estimate that many looms were at work in the different buildings.

So one might wonder whether the birth of the first palace at Malia is in essence a direct result of the site's involvement in exchange networks to the East. We know the Cretans set up shop at Ugarit for the tin trade.²⁴ From MM II, representations of boats are abundant, notably at Malia on prism seals; anchors, probably votive, have been found in Quartier Mu.²⁵ Evidence for contact with the Near East is numerous: some fragments of obsidian from central Anatolia have been recovered in the palace and at Quartier Mu.²⁶ Several vases are decorated with Egyptian motifs: a sphinx, or a lid with falcons.²⁷ Moreover, there is evidence for ceramic imports from Malia in the Cyclades at Thera.²⁸

Contacts with the Near East at the start of the second millennium must have led to a production and accumulation of wealth. The Cretan palaces appear in three urban agglomerations, the history and territorial resources of which were barely comparable, but of which the elites — perhaps more dynamic and entrepreneurial than elsewhere? — succeeded in inserting themselves in maritime exchange networks. As for the similarities which are seen between the three palaces, in their architecture or in Kamares pottery,

16 Pelon 1986.

17 Pelon 1982.

18 The smaller palatial complex at Petras is built later, in the MM IIA period.

19 Shaw 1973.

20 Poursat 1992; Schoep 2004.

21 Olivier and Godart 1978.

22 Detournay 1980, 147–9.

23 Poursat 1996; Poursat and Loubet 2005.

24 Heltzer 1989, 7–28; Bonnet 1995, 113–23.

25 Poursat 1980b.

26 Carter and Kilikoglou 2007.

27 Poursat 1980a.

28 Knappett and Nikolakopoulou 2005, 178.

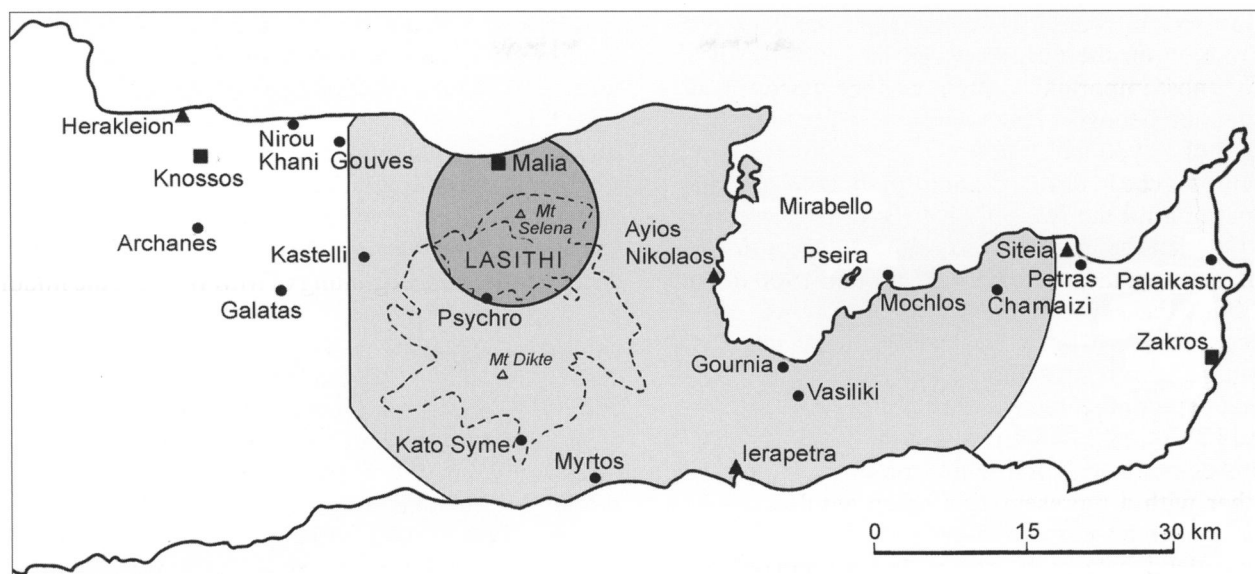


Fig. 25.3. Possible extent of the Protopalatial Malia-Lasithi state (dark grey) and of its zone of influence.

they are probably best explained by the notion of peer polity interaction, as argued by John Cherry.²⁹

THE MALIA-LASITHI STATE

What about the Malia state? An idea commonly cited 20 years ago was that Minoan Crete was divided into well-defined territories, each one controlled by a state with a palace. In this hypothesis, it was natural to look for certain cultural markers to denote the boundaries of these states. This is what led me to envisage a very large territory of Malia,³⁰ extending as far as Myrtos Pyrgos on the south coast, and out east to Chamaizi, engulfing the Mirabello too (the markers for example were the tartan-style pottery and the shoe-socket spearheads, known in Crete only at Malia and at Myrtos Pyrgos, and the so-called Chamaizi juglets or the bronze carpenter's hoards). Gerald Cadogan, who developed the idea of a Malia-Lasithi palace-state,³¹ had posed in similar terms the problem of the existence of a Knossian state in the Old Palace period,³² the boundary with the Malia territory lying somewhere towards Gouves and Kastelli (FIG. 25.3).

Do such cultural boundaries correspond to political territories, controlled by a centralised power, and can they be defined as states? This hypothesis of the existence of states — i.e. of politically-controlled territories with more or less fixed boundaries as a potential source of conflict — has recently been re-evaluated. Carl Knappett has indeed shown that the palace of Malia could not lie at the head of a fully centralised state: Malia controlled neither the interregional commercial networks, nor the economic functions of Myrtos Pyrgos, Gournia or Petras.³³

The religious territory of Malia also seems to remain limited, although Quartier Mu, for example, has provided a whole series of objects which testify to religious activity, such as figurines: Malia has no peak sanctuaries, and cult activity takes place largely in the town itself, in public and private sanctuaries.³⁴ It could barely extend any further than the cult caves of Lasithi (Trapeza, Psychro, Ayios Charalambos). The idea of a 'segmentary state'³⁵ has been developed in the same way by Peter Warren for the Neopalatial territory of Knossos, which has variable boundaries as far as religion, administration and economy are concerned.³⁶

Should we not then allow the idea of a very restricted Maliot territory? The 'natural' territory of Malia is first of all the coastal plain. The upland plateau of Lasithi, the control of which would have been important for Malia for both economic (pastoralism) and defensive reasons (protection against possible attack, and control of inland routes), only seems to be attached to Malia as of MM IB. Further afield, its territory could only really be a matter of commercial contacts, with the Mirabello or the South Coast and the Mesara. The case of Myrtos Pyrgos (which had close ties with Malia in the ceramics, Hieroglyphic stamps on amphora handles,

²⁹ Cherry 1986.

³⁰ Poursat 1987, 75; 1988, 79.

³¹ Cadogan 1995.

³² Cadogan 1994.

³³ Knappett 1999a.

³⁴ Poursat 2009.

³⁵ Knappett 1999b.

³⁶ Warren 2004.

weapons) probably corresponds, as Knappett has shown, to some special contact between elites, the precise nature of which escapes us, but the result of which, if not the goal, is not the establishment of territorial control, but rather the guaranteeing of regional commercial ties.³⁷ One might even imagine some relations at the level of local elites with a distant site in eastern Crete, Petras, where pottery, Hieroglyphic archives and jewellery are comparable to those of Malia. Overall, Malia can be defined more as a city-state, a palatial town with limited territory, capable of exploiting and no doubt defending its immediate natural environment, but certainly not independent in terms of resources, needing to establish an alliance network, with particular links with sites on the south and northeast coasts in order to secure its maritime connections and its commercial relations.

The existence of a Malia territory is even more debatable in the Neopalatial period. In Lasithi, Vance Watrous had noted a contrast between the wealth of Neopalatial Crete and the depopulation of Lasithi, and went as far as to postulate an emigration towards the palatial centres;³⁸ yet Malia too declines in population. At the same time, the territory of Knossos seems to expand: in the Pediada, a small palace is built at Galatas.³⁹ The villa of Myrtos Pyrgos, in LM IA, imitates Knossian styles. Malia has nothing more in terms of territory than its coastal plain: signs of maritime activity decrease.⁴⁰ This poses another problem, that of the political structure of Neopalatial Crete.

‘POLITICAL STRUCTURE IN NEOPALATIAL CRETE’: KNOSSOS AND MALIA

The possibility of a politically united Crete, under the leadership of Knossos, has often been evoked for the Neopalatial period.⁴¹ An Egyptian text mentions ‘the king of the Keftiu’, which could only be that of Knossos.⁴² This text dates, however, to the reign of Tuthmosis III and could refer to the beginning of the so-called ‘Mycenaean’ period on Crete. Some authors have considered that the cultural similarities throughout Neopalatial Crete could relate to the competition among rival principalities, notably at the end of the Neopalatial period.⁴³ Others, like Peter Warren and Malcolm Wiener, maintain this idea of a Knossian rule over Crete.⁴⁴

What role for Malia in this debate? The recent comparative studies of Ellen Adams, which consist principally of the analysis of internal functioning of two towns (Knossos and Malia), pick out some major differences.⁴⁵ On several occasions she uses the term ‘void’ to characterise Malia and its region: no tombs, no more public sanctuaries in the town, no extra-urban sanctuaries. This marks a contrast not only with Knossos but with the Malia of the Protopalatial period. It is hard to escape the conclusion that Malia was a dependency of Knossos in this period, whether vassal

or satellite. All the excavators of Malia have asked themselves the same question. This was already the conclusion reached by Gallet de Santerre in 1949, and it is certainly the same answer that we must give today.

The Neopalatial period — spanning 250 years — is nonetheless far from being a single, monolithic block of time. The political structure of the island, and the extent of Knossian control, certainly changed between 1700 BC and 1450 BC, and thus it is appropriate here to attempt a brief diachronic analysis, even if the history of Malia in the Neopalatial period remains very uncertain. If we follow those dates that seem the most secure, the history of the palace looks something like this.

MM III is the period when Knossos extends its power and its territory in central Crete. Relations with the Cyclades, and ceramic imports from the Dodecanese and Miletus, already show the dominant role of Knossos in Aegean exchange networks.⁴⁶ At Malia on the other hand, little MM III reconstruction is seen in the town. The density of occupation of the coastal plain remains unclear, due to the difficulties of distinguishing between MM III and LM I in the survey pottery. However, the palace is still functioning. One impressive wall, probably part of the northern façade, indicates reconstruction. There is craft and trade activity: the remains of a founder’s workshop belong to this period.⁴⁷ The palace also has administration: the Hieroglyphic Deposit associates tablets in Cretan Hieroglyphic and Linear A, as well as some sealings; another Linear A tablet discovered in 1978 is an inventory of vases.⁴⁸ At the end of the period, a fire destruction seals the archive. Thus it seems that in MM III the palace was bringing together activities that previously took place in town complexes like Quartier Mu. Was Malia a rival or a vassal of Knossos? For the time being, we might say that Malia could have maintained her independence until 1600 BC.

In LM IA the picture changes. Paradoxically, this is the period that sees the finest architecture, while marking the end of Malia’s autonomy. It is the major phase of construction on the site. The rebuilding of the palace follows the Knossian model: the so-called Loggia, a monumental staircase, pillar crypts, imitate

37 Knappett 1997, 311.

38 Watrous 1982, 15.

39 Warren 2004.

40 Van Effenterre 1980, 75–9.

41 Warren 2002.

42 Hägg and Marinatos 1987, 332.

43 Schoep 2006.

44 Warren 2002; Wiener 2007.

45 Adams 2004*a–b*.

46 Knappett 2006.

47 Pelon 1987.

48 Olivier, Pelon and Vandenabeele 1979.

the west part of the palace at Knossos. Large Knossian-style houses (House Epsilon, *Zeta-Alpha* and *Beta*) imitate also the main features of palatial architecture. However, not a single securely-dated archival document is known from either palace or town; prestige objects are rare; the splendid stone triton, with a scene of two genii performing a libation, attributed to LM IA, and perhaps Knossian, is the only prestige object found in the palace.⁴⁹ Fresco fragments are rare. The pottery is influenced by Knossos, and there are no local workshops comparable to those of eastern Crete. There is no sign of any maritime activity. Lasithi too undergoes a period of depopulation and decline.

It is difficult to think that the palatial town of Malia could have been autonomous in these circumstances, let alone compete with Knossos. Both architecture and pottery tend to show that the LM IA reconstruction at Malia could have been a Knossian initiative, at the same time as the villa of Ayia Triada was also built under Knossian control. From this perspective, Malia may have appealed to Knossos above all as a place controlling access to eastern Crete.

The palace of Malia ends in decline in LM IB. Destructions took place at Malia in the course of LM IA, in Delta and Lambda. As for the palace, there are differences of opinion among the excavators: but it seems to have continued, perhaps with a reduced role (for storage), until the end of LM IB as indicated by rare fragments of LM IB Palatial Style pottery.⁵⁰ The three largest houses (House Epsilon, *Zeta-Alpha* and *Beta*) have given the few examples of complete vases of LM IB Marine Style,⁵¹ as well as prestige objects: a stone vase made of Egyptian alabaster, comparable to those from Knossos and Zakros,⁵² and the Egyptian stone sphinx from *Zeta-Beta*,⁵³ which probably indicate not so much direct contact with the East but rather, like the carved triton, connections with the Knossian elite.

Above all the situation at Malia ought to be compared with that at other Cretan sites of this period, which also underwent some marked changes: under Knossian influence, the palace at Phaistos is rebuilt, that of Zakros is built. In eastern Crete, there is growth in the town of Mochlos, under the influence of the palatial centre at Gournia; and, at Pseira, relief frescoes decorate a small sanctuary. These disparities between Minoan sites — decline or renovation — probably reflect the changing interest of Knossos in the management of its cultural and economic influence over Crete rather than competition between local elites.

THE ROLE OF MALIA IN THE MYCENAEAN KINGDOM OF CRETE

With the arrival of a Mycenaean dynasty at Knossos c. 1450 BC, Malia, no longer a palatial town, first of all maintains and then expands its relative importance. Two stages can be distinguished, as at many other sites on Crete.

First, a stage of limited reoccupation in LM II–IIIA1, when several Neopalatial houses, not burnt during the 1450 destruction, like House Epsilon, or abandoned since the end of LM IA, undergo reoccupation, more widespread than we previously had imagined (Gamma, Lambda, Nu), but nonetheless limited in scale. Was the reoccupation immediate? We cannot rule out the idea of a short abandonment, as at Mochlos, or at Ayia Triada, where it has been assumed that ‘the LM II pottery found on the site is largely to be accounted for by the household goods that the groups from Knossos responsible for reoccupation brought with them’.⁵⁴ Was it a matter of incoming Mycenaeans?⁵⁵ The pottery is high quality and Knossian in character and, as at Mochlos, shows the ‘formation of a new elite class that derived at least part of its authority from connections to Knossos’.⁵⁶ Drinking and pouring vessels (cups, jugs, kylikes) in the tombs also point to the emergence of new cultural traditions. However, there is no sure evidence to confirm the presence of Mycenaeans at Malia. This phase is brought to an end around 1370 BC by a fire destruction, at the same time as at Knossos, and perhaps for the same unknown reasons.

After 1370 BC, Malia once again becomes a relatively prosperous town, which seems to profit, as so many others, from the decline of Knossos. It is no longer a question of reoccupation, but of construction, in several parts of the town, of new houses after filling in of earlier structures. House Epsilon is rebuilt. A new building of considerable size springs up in Quartier Nu, the only place at Malia where Linear B inscriptions have been discovered: among the imported vases, three stirrup jars bear painted inscriptions in Linear B.⁵⁷ These vases are well known on the mainland, at Mycenae, Tiryns and Thebes, where they were exported to from Chania (Mycenaean Kydonia) or Knossos, their main production locations. The Malia examples, datable to the beginning of LM IIIB (c. 1300 BC), come also from the region of Knossos and Chania. Moreover two jar stoppers with seal impressions confirm the place of Malia in Mycenaean palatial trade: this type of sealing for jars is only attested in palatial contexts on the mainland and is rare on Crete (Chania, Kommos).⁵⁸

49 Baurain and Darcque 1983.

50 Van de Moortel and Darcque 2006.

51 Müller 1997, 294–5.

52 Warren 1969, 113.

53 Michaelidis 1995.

54 D’Agata 1999, 50.

55 Driessen and Farnoux 1994.

56 Brogan, Smith and Soles 2002, 117.

57 Farnoux and Driessen 1991.

58 For the sealing from Epsilon, see *CMS* II.6, p. 189, 191 (dating) and nos. 173–174; the second stopper is *CMS* II.6 no. 210; see also Krzyszkowska 2005, 282–4.

Malia surely was not as important as Chania or Kommos; but its documents suggest the presence of Mycenaeans: the word *ma-re-wa* on one of the inscribed vases is most probably a Greek anthroponym. Is Malia then the *se-to-i-ja* of the tablets (the name of the ancient site of Malia is still unknown)? This hypothesis cannot be confirmed,⁵⁹ but Malia was certainly an important second-order centre of Mycenaean Crete. Malia inserted herself in the 'palatial' trade network of LM IIIA2–B, which stretched from Knossos and Chania to the mainland palaces. A key factor in the general evolution of Minoan sites, from the beginning of the Minoan palaces to the disappearance of the Mycenaean ones, is the degree of integration within exchange networks of the Aegean and East Mediterranean. The period of the First Palaces and the Mycenaean period are the most flourishing in the history of Malia.

A destruction of the site around 1250 BC puts a sudden stop to this development. The site is then abandoned around 1200 BC, its population migrating to refuge sites such as Karphi and Anavlochos, on the edge of the Lasithi mountains.

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