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Excavations at Azoria and Stratigraphic Evidence for the Restructuring of Cretan Landscapes ca. 600 BCE

Models of Urbanization on Crete

Conditions at the end of the 7th century on Crete constitute what might be called a "phase transition." This term I adopt from Norman Yoffee[1], who visualizes a rapid crystallization of cities in "emerging interaction spheres." Derived from complex adaptive systems, the term means an abrupt transition in states of being; the boiling or tipping point of change. By analogy, in behavioral realms the meaningful correlates might include evidence for the rapid materialization of new social institutions; the institutionalization of communal interaction; interconnections between previously unrelated groups; scalar changes in modes of interregional communication and interaction; and intensification of production and exchange. In considering the temporal aspect of the changes in question, the concept has points in common with the idea of a "punctuated equilibrium" which John Cherry borrowed from evolutionary biology to qualify the perceived suddenness of the leap in level of complexity, scale, and material elaboration that accompanied the emergence of the palace-centered states of Crete in the transition from the Early to Middle Bronze Age[2]. Both concepts are I think broadly applicable to Crete in the Archaic period, and are useful in a descriptive sense, that is, in emphasizing the implications of stratigraphically definable horizons and thresholds or tipping points of significant culture change. Both perspectives though might be perhaps weaker in actually coming to terms with the causes, or in elucidating underlying sociopolitical structures and long-term processes leading up to the stratigraphically-identifiable periods of transformation. The purpose of this paper is to investigate briefly evidence from excavations at the site of Azoria for such an abrupt phase transition or punctuated change occurring roughly in the transition from the 7th to the 6th centuries BCE.

In a seminal article drawing on wide-ranging data, Antonis Kotsonas characterized the late 7th century on Crete in terms of intensification of production and exchange; increased surplus storage and mobilization; radical spatial and organi-

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1 Yoffee 1997; 2005, 229–231.
2 Cherry 1983.

zational shifts in mortuary, cult, and settlement behavior; and evidence for territorial expansion and internecine warfare[3]. These conditions resonate not only with Yoffee's idea of the phase transition, but also with the tenets of "coalescence", which might get us closer to understanding the processes involved in culture change in the Archaic period on Crete[4]. The latter, defined comparatively for prehistoric periods of the Americas, is a concept that does not predict a particular kind of society per se, but conditions, processes and strategies for creating integrative institutions and corporate structures that are responsive to scalar stress: in particular, demographic movement and settlement aggregation, increased interregional interaction and conflict, and political and economic intensification. Material evidence for coalescence would include shifts from static to dynamic conditions, and from long-lived stable and dispersed communities to nucleated sites; new forms of aggregated settlement structure; the formation of multilingual or multiethnic communities; and new kinds of social integration, as well as the appearance of institutions encouraging social integration that required new architectural designs and innovations in material culture[5].

While the archaeology of 6th-century Crete remains, in settlement contexts, largely unexplored – the same might be true for mainland Greece as well – the material evidence currently available suggests a large-scale restructuring of the cultural and political geography at the end of the 7th century, fitting well with the broad outlines of a relatively rapid phase transition and coalescence. The conditions have been admirably shaped by recent narratives, which for the most part, have moved successfully beyond the idea of a 6th-century gap as a mysterious, though counterintuitive, lacuna in the archeological record of the island. Indeed I have argued elsewhere that we should begin to picture the 6th-century discontinuity itself in the context of wide-ranging systemic developments and urban growth, rather than the broad brush-strokes of societal fragmentation, economic decline, or population decrease[6]. Saro Wallace, for example, has supported the idea of the expansion of state territories and inter-polity conflict in the Archaic period, strengthening or reaffirming what she sees as preexisting, essentially Protogeometric (PG), state-level identities[7]. To be sure, a date around 600 BCE represents the latest *terminus ante quem* for a significant sociopolitical transformation on the island, emphasizing that the stratigraphic discontinuities that we actually see in the late 7th century may reflect a latter phase of a continuous development, perhaps enhancing, but not fundamentally changing, the structure of preexisting social

3 Kotsonas 2002.

4 Kowalewski 2006.

5 Kowalewski 2006, 108.

6 Prent 1996/1997; Morris 1998, 65 f.; Kotsonas 2002; Perlman 2010, 108; Haggis et al. 2004, 344. 393; Erickson 2010, 1–22; cf. Erickson, this volume.
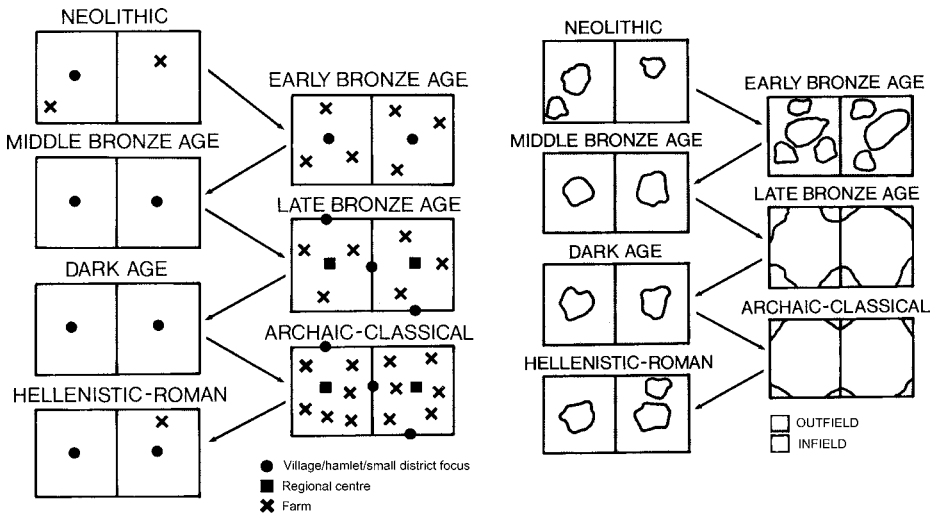
7 Wallace 2010a; 2010b.

Fig. 1: Models representing changing settlement patterns (left) and land use (right) in the Aegean

configurations. Although the process must have involved a number of complex interregional and intraregional variables, such as territorialism, inter-polity conflict, and expanding political and economic alliances, it is the elite monopolized exchange and surplus production and mobilization – that is, critical relationships with rural agricultural hinterlands – that are unquestionably at the core[8].

The question that emerges in the juxtaposition of Kotsonas and Wallace models, is perhaps whether the change represents an abrupt and canonical shift in settlement structure and land-use in the 7th or 6th centuries, for example, as John Bintliff (Fig. 1) modeled for the Aegean several years ago[9], or a more gradual incremental Early Iron Age process. My guess is that the problem is more methodological and phenomenological than material: Wallace's picture is shaped from a gradualist perspectives derived from surface survey, while Kotsonas's reconstruction is based for the most part on individual stratigraphic contexts. While I would agree that as a process, it was probably a long-term development, and that Archaic-period discontinuities should reflect the visible materialization of the results of a process rather than a singular global event, neither approach necessarily predicates mutually exclusive causal variables. I think it is, nevertheless, from the standpoint of excavation, still important to explore the material evidence for the latter as archaeological evidence of the dynamics of the process.

In Wallace's narrative, which is probably the most elaborated to date, a circumscribed lineage-based elite (essentially sets of clans) survived into the Archaic peri-

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8 Wallace 2010a, 78; 2010b, 346 f. 374 f.; see Erickson 2009 on the territory of Praisos.
9 Bintliff 1982, 107 f.

od, mutatis mutandis, becoming increasingly entrenched, ultimately forming the ruling or citizen class of the Archaic city[10]. The conservative clan-based system was linked to domination or ancestral control and intensification of use of land holdings and agricultural resources (essentially the "outfield" in Bintliff's model in Fig. 1)[11]; and such a system would perhaps have internally inhibited both complex social stratification and expansion or mobility of systems of management and identity, while ultimately encouraging the proliferation or replication of numerous relatively small-scale states[12].

The model is vivid, and indeed with more excavation and survey specifically targeting Archaic and Classical periods, we will no doubt recover a large number of such small-scale cities, miniature proto-*poleis*, of variable sizes, material configurations, life trajectories and regional histories. Most of these will have Early Iron Age foundations and survive well into the 6th and 5th centuries, but their primary period of material growth and formal development will most likely be the 6th century itself; and many of these should be found to have been abandoned long before they could leave substantial epigraphic records or surviving historical memory[13]. In this sense our epigraphic and historical inventories of Cretan *poleis*, necessarily dependent on place names that survive in Classical, Hellenistic, or Roman-period documents, will have limited diachronic value in understanding the locations and structure of early Cretan urbanization. We will remain dependent on the archaeology.

Among these small centers, inter-polis conflict would have reinforced, enhanced, and probably led to the expansion of preexisting and formative state structures[14]. At the same time, however, this early inter-city dynamic, that served to encourage the growth of cities and territorial states, will also at the same time have been a likely cause for the early destructions of many of these emergent centers. But for our methodological discussion here, what is interesting is that Wallace considers the specific forms of these early cities on Crete – what they looked like – to be materially irrelevant. That is, in essence, the importance of the construction of the physical morphology of Greek cities was that it reinforced and encouraged the success of already emergent *poleis* in the Aegean; but for Crete, she sees a persistent "constrained material reality", that is, a lack of distinctive or compelling evidence, or indices on the site-level, to help us grapple with the character of Archaic urbanization as a cultural phenomenon and meaningful correlate for changes that

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10 Wallace 2010b, 347–348.

11 Bintliff 1982, 108; Jameson 1992.

12 Wallace 2010b, 341.

13 For the artifact of the "proto-*polis*" I have benefited from much discussion with Paula Perlman and Florence Gaignerot-Driessen. On the epigraphical complexities in the formation of *polis* identities, see Gaignerot-Driessen 2013.

14 Wallace 2010b, 347.

we see in this period[15]. It suffices to say, however, that any argument on the form or meaning of the structure of settlement in Archaic Crete, remaining largely ex silentio, deserves to be challenged through excavation.

In this paper, using stratigraphic evidence from recent excavations at Azoria, I present an alternative to the dominant gradualist perspective – the situation is not unique to Crete – which, like most views of the period, tends to look outside of the city center itself for material indices of urbanization, and for evidence of sociopolitical changes leading to the *polis*, or in Hansen's nomenclature a "type of town" or "urban centre" rather than the political community of "state"[16]. In general the question of what constitutes the emerging Archaic city in the Aegean in a material sense is normally framed as being unanswerable, unimportant, or essentially moot: the stratigraphically visible thresholds of urban transformation seem, on the one hand, unattainable archaeologically (or nonexistent), that is, obscured by later superimposed strata, ambiguously configured, formally unremarkable, or irrelevant to the question of sociopolitical organization. That said, two questions are worth pursuing: if it were possible to recover distinct stratigraphic and materially coherent phases of urbanization, what would be the formal criteria and archaeological data needed for defining such stages, and indeed the material condition of urbanism itself in the Archaic period? And second, what kinds of evidence would we want in order to explore the social or political structure of that urban community through time[17]?

One approach to the problem of the early Cretan city is through the evaluation of evidence for sociopolitical structure, which might be modeled with some success through evidence of intra-site relationships manifested in patterns of use of domestic and communal spaces. A fundamental component of such relationships, which leaves archaeological traces, is the scale, organization, and integration of agricultural production – as a means of organizing, subsidizing, and controlling labor and land use, and structuring political and economic relationships, between individuals, groups, and various parts of the larger collective of the state. For example, Wallace offers the eloquent and perhaps prescient view that prominent kin groups emerged within early political centers on Crete, serving to reinforce new "structures of authority and dominance"[18], permanently altering direct localized and traditional lineage connections to agricultural land, and leading to sharp divisions of classes that left a conquered or socially subordinated rural population distinctly separate from and in degrees dependent on an urban citizen class: "urban living may increasingly have been considered a restricted privilege, mainly for full citizens", evidently "building political coherence and economic growth"[19]. The picture

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15 Wallace 2010b, 282 f.; cf. Kotsonas 2002.
16 Hansen 1997b, 9. 54–57; cf. Morris 1991.
17 cf. Hansen 1997b; Morgan – Coulton 1997.
18 Wallace 2010b, 336.
19 Wallace 2010b, 336.

fits remarkably well of course with Ian Morris's application of Gellner's agro-literate state model (Fig. 2)[20], in which a narrowly stratified urban elite is distinct from horizontally stratified rural peasant classes, but with social mobility between broad groups less rigidly maintained than in a classic citizen-state *polis* model. Paula Perlman's recent work on the Archaic Cretan economy is however providing a more complex and nuanced picture[21], but for our purposes here Wallace's model, and the tendencies on Crete toward agro-literate structures can offer a coarse societal framework as a backdrop to archaeological evidence recovered through excavation.

But what interests me here is less the viability of the theoretical constructions of social or political landscapes of hypothetical proto-urban centers – which are nevertheless compelling – as much as the importance of the material constitution and physical construction of the city itself as a form of cultural production. The deliberate creation of the urban built environment (the centralized residences of the prominent kin groups) becomes in Wallace's view, a process of social and political negotiation, actively building a political economy: the assertion and maintenance of dominant social and political ideologies and strategies[22]. Both are a result of aggregation as well as a catalyst for continuing aggregation and social resolution. Internal warfare was also a critical strategy for the development and maintenance of emergent state structures, a view echoed in Brice Erickson's summary of economic adversity and the commonplace impression of material impoverishment on Crete in the 6th century[23]. Site destructions, the construction of fortifications, and the martial quality of dedications in sanctuaries, might indeed reflect conditions necessitating the protracted and on-going assertion of Wallace's identity structures. While regional conflict would have served to reinforce and perpetuate dominant ideologies and sociopolitical order at home, the long view sees these inter- and intraregional dynamics as variable, beginning before the 6th century and continuing well after – a kind of continual process of restructuring the emerging polities.

This gradualist perspective, though very attractive, should not however contradict, or even cloud, a critical and global phase transition in the late 7th century. Echoing aspects of Kotsonas and Wallace's work, Erickson's view is less systemic and more causal, and therefore historical. His assertion that "inter-*polis* hostilities may have intensified in the 6th century, heralding a Darwinistic fight for survival [...]" emphasizes the social and economic peer polity-like interactions that led to changes in mortuary and cult display, and materially, a form of austerity in elite consumption that may have been resolved at a local level through ritual systems

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20 Morris 1997, 99 f.
21 E.g., Perlman 2004.
22 Wallace 2010a, 78.
23 Erickson 2010, 305–308; Wallace 2010b, 347; Perlman 2010.
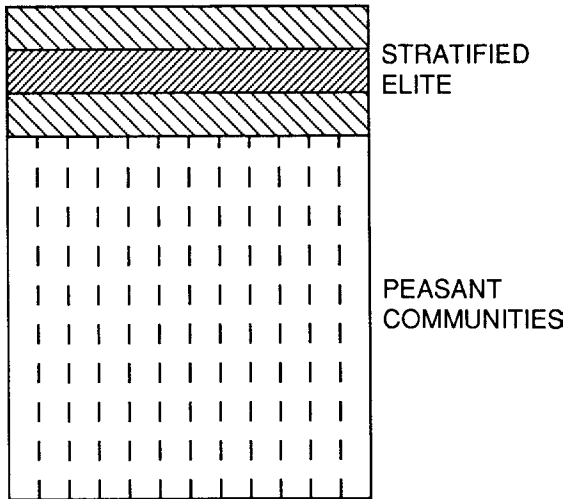
Fig. 2: Model of Gellner's agro-literate state

that promoted collective identity[24]. Along similar lines, James Whitley proposes that the material austerity, especially in communal rituals and dining practices, could have functioned to promote a form of egalitarian ethos or the institutionalization of new forms of social interaction among clans or segmented lineages that made up a newly constituted citizenry[25]. Extreme standardization of cup forms and types (and a remarkable lack of diacritical or qualitative stylistic elaboration or rationing), while probably overemphasized, does represent a significant change from the Late Geometric (LG) and Early Orientalizing (EO) practices and traditions, and most likely, in their use contexts, reflects a corporate political culture of exclusion[26]. The potential for modeling changes in the social discourse of consumption practices is I think significant and worth exploring[27].

Both Erickson and Wallace would probably agree that changes in agropastoral production and the institutionalization of these communal dining practices in the 6th century were at the heart of the construction of political identities[28], and indeed, as Kotsonas has put it, forming "a consensus among the competing elite"[29]. In such an agro-literate system, the institutionalization of the citizenry was closed and internally operating, or as Erickson has said most succinctly, "Cretan citizens

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24 Erickson 2010, 307 f.
25 Whitley 2009, 290.
26 Small 2010.
27 E.g., Kotsonas 2011.
28 E.g., Erickson 2010, 320. 344; Wallace 2010b, 282; Small 2010.
29 Kotsonas 2002, 55.

did not need to compete with serfs and slaves"[30]. While the emphasis on public dining and drinking in the archaeological record may be a result of our selection bias and the survivability of bones and pottery, food and utensils, for food and drink consumption, Crete does present interesting historical contexts in which communal agricultural resource allocation and ritualized household and supra-household consumption were evidently important. The historically-attested institution of the *syssition*, and the physical building and location of a communal mess hall, or *andreion*, present obvious and fascinating examples that have prompted considerable discussion of public dining practices as culturally significant social behavior. Moreover, the characterization of the Cretan *polis* as a quasi-agro-literate state, however generalized or simplified, is related directly to the economics and politics of land use, centering on the control of agriculture, the labor to implement it, the procurement and maintenance of surplus for redistribution, and above all, exclusionary definitions of public consumption[31].

Archaic civic inscriptions such as the Spensithios decree refer to agricultural products that existed as payments into and out of public stores, while the Gortynian Code and inscriptions from Eleutherna commonly make references to the agro-pastoral concerns of the city. Paula Perlman's evaluation of the Archaic Cretan economy, however, points out the importance of craftsmen wage-earners at Eleutherna, and the potential implications of a semi-monetized or even market sector not obviously tied to agricultural production[32]. The overly generalized picture – agriculture supporting rigid social and political groups of citizen aristocrats who controlled production by dependent laborers, serfs and slaves – has prompted Perlman's analysis, demonstrating clearly that "the traditional nexus of land ownership, agricultural production, and citizenship was not absolute"[33]. That said, it is important to keep in mind that an agricultural economy in urban or state-level contexts is not a subsistence economy (as it is often misconstrued), and that staple-finance based systems are very complex things, not precluding or obviating the development of other sectors of an economy. Craftsmen, citizen craftsmen, or even well-developed market driven exchange, do exist and operate parallel to prevailing staple-finance and agro-literate structures. While I am still reluctant to accept the "want of evidence for interest on the part of the state in agriculture and animal husbandry [...]" that Perlman reads in the data, she does imply that the stability of the traditional structure of land ownership and agricultural production may not have required an abundance of inscribed regulation[34]. That is, what the state chose to inscribe was not necessarily a convenient documentation of every detail of the

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30 Erickson 2010, 305.
31 Small 2010; see Bintliff 1982, 108, for Archaic Greece in general.
32 Perlman 2004.
33 Perlman 2004, 130.
34 Perlman 2004, 129 f.

economy, or the state's dependence on it, but perhaps a reflection of immediate or current concerns that were its active purview, as well as the sample of contextually-dated inscribed documents that survive or have been recovered; that latter I think is a much bigger consideration.

The following reflects on evidence of urbanization from excavated contexts at the site of Azoria, suggesting that the analysis of the construction of the city center itself informs our understanding of patterns of changing intra-site relationships; both indicate an abrupt change in the agricultural economy, in which new contexts and practices of food production and consumption, in the late 7th and early 6th centuries BCE, were of central importance in ordering social, and by extension, economic and political relationships in the Archaic city.

Evidence for a Phase Transition at Azoria

Azoria became a large aggregated settlement by the 6th century – broadly speaking, fitting the chronology, form, and process of small-scale urbanization as we understand it in the Aegean, and reflecting what I think is a recurring pattern on Crete in general. The model derived from both survey and excavation in the Kavousi area suggests a long period of static settlement forms in the Early Iron Age, miniature aggregates or clusters of small dispersed interrelated villages and cemeteries (about 10–20 houses each), remaining stable in the region for a period of some 400–500 years. An abrupt change at the end of the 7th century evidently brought with it both abandonment and physical movement of population to the site of Azoria. The site expanded to about 15 ha. in size, and what we see about 600 BCE, is a very different idea and configuration of what the settlement had been before, how it was structured physically, the nature of its economy, and its arenas for social interaction. This date coincides with the abandonment of the neighboring Early Iron Age site of the Kastro, and associated cemeteries containing collective tombs at Vronda, Skala, Skourismenos, Chondrovolakes, and probably at Azoria itself, where an early 6th century street and house were built directly over an intact, but at the time, still very visible, Late Minoan (LM) IIIC to PG tholos tomb[35].

Evidence for this kind of aggregation and coalescence is also apparent in the dispersed Early Iron Age cluster pattern at Gortyn, with the establishment of a new temple and settlement in the plain[36]. In western Mesara, we do not really know the disposition of Phaistos, but it could well fit Wallace's model of a PG aggregate that develops, by the 6th century, a centrifugal series of rural dependents, indeed the very kind of structure we imagine for Crete in general in the Archaic period[37]. Wa-

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35 Haggis et al. 2004; 2007a; 2007b; 2011a; 2011b; Haggis – Mook 2011.
36 Perlman 2000, 74–76; 2004a, 121; Wallace 2003, 263–266.
37 Watrous – Hadzi-Vallianou 2004a, 314–317; 2004b, 342–344.

trous and Hadzi-Vallianou's map of the Archaic western Mesara is easily comparable to Bintliff's diagram (Figs. 1. 3), and the pattern is certainly indicative of significant changes in regional structure; but the configurations of the Early Iron Age and Archaic settlements at Phaistos itself (Fig. 3), that is the actual form and structures of settlement, are completely unknown[38]. In the Vrokastro/Kalo Chorio region, by the 7th and 6th centuries, settlement apparently shifts inland from nucleated sites in the upper Ayios Phanourios area, upland into Skinavria and Meseleroi, though it remains unclear if the pattern reflects a central aggregate at Oleros with dependent farms and estates[39]. Finally the move from the Karphi sites – I think there is a cluster of sites there – to Papoura is a clear pattern of early, that is, Protogeometric, aggregation, but we still do not know the actual internal structure of the Papoura settlement or changes down into the 7th and 6th centuries[40].

The importance of recent work at Azoria (Fig. 4) is that we can now begin to evaluate the details of changes in the internal settlement structure in the period, with a level of resolution simply unavailable in samples derived from surface survey, early-excavated and normally unstratified mortuary or sanctuary contexts, or sporadic stratigraphic soundings. The radical rebuilding of the site at the end of the 7th century demonstrates the dynamic reintegration, redefinition, and restructuring of domestic and communal spaces; the conceptualization and reification of a new physical form of settlement and community; a drastic increase in both the scale of building and the labor allocation and organization required to implement it; and finally the introduction of new kinds of architecture for entirely new venues of household functions and supra-household interaction[41]. The latter take the form of buildings probably for the restricted use of a citizen class; that is, fitting Hansen's restrictive definition of "civic" architecture. On the surface of things, this evidence accords remarkably well with many of the synthetic studies mentioned above, as well as historical sources that suggest a quasi-agro-literate structure of Cretan society at this time.

One of the most remarkable and materially consistent indications of the phase transition at Azoria is the large-scale transformation of the topography of the site, evinced in the presence of a thick layer of rubble fill found as wall and floor packing, and foundation deposits for Archaic buildings across the full extent of the excavated areas[42]. These "Archaic fill" deposits are normally discovered directly underneath the floor surfaces of buildings, in spaces in between buildings, as bedding for streets and ramps, and behind the spine walls on their upslope sides. Spine walls are massive retaining and dividing walls oriented to the contours of the hill

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38 Cf. Erickson 2010, 320.

39 Hayden 1997, 112–114. 133 f.; 2004, 179 f. 188; Erickson 2010, 192. 246.

40 Wallace 2010a, 23 f.

41 Contra Erickson 2010, 317–319; and Wallace 2010b, 282 f.
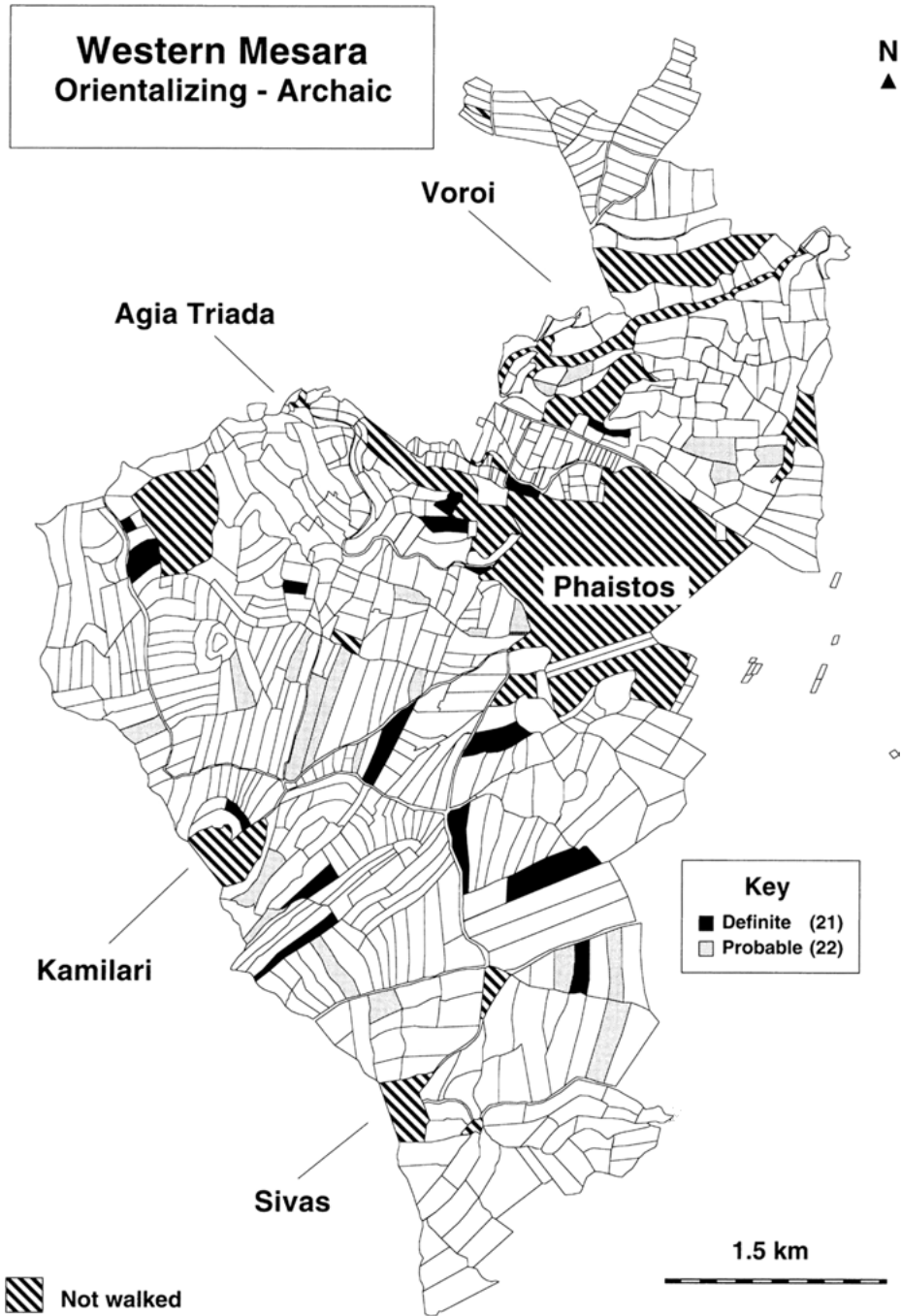
42 Haggis – Mook 2011, 518.

Fig. 3: Distribution of off-site Orientalizing-Archaic pottery in the Western Mesara

slope, which serve to structure architectural space and the urban topography; their widespread appearance in the late 7th and early 6th century signals the formalization of civic architecture and the materialization of the city plan[43]. The creation of these massive foundation deposits; the use of megalithic construction; and the redesign and planning of the use of space, on a site-wide scale, in relatively short period of time, suggest a scalar upswing in the Archaic period – a significant change in the supra-household organization of the settlement; the mobilization and implementation of labor; and the form and perception of the built environment.

In *sondages* excavated so far on the site, the foundations for the Archaic buildings evidently intruded upon Early Iron Age and Orientalizing (O) occupation levels, usually destroying or effectively burying these earlier structures. The cobble-fill foundation deposits, found packed beneath Archaic buildings, and in between Archaic walls and the Early Iron Age structures normally include a mixture of Early Iron Age and Orientalizing pottery – the latest material recoverable in the cobble fill is Late Orientalizing in date, a likely *terminus ad quem* or *post quem* for the formation of the layer, thus providing a tentative chronology for the initial urban building phase that established the form of the Archaic settlement. While modifications and additions were evidently made throughout the 6th and early 5th centuries, a date just before 600 BCE marks a definitive period of urban growth, imprinting on the landscape a new settlement plan that was to remain essentially unchanged until the abandonment of the site.

While we are still considering the implications of this stratigraphic horizon, one thing we can see clearly is the summary destruction of Early Iron Age topography – a process that we find somewhat surprising given the regular trajectory of long-term settlement development on the neighboring site of the Kastro, which shows clearly a continuous stratigraphic layering, and the gradual accretion and expansion of rooms and buildings from the 12th to the end of the 7th century BCE[44]. In sharp contrast, the physical change to the settlement at Azoria was abrupt and transformative. The Archaic builders consciously chose to alter the Early Iron Age terrain by concealing or systematically erasing the remains of earlier buildings. Furthermore, the renovation does not appear to be merely a matter of the technical exigencies of town planning on uneven terrain, or even the logistics of an ambitious public building program. It was a deliberate reconstruction of the physical and cultural landscape.

One interesting and perhaps dramatic example of this phase transition is in the burial of a cult building, probably an Early Iron Age hearth temple ("EIA–O Building"), on the lower southwest slope of the South Acropolis (Fig. 4: B3000, B3900)[45]. The building's construction date is no later than PG, with certain use in

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43 Haggis et al. 2004, 349–352; 2007a, 263–265; 2011a; 2011b.

44 Mook 2011.
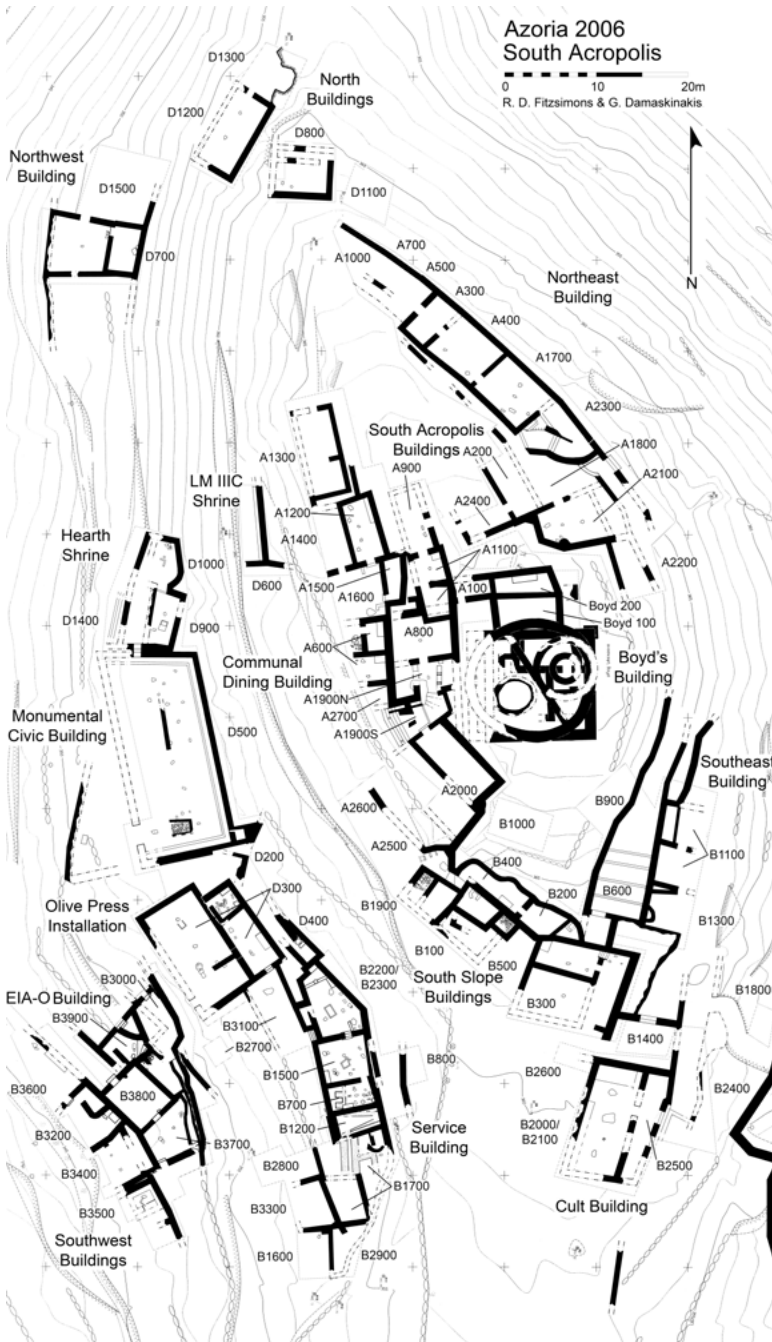
45 Haggis – Mook 2011.

Fig. 4: Site plan of Azoria

the Late Geometric and Early Orientalizing periods. It was evidently altered and expanded in the course of the 7th century, and then eventually abandoned, in its last phase leaving behind a surprising amount of discarded sacrificial and dining debris. An Archaic street and the typical cobble-fill layer completely covered the last phase of the use of the temple. Although the street itself and its packing will have been exposed to the elements and eroded and resurfaced in the course of the 6th and early 5th centuries, the critical change, that is, the abandonment and burying of the temple, occurred in the late 7th century, when a mound of burned bone debris, and an assemblage of fragments of mostly LG to EO fine drinking vessels were gathered and dumped out into a front room and adjoining courtyard at the front of the building. While the main rooms of the building have yet to be excavated, the size and shape of the structure, and the condition of the ceramic and bone assemblages are consistent with those of hearth temples at Dreros, Prinias, and Kommos[46]. What is important here is not only the abrupt abandonment and burying of the temple, a building type of sociopolitical importance in the Early Iron Age, but its disuse coincided with the radical modification of the topography and communication patterns to accommodate the Archaic civic buildings on the west slope of the South Acropolis – the Monumental Civic Building and Communal Dining Building effectively and immediately replaced the EIA–O Building, and transformed the context and scale of ritualized public drinking and dining.

Changes in Settlement Structure

In considering the phase transition from the standpoint of settlement structure, we can look at the differentiation of group membership, which I think provides an instructive indicator of intra-community organization and interaction. An examination of earlier forms of settlement in the region, that is, prior to 600, shows clearly the existence of proximate residential corporate groups. These manifest themselves in contiguous blocks of houses, probably related by lineage ties, patterned sequentially, and forming, over time, agglutinative compounds or spatially distinct neighborhoods. For examples, the Early Iron Age sites near Azoria, such as Vronda and Kastro[47], provide the clearest pictures of these kinds of proximate groupings. Growth on these sites is internal, additive, centripetal, and integrative. The structure of settlement manifests itself as agglomerative clusters of houses, sharing party walls, developing in linear diachronic patterns of expanding lineage groups.

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46 Shaw 2000, 698–703; Prent 2005, 627–633; 2007.
47 Coulson et al. 1997; Mook 1998; Glowacki 2004; Glowacki – Klein 2011; Mook 2011.

These residential compounds, such as the Northwest Building on the Kastro[48], show gradual growth variously over 100 to 500 years, and static, entrenched, and integrated structuring of space, representing intergenerational and locus-bound groups; and emphasizing continuity and the connection between the physical locus of building and the surrounding landscape as a condition engendering and sustaining social identities. The coherence of these Early Iron Age corporate groups was probably related to land ownership and agriculture; the need to maintain cohesive landholdings, agricultural and pastoral resources, and a sufficiently large and stable labor pool (on the household level) to exploit these resources effectively.

By the 6th century at Azoria the situation is entirely different[49]. The houses are new constructions, independent and larger in size than their Early Iron Age predecessors[50], and fully and physically integrated into the overall Archaic plan of the settlement (Figs. 4. 5). There is no diachronic change in their form over time, and they seem to represent individual nuclear households, with clearly-defined room functions: storerooms, halls (or living rooms), and kitchens, normally with adjoining interior courtyards (Fig. 5). Not only have the dimensions of the basic house unit increased, but the internal configuration of space has changed as well. Houses no longer have hearth-rooms – that is, the combined living, working and food producing areas characteristic of the Early Iron Age houses – but are spatially complex, with critical division of use areas. The halls mediate between storage and food producing areas, suggesting the economic and social-symbolic importance of pithos storage, and they were clearly used for food consumption (drinking, dining, and other activities), rather than food storage, production, or primary food processing. Perlman, following Erickson's reconstruction of sympotic assemblages in the presumably "private" context of burial, argues for the existence of household symposia in Archaic Crete[51]. The evidence from the halls of the houses at Azoria would certainly not contradict this view. Although there are few differences in essential components of ceramic assemblages found in public and private spaces at Azoria, the Communal Dining Building contains concentrations of rarely stands, rarely found in halls of houses, as well as unusual amounts of drinking and dining debris, suggesting the exclusive function of the dining rooms in that building (Fig. 1: A800, A2000, upper and lower rooms). Furthermore the finds from the main hall and pantries of the Monumental Civic Building indicate clearly that the main function of that structure was banqueting as well.

More to the point, the relationship of the house to the settlement had changed as well. Houses are physically integrated into the armature of spine walls which were constructed systematically in the early 6th century and extend continuously

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48 Mook 1998; 2011.
49 Haggis et al. 2011b.
50 See Mook 2011 for the range of LG house sizes on the Kastro.
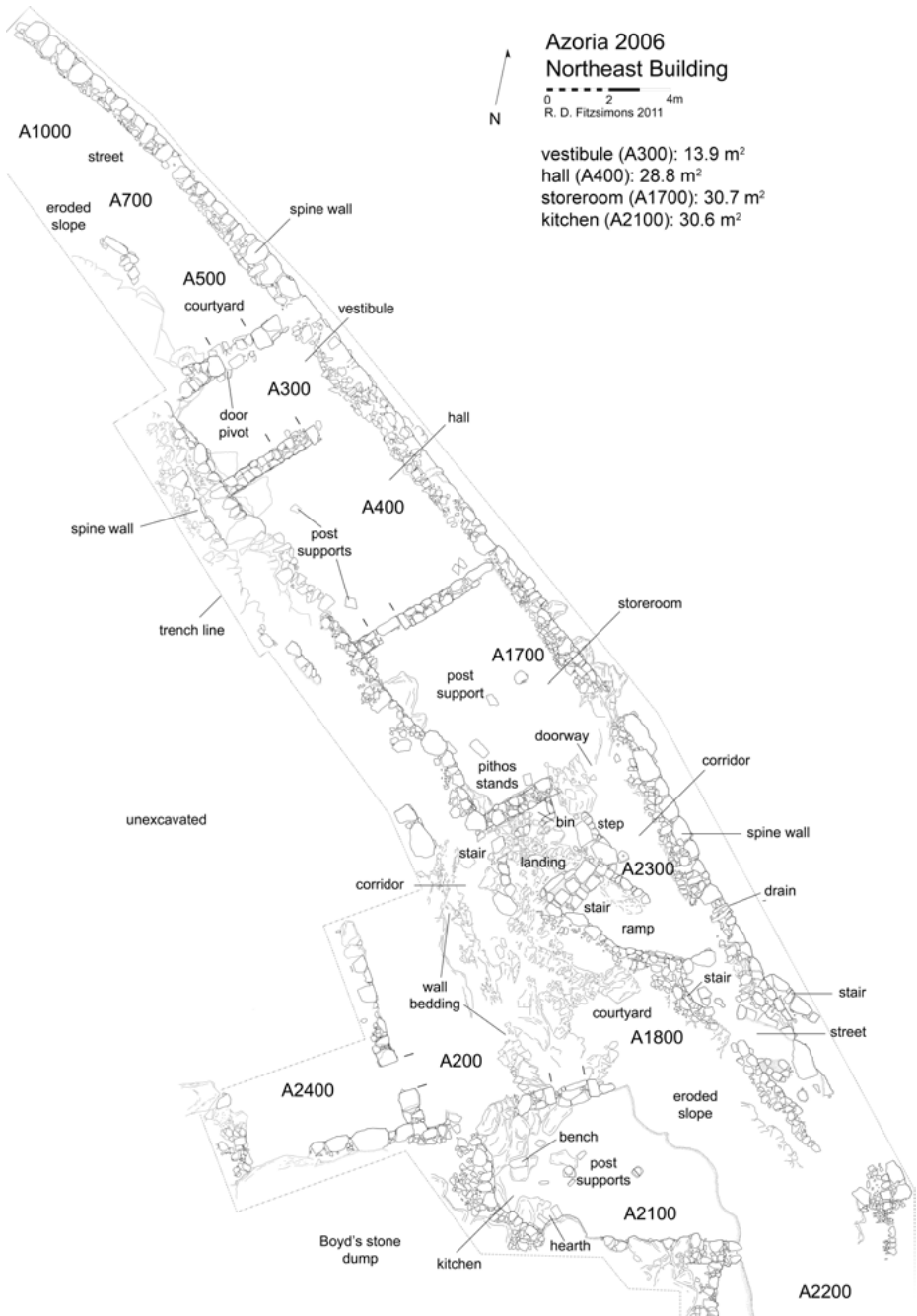51 Perlman 2004, 122; Erickson 2010, 326–328.

Fig. 5: Northeast Building

through zones of both civic and domestic building (Figs. 4. 5). This break from the Early Iron Age proximate (essentially co-residential) neighborhoods, blocks or clusters emphasizes the potential importance and social dynamics of changes in household interaction in the phase transition. The Archaic houses were reintegrated as single residences into the city-wide plan with a direct relationship to communal buildings. The Archaic pattern most probably represents multi-lateral relationships between individual elite houses and public space, while the Early Iron Age pattern from the region strongly indicates mediation at the level of the cluster or proximate group.

It is not likely that the essential corporate identity of the household had changed – in fact I think that given the static form of houses, and the kinds of food storage, processing, and consumption recovered suggest that these new urban residences must have been centers of dispersed or multi-local households. Thus it is the relationship of houses to the public or communal sphere that had changed, and as a result, the way in which the household interacted physically and economically with its broader political and agropastoral environment. From the range of foods and kinds of food processing in the houses, we conclude that a large part of primary production at Azoria was conducted away from the center, in presumably related or extended households down slope from the peak, or on rural estates: such activities would have included initial-stage grain and pulse storage and processing, and short term storage of olive and grapes for the production of oil and wine. That is to say, what we find in the urban houses is evidence for the final-stage storage and processing for consumption: clean grains and pulses, with small querns, mortars, hand stones, sometimes found with graters; cooked pulses, wine lees, and whole olives. Furthermore, most of the primary-stage butchering of meat was done elsewhere as well. Thus, from an agricultural perspective, the Archaic urban houses, in marked contrast to their 8th and 7th century counterparts, were principally consumers, and mostly likely the managers of both labor and production of agricultural wealth.

The public or civic institutions that ultimately developed at Azoria in the 6th century may have weakened the direct interpersonal bonds that were fostered by traditional clusters, proximate blocks of households, or neighborhoods that comprised the Early Iron Age communities. But given the overwhelming evidence of clans and tribes – as social units responsible for structuring membership in civic institutions[52] – the new communal venues may have served to crystallize, enhance, and ultimately institutionalize the identities of groups that were originally kinship based. From the perspective of the household, urbanization on Crete may be seen as an active institutionalization of the residential kinship-corporate group, solidifying and codifying their social profile, political power, and economic status. Whatever social ties were weakened by the shift from proximate to dispersed residences,

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52 Perlman, this volume.

they were compensated by new communal institutions that did not erode the essence of the corporate group, but rather reshaped and reintegrated its functions in venues of public rituals of assembly, dining and sacrifice.

The Development of Civic Space

The civic buildings occupy the upper shoulder of the southwest side of the South Acropolis (Fig. 4). While technically a central location, this is obviously not the kind of plan that we like to associate with Greek civic topography: that is, an open area in the center of the city, often demarcated with boundary stones, occupied first by an agora and temple[53], and then gradually populated by civic institutions, that through time, eventually take on distinguishable material forms of epigraphically-identifiable buildings: *bouleuteria, prytaneia*, and various locales for assemblies of citizens, like theaters, *ekklesiasteria, stadia*, law courts and so on[54]. The buildings at Azoria obviously defy this arrangement, and though access routes are difficult to demonstrate because of erosion on the outer edges of the slopes, we do know that buildings were connected by a series of parallel streets running with the contours of the hill. The most accessible routes were from the south, but neither the Monumental Civic Building nor the Communal Dining Building (Fig. 4) provides a visual focal point from within the city, nor do they communicate openly from a central or open public space. Rather, they seem to have been inserted or nested into a framework of spine walls that structured the urban topography and formed an architectural armature that was established during a horizon of rebuilding at the end of the 7th century BCE.

The buildings were thus tightly knitted into the overall city plan and constructed along with houses that are built around them in a similar fashion. The impression is one of controlled or perhaps limited access from neighboring households, rather than from obviously central, reserved and unoccupied, communal space[55]. Two things are important at this scale. First the buildings communicate directly with contiguous occupation areas; both domestic and civic spaces were part of a coordinated and synchronous building program and apparently unified design and plan of the city center. The exclusive internalizing form and communication patterns, and the direct juxtaposition to houses, suggest integration that was probably restricted and socially, as well as practically, relevant to the urban households. That is, the urban zone is a remarkably closed social community, defined by the close interrelationships of households and civic buildings. The scale and definition

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53 E.g., Crielaard 2009.

54 Hansen 1997b; Osborne 2005.

55 I have benefited from much discussion with David Small on communication patterns at Azoria (Small 2010, 203).

of public space were probably narrowly defined and critical and prescriptive variables in the creation and articulation of civic identity if not citizen status.

The second importance of the location is that while not centrally prominent or spatially engaging from within the city itself (such as an agora and acropolis sanctuary would be), the buildings have a dominant western aspect and viewshed, visible from the plain of Kampos, the north Isthmus of Ierapetra, and the Bay of Mirabello, and no doubt the neighboring territories of Oleros, Istron, Olous, Lato, Anavlochos and perhaps Milatos as well. That is, the civic center communicated on a local level within a closed and static community of urban households, and on a regional level, it projects a physical presence and identity outward toward other territorial states, rather than into its own regional hinterland.

The particular form of aggregation in the Archaic period at Azoria also presents interesting archaeological correlates of coalescence, such as collective defense; the physical movement of people to larger towns incorporating different regional populations, including multilingual or multiethnic groups; the intensification and scaling up of mechanisms of production; and an increase in visible indicators of interregional and extraregional exchange[56]. Perhaps most important in the archaeology is evidence for community integration by means of corporate groups, clan systems, and sodalities; and the construction of collective leadership structures and the physical buildings for them, such as venues promoting universalizing ideologies through social and religious rituals. The juxtaposition of the Communal Dining Building and Monumental Civic Building, suggest different scales and different levels of integration within the city center. The layout of the buildings points to communal activities, but within highly controlled and regulated systems of participation and inclusion.

The Civic Buildings

The civic buildings mirror each other's essential functions: both have substantial storage and kitchen spaces; cult installations; and rooms for communal drinking and dining. The Communal Dining Building (Fig. 6) is complex and compartmentalized, indicating the division of activities and the segregation of groups. Food processing (A1600; A600) and storage facilities (A1200; A1500 and A1600) are centralized on the lower terrace, where rooms are tightly interconnected, but also physically separate from the dining rooms on the terrace above. It is clear that the communication patterns within the building are dendritic, with exclusive access

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56 See Haggis et al. 2004 for the nucleation of settlement; and Haggis et al. 2007a; 2011a; 2011b, for evidence of fortifications; east Mirabello, Attic, Corinthian, Lakonian, Aiginetan, Ionian and east Aegean, and Thasian imports; and Greek and Eteocretan inscriptions. On extraregional trade see Brisart, this volume.

Fig. 6: Excavated areas of the Communal Dining Building as of 2006

from food storage and processing areas, to the rooms of the upper terrace, controlled by a stair, porch and vestibule. The cult room (A1900N) with a ground altar is centered within a cluster of dining rooms (A800; A2000 upper and lower) (Figs. 6. 7). While only about half of the entire lower level of the building is preserved, the concentration of provisions and facilities for food storage and preparation is beyond question. Only one of two pithos storerooms was well preserved (A1200), it contained at least seven jars holding a variety of foods, but mostly wine and olives in its last period of use[57]. Its area, exceeding 20 m^2, is double the size of the smallest storeroom in the Service Building (Fig. 4: B700), which is 11 m^2 and contained no less than nine jars, among a number of smaller storage vessels such as amphoras.

The adjacent Monumental Civic Building (Fig. 8), in marked contrast, has a single undivided main hall with a well-built stepped bench around the sides (D500), that was clearly designed to accommodate assemblies and feasting, activities that were more communal, or perhaps less restricted or internally segregated, than those of the Communal Dining Building. The Service Building (Fig. 9), with three storerooms (B700; B1200; D300), two kitchens (B1500; B2200/2300), and an industrial olive-oil press (D300), supplied the Monumental Civic Building with its considerable provisions[58]. A shrine (D900; D1000) is directly connected to the main hall, but has restricted access. The rooms of the shrine are small (Fig. 8: Hearth Shrine), and practical use would have been limited to a few people. Although offerings on the altar would hardly have been openly visible beyond the confines of the altar room itself, votives could have been paraded into and out of the public view on the terrace in front of the building and within the adjoining main hall. That is, the structuring of space of the Monumental Civic Building suggests inclusive, expanded, and large-scale public participation, while the small size and limited access of the adjoining shrine (Fig. 8), points to the existence of an exclusionary and probably codified group of titled magistrates or functionaries of the cult. The altar room (D900) was equipped with a hearth, and adjoined a small kitchen (D1000), but food preparation was no doubt limited to preparation of sacrificial offerings and dining by a select few.

In general, the dining and ceremonial areas of the Communal Dining Building are internally differentiated (Figs. 6. 7). The compartmentalization of space and the replication of assemblages, suggests the separation and reduplication of similarly functioning rooms. Each of these spaces contains dining debris, a preponderance of individual drinking vessels, such as cups and skyphoi, as well as animal bones and marine shells, clearly food refuse. Serving vessels are also found, the most interesting being terracotta stands, each very different, in fact unique, in design and degree of elaboration (Fig. 7)[59]. Formally these can be defined as krater stands,

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57 Contra Erickson 2010, 319.

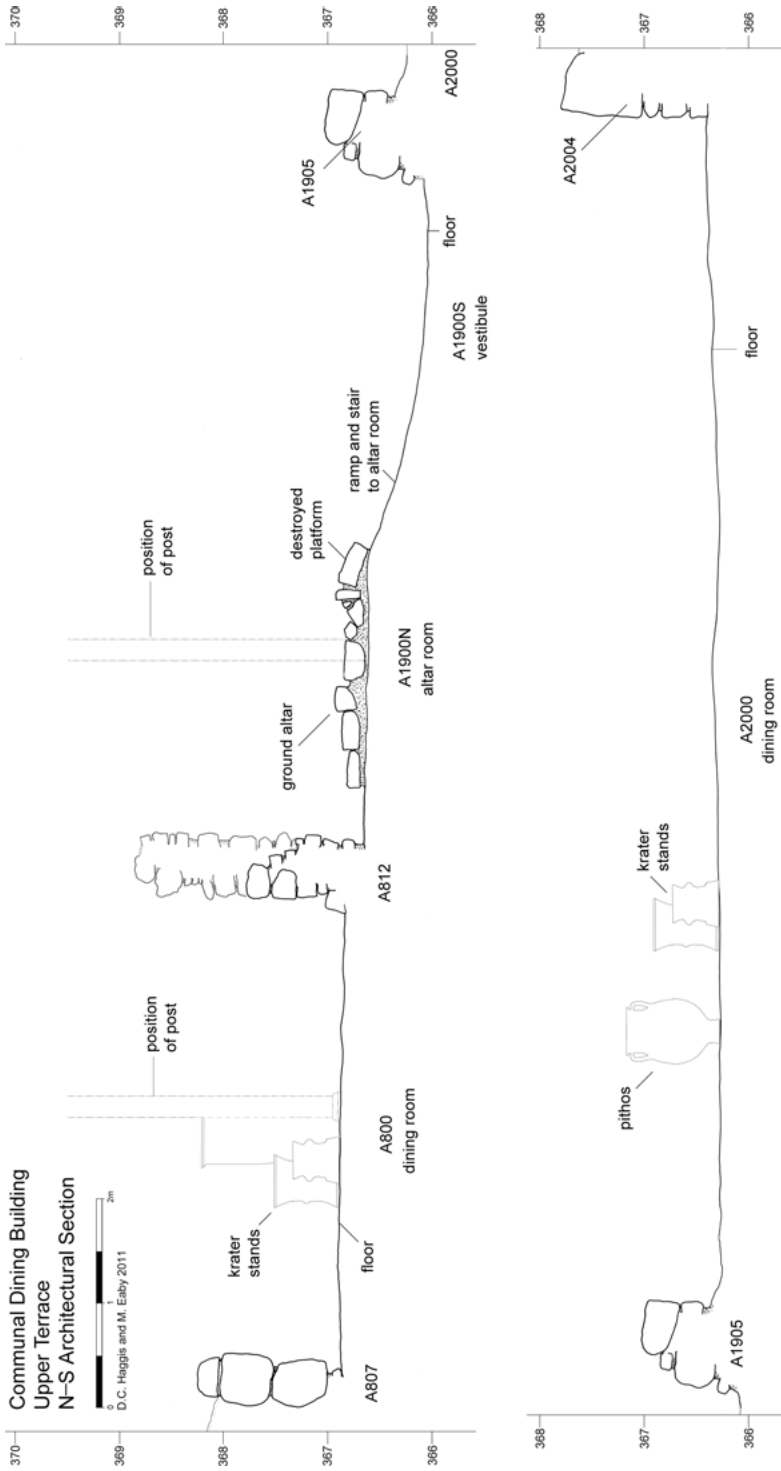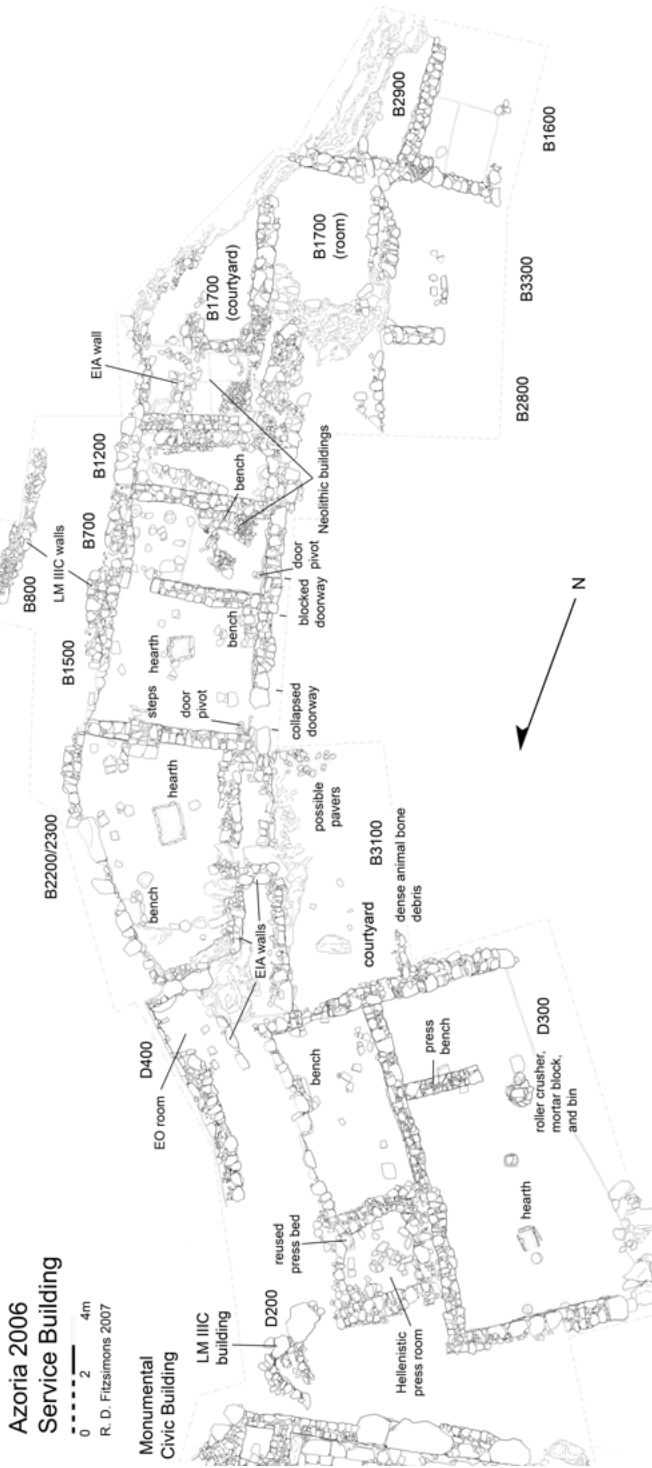**58** Haggis et al. 2011a.

59 Haggis et al. 2011a, 14.

Fig. 7: Communal Dining Building: architectural section of the upper level (dining rooms and altar room)

Azoria 2006
Monumental Civic Building

R.D. Fitzsimons 2006

0   2   4m

N

LM IIIC wall

Main Hall

stepped
entrance

socket

paved
platform

D500

stepped
doorway

Hearth Shrine

D900

altar

hearth

terrace

stepped
facade

D1000

D1400

hearth

Fig. 8: Monumental Civic Building

Fig. 9: State plan of the Service Building

roughly biconical, often fenestrated, more rarely cylindrical, supports for kraters, dinoi, or other large open containers. They are rarely found elsewhere on the site in either domestic or civic contexts, and their consistent appearance in these dining rooms suggests a special function related to serving wine to large groups of people. The distinctive and distinctly different forms of these objects, used and juxtaposed in the same context, indicates a horizontal apposition of different styles in marked contrast to the homogeneity of individual servings in high necked black-glaze cups. The differences are probably significant and are not likely hierarchical or diacritical distinctions of entrepreneurial or patron-client relationships, but rather the juxtaposition of socially-equal groups, each with their own stand, drinking from their own krater, a practice which would have emphasized subgroup identity within the larger group using a dining room. The altar room (Figs. 6. 7: A1900N) was open and visible from the vestibule, fully integrated into the row of dining rooms on the upper terrace, and was most likely accessible for routine offerings from participants engaged in the various adjoining dining rooms.

In contrast, the main hall of the Monumental Civic Building presents ample space for open participation irrespective of group or sub-group identities (Fig. 8: D500). Meals, such as stews, were ladled out in large common vessels, and meat remains represent whole leg portions spit-roasted in the adjacent kitchens of the Service Building (Fig. 9: B1500, B2200/2300). This is not to say that social distinctions did not exist, or could not have been expressed through differentiated portioning of meat, such as the leg segments, or other foods, or even by means of arranged seating within the building. But the open plan and fixed seating are designed to encourage, if not prescribe a communal experience.

Considering also the evidence of urban residences on the site, and domestic contexts of food processing and storage, the overall intra-site pattern suggests a marked decentralization of food procurement activities, with primary production, storage, and processing relegated to dependents at the periphery of the center, turning the urban house into estate managers, essentially centers of dispersed households. The urban residences would then have both stored already processed consumables derived from the countryside, but also channeled its surplus into the storerooms and kitchens of the Service Building and the lower level of the Communal Dining Building. The social mechanisms of production were geared not to the subsistence needs of independent family units as in the Early Iron Age settlements, but to larger-scale venues of public commensality that reinforced the equality, identity, and the economic structure of segments of the urban citizenry. That is, intensification of primary production shifts dramatically from the houses at the center to both rural dependents at the periphery, as well as to the centralized facilities of civic buildings.

On the intra-site level, houses were built with direct reference to these communal spaces and civic buildings, codifying their locations, statuses and relationship to the communal dining halls and the associated service buildings (Fig. 4). The

evidence for feasting and forms of public investment in it – that is, large complexes, devoting unusual amounts of space and resources to food storage and processing – demonstrate clearly the intensification and centralization of production and consumption. Pantries (storerooms and kitchens) are equipped with complete processing, dining, and drinking equipment, suggesting supra-household and ceremonial functions. Moreover, the altars in the civic buildings emphasize the use of communal cult practices in expressing, if not an egalitarian ethos, certainly the collective identity of a participating class.

What is interesting is the rapid, synchronic, and unified integration of houses and public buildings in the city center at the end of the 7th century, and the scaling-up of their forms and functions, suggesting a conscious and deliberate act of constructing and redefining the social community, while articulating relationships that served to maintain and reinforce the urban political economy, especially the allocation of household surpluses in civic contexts of consumption.

Conclusion

The conditions that engendered this specific form of aggregated settlement at Azoria invite both historical particularism as well as speculation on global processes that affected every area of Crete by the end of the 7th century. The period of transition may be characterized by scalar stress, involving territorial expansion, changes in trading patterns, political intensification as well as a pronounced increase in internecine conflict and inter-polity warfare, a picture resonating with the idea of coalescence. Political intensification, changes in labor allocation and mobilization, and the social mechanisms for production are strongly in evidence at Azoria, indicating a marked break from Early Iron Age patterns in the region. What might be apparent in the evidence is the viability of clan-based systems, their codification and materialization, and their potential to direct or facilitate long-distance exchange; to appropriate and maintain corporate holdings of property and control agricultural production over generations.

The process of constructing the city, while predicated and preconditioned by a preexisting social structure, nevertheless created a new political community, fundamentally changed earlier modes of behavior, and ultimately new kinds of interaction. The Archaic city was, if anything, not simply a scaled-up version of its Protogeometric or even Late Geometric predecessor, but rather, an entirely new way of thinking, living, and interacting. The phase transition encompassed a purposive redirection of resources and reshaping power relationships in many ways in direct, physical, and architectural opposition to the Early Iron Age settlement structure. Extrapolating from this evidence from Azoria, we might begin to see new city centers on Crete as essentially collections of newly institutionalized households. Clans were rewoven into the urban fabric of the settlement, making up a

network of similar houses whose identity and stability were derived from communal institutions combining cult and feasting practices that reaffirmed and facilitated the social, political, and economic order of the Archaic community.

Illustration Credit

Fig. 1:   after Bintliff 1982, 107 f. figs. 13.4–5
Fig. 2:   after Morris 1997, 93 fig. 6.2a
Fig. 3:   after Watrous – Hadzi-Vallianou 2004a, 316 fig. 11.6
Fig. 4:   R. D. Fitzsimons and G. Damaskinakis
Fig. 5. 8. 9: R. D. Fitzsimons
Fig. 6:   R. D. Fitzsimons, with additions by D. C. Haggis and M. S. Mook
Fig. 7:   D. C. Haggis and M. Eaby

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