

# Ancient Landscapes in Eastern Crete: the (Re)making of the Isthmus of Ierapetra in MM II

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**Abstract** The material record from the Protopalatial period on the Isthmus of Ierapetra provides a unique challenge for archaeologists. On the one hand, this phase marks the earliest appearance of palace or state level political organization; on the other, various site formation processes have made it difficult to recover meaningful contexts. This paper tries to show how an approach through landscape and an archaeology of the senses can help us bridge this divide. My goal is a layered reconstruction drawing first on surveys and new excavations before looking at material studies targeting the Protopalatial economy and social organization. I conclude by moving from what we have found to what we can infer about the missing parts (what students of landscape archaeology sometimes describe as the space between). My goal is not to champion the use of landscape over our discipline's traditional preference for sites, buildings, and artifacts but instead to harness all the available data for large-scale questions.

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## Introduction

Two publications provide the basis for the current image of the Protopalatial landscape along the Ierapetra isthmus and adjoining coastal plains (see Fig. 1 for a map of the sites mentioned in the text).<sup>1</sup> In the first, Carl Knappett traced patterns in material culture, primarily the production and exchange of pottery, and he suggested that the isthmus formed the eastern periphery of a loosely organized Malia state c. 1800 B.C. In the second, Vance Watrous employed data collected through systematic surveys of the northern half of the isthmus to detect nascent signs of hierarchy in the distribution and size of Middle Minoan IB–II (MM IB–II) settlements. For this area, he recorded a three-fold increase in the number

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1 Knappett 1999, 625, fig. 6; Watrous and Schultz 2012a, 41–50, maps 21–4.

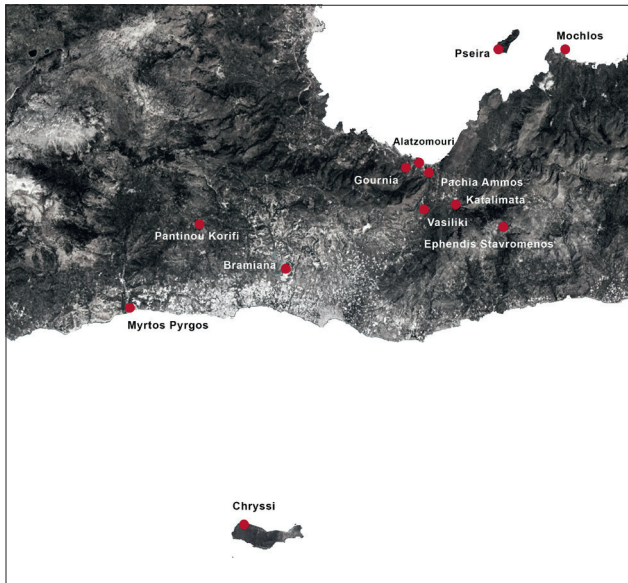
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**Fig. 1** Isthmus of Ierapetra with sites mentioned in the text. Courtesy of Google Maps (M. Eaby) [Gournia, Sphoungaras, Alatzomouri-Pefka, Pacheia Ammos, Pseira, Mochlos, Vasiliki, Katalimata, Bramiana, Chryssi, Myrtos Pyrgos, Ephendis Stavromenos in Thryphti, and Pantinou Korifi below Stavromenos Anatoli].

of habitations, including the appearance of nine new village-sized sites during this period.<sup>2</sup> While certainly of considerable interest to archaeologists, the results of these studies have largely failed to draw the general public’s attention to this period of Crete’s first states (or what some regard as Europe’s first civilization). There are many reasons for this disconnect, including the poor visibility of the remains, but some fault also stems from the limited efforts of heritage professionals to prioritize this responsibility. This workshop has tackled the problem head on, exploring the use of ancient landscapes as pathways for improving our understanding, and aiding in the long-term preservation, of Crete’s cultural resources. I want to thank the organizers for inviting me to participate with this small contribution.

The importance and limited visibility of the Protopalatial period led me to select it as the focus of this paper. First, it represents the earliest appearance of palace or state-level political organization in the Aegean and, by extension, Europe. For those raised to believe in the European sense of “classical debts,” this is perhaps puzzling.<sup>3</sup> On Crete, Protopalatial sites and in particular those with possible palaces have represented a sort of holy grail for archaeologists seeking to uncover the mystery of Minoan civilization and its origins.<sup>4</sup> Such questions were in fact at the heart of two recent projects affiliated with the American School of Classical Studies: the campaigns by Watrous at Gournia in 2010–2014 and another

2 Watrous and Schultz 2012a, 41–43.

3 Hanink 2017.

4 Compare Branigan 1970; Renfrew 1972; and Cherry 1986 with Schoep 2006, 2012; Schoep and Tomkins 2012; also Whitelaw 2001, 2004, 2012, 2017, 2018.

by Jeffrey Soles and Costis Davaras at Mochlos from 2004–2010.<sup>5</sup> The second reason for choosing the period was to highlight the problem of site formation processes on the archaeological record, and by extension, our ability to reconstruct the island's ancient landscape in any particular period.

For most of Crete, the Neopalatial material record (i.e. the Second Palace period) is much better preserved than that of the preceding Protopalatial period. For example, on the isthmus of Ierapetra parts of more than 90 Late Minoan I (LM I) houses have been exposed by excavations at Gournia, Pseira, and Mochlos in comparison to fewer than five MM II houses at the same sites.<sup>6</sup> The explanation is a simple matter of taphonomy, whereby the houses of the later period largely reused the building materials of the earlier dwellings, obliterating them in the process.<sup>7</sup> Fortunately for archaeologists, ancient ceramics are proving much harder and are providing a more balanced record of MM II and LM I activity across eastern Crete. In this particular case, archaeologists have made extensive use of MM II Mirabello Ware, which was produced in the area of Gournia and Priniatikos Pyrgos, to build a strong case for the presence of a dynamic Protopalatial economy in the area.<sup>8</sup> In spite of these gains, the recent excavations at Papadiokampos, Mochlos, Pseira, Gournia, and Priniatikos Pyrgos have struggled to recover additional primary architectural contexts displaying this activity.<sup>9</sup>

This fragmented and somewhat frustrating pattern in the material record represents a significant challenge for anyone trying to illustrate the earliest states on Crete, particularly for the general public. In this paper, I try to show how an approach through landscape and an archaeology of the senses can help us bridge this divide. My goal is a layered reconstruction, drawing first on surveys and new excavations before looking at material studies that target the Protopalatial economy and its political and social organization. The conclusions focus on what we can infer about the missing parts (what some proponents of landscape archaeology describe as the space between) through an examination of the *chaîne opératoire* of the material record. My goal is not so much to champion the use of landscape over the discipline's traditional preference for sites, buildings, and artifacts but instead to harness all the available data for investigating large-scale questions.

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5 Watrous et al. 2015; Brogan and Koh 2011; Doudalis 2019.

6 For Gournia, see Buell and McEnroe 2017; for Pseira, see McEnroe 2001, 63–78; for Mochlos, see Soles 2001; Brogan and Barnard 2011, figs. 17.1 and 17.4.

7 An excellent example is provided by the MM II mansion or palace at Gournia; *infra* n. 20.

8 For Mirabello Ware from Gournia, see Betancourt and Silverman 1991, figs. 4–7; Haggis 2012, 147–52. For records of its presence on surveys and excavations outside the immediate environs of Priniatikos Pyrgos and Gournia, see Poursat and Knappett 2005, 24–26; Sofianou and Brogan 2012; Whitelaw 2015; and Doudalis 2019.

9 For Papadiokampos, see Sofianou and Brogan 2012; for Mochlos, see Brogan and Koh 2011; Doudalis 2019; for Pseira, see Betancourt 2005, 290–91; for Gournia, see Watrous et al. 2015.

## Landscape theory

There is no shortage of theoretical approaches to the ancient landscape. My work here draws heavily on regional survey data that allows us to trace changes in settlement patterns from the Final Neolithic (FN) to MM II, and it certainly benefits from the fact that the isthmus of Ierapetra is one of the most thoroughly surveyed landscapes in the entire Aegean. Moreover, the four projects are now fully published.<sup>10</sup> So far, advanced GIS modeling has not been applied, but this will change with Christine Spencer's reexamination of the survey data as part of her ongoing UCL dissertation.<sup>11</sup>

Gary Lock observed a pair of trends in recent GIS investigations that he called "Landscape Then" (landscape patterning as predictive modelling of the ancient world) versus "Landscape Now" (recording the present condition for cultural resource management).<sup>12</sup> Although this paper does not use GIS, it is aimed squarely at resource management in the present. The rich landscape perspectives offered by human ecologists (e.g., Rackham and Moody's groundbreaking *Making of the Cretan Landscape*) and phenomenology also play an important role.<sup>13</sup> While this paper does not attempt an explicit view of the Mirabello as sensed from walking through it, I do take advantage of the perspective when taking visitors to sites in the region (e.g., giving tours of inland sites in the afternoon when aromatic plants are most potent).

## The (re)making of the MM II landscape on the Isthmus

I begin with a quick review of the physical remains from the Protopalatial period from the northern Ierapetra isthmus as they were known in 2008. These finds included the MM II House Aa and House Tombs 1 and 2 at Gournia, the jar burials at Sphoungaras and Pacheia Ammos, the unpublished MM I–II house at Vasiliki, pottery studies by Stelios Andreou, and the surveys at Vrokastro and Kavousi, which provided evidence for population growth.<sup>14</sup> There were tantalizing hints of an emerging elite at Gournia, but the details were still difficult to grasp and very much up for debate.<sup>15</sup>

10 For Pseira, see Betancourt et al. 2004, 2005; for Kavousi, see Haggis 2005; for Gournia, see Watrous and Shultz 2012a and 2012b; for Vrokastro, see Hayden 2004; 2005.

11 Pers. comm. C. Spencer.

12 Lock 2003, 164.

13 Rackham and Moody 1997; Dabney 2016; Vavouranakis 2006.

14 For Gournia, see Soles 1978, 1992; for Sphoungaras, see Hall 1912; for Pacheia Ammos, see Seager 1916; Andreou 1978, 55–119; for Vrokastro, see Hayden 2004, 81–104; for Kavousi, see Haggis 2005, 69–74.

15 E.g., Soles 1992; Watrous 1994.

## Survey

The publication of the Gournia Survey in 2012 provided the crucial missing piece of regional data and it incorporated the previous results from the Vrokastro, Kavousi, and Pseira Surveys.<sup>16</sup> In MM IB–II (Fig. 2), Watrous noted that the region witnessed a three-fold increase in the number of settlements (from 28 to 76) and in particular, village-sized settlements (from 4–13).<sup>17</sup> The density of settlements and the diverse new environments exploited indicate a sharp intensification of land use. Moreover, the settlements group into four clusters, perhaps reflecting extended kinship groups, with the cluster around Gournia containing four village-sized settlements representing the most complex group with signs of increasing social hierarchy and inequality.<sup>18</sup> This is in fact the densest period of settlement recorded on the isthmus in any phase of antiquity; and little by little recent excavations have started filling in more details of this landscape.

## The landscape of settlements: new excavations at Gournia, Mochlos, Bramiana, and Katalimata

From 2010 to 2015, Watrous' excavation targeted the Prepalatial and Protopalatial settlements at Gournia, which had been identified by the survey as the largest site in the most complex settlement cluster in the region.<sup>19</sup> One of Watrous' most important discoveries was the foundation and plan of a Protopalatial mansion or palace underneath the later Neopalatial palace. Matthew Buell and John McEnroe identified a white metalimestone which was used exclusively in the Protopalatial period for this monumental structure (Fig. 3).<sup>20</sup> Part of an impressive MM II house was also recorded in the Gournia artisans' quarter, and sections of MM II streets were distinguished from later streets by their blue paving stones.<sup>21</sup> Excavations at Mochlos from 2004 to 2010 uncovered considerable deposits of MM II pottery and parts of three rooms of Protopalatial House 1 which held important metal finds (bronze axes and a silver vessel). The pottery was the subject of a dissertation by Giorgos Doudalis.<sup>22</sup> Elsewhere in the foothills northwest of Ierapetra, rescue excavations by Vili Apostolakou at Bramiana recovered a small but significant deposit of MM II and early Neopalatial pottery that appears to come from a hamlet destroyed during the construction of the Bramiana res-

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16 Watrous and Schultz 2012a.

17 Watrous and Schultz 2012a, 41.

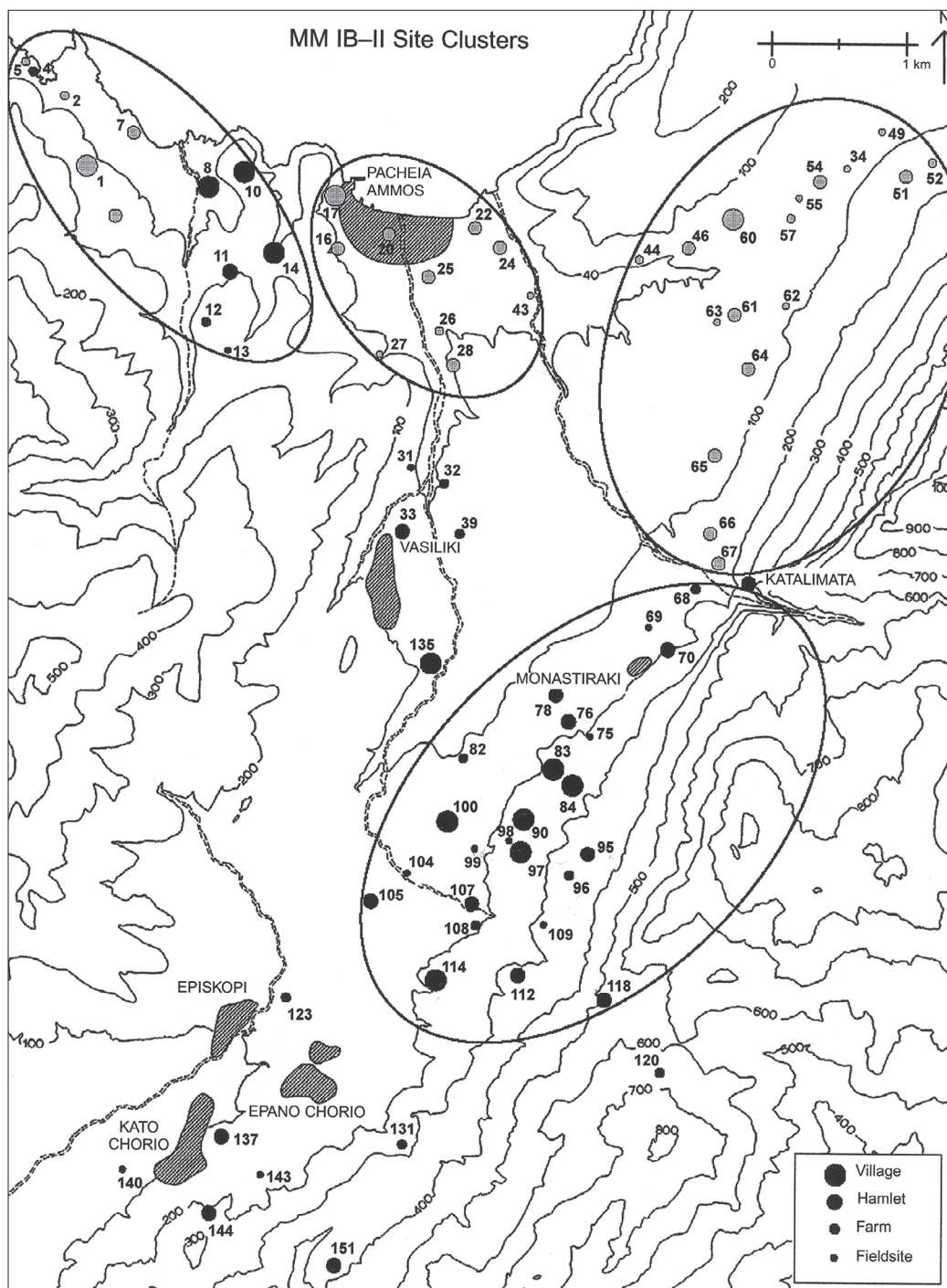
18 Watrous and Schultz 2012a, 41–42.

19 Supra n. 18; Watrous et al. 2015, 408–13.

20 Buell and McEnroe 2017, 209–13.

21 Watrous et al. 2015, 409–15; Buell and McEnroe 2017, 208–14.

22 Brogan and Koh 2011; Doudalis 2019.



**Fig. 2** Map of the MM IB-II distribution of sites in the northern half of the Isthmus (after Watrous and Schultz 2012, map 21).





**Fig. 3** Plan of the LM I Gournia palace highlighting the location of MM II walls (after Buell and McEnroe 2017).

ervoir.<sup>23</sup> Although the site itself was not located, the pottery from Bramiana (and Mochlos for that matter) reveals important links to sites like Gournia.<sup>24</sup> Finally, in 2008 Krzysztof Nowicki published the MM II pottery from dwellings built on remote ledges inside the Cha Gorge (Fig. 4), the location of which suggested that the widespread MM IIB destructions at sites across the region were associated with a period of instability that forced inhabitants to seek refuge on the inaccessible cliffs (something that appears to accompany other periods of stress in the region in FN, LM IB, and LM IIIC).<sup>25</sup>



**Fig. 4** View of Cha Gorge marking ledges with MM IIB houses (after Nowicki 2008, pl. 1B).

### **The landscape of craft: Alatzomouri-Pefka and Chryssi**

Another recent rescue excavation by Apostolakou exposed a series of nine rock-cut basins in the pine trees next to Richard Seager's Villa in Pacheia Ammos at Alatzomouri-Pefka (Fig. 5).<sup>26</sup> Several hundred restorable vessels (Figs. 6–7) were recovered in a well cut into the

<sup>23</sup> Apostolakou et al. 2019; Apostolakou et al. 2020.

<sup>24</sup> Apostolakou et al. 2016; Apostolakou et al. 2019; Apostolakou et al. 2021.

<sup>25</sup> Nowicki 2008, 45–51.

<sup>26</sup> Betancourt et al. 2012; Brogan et al. 2012; Apostolakou et al. 2016; Apostolakou et al. 2020.



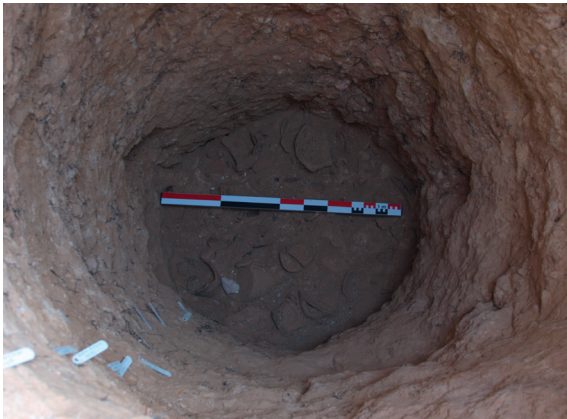
floor of the largest basin. Together, these MM IIB finds allow us to identify the site as a dye-works installation which formed part of an impressive local textile industry that was probably organized by groups based at Gournia.<sup>27</sup> The site's function, which likely involved the particularly pungent smells of purple dyes, is one reason for its location on the hills away from other habitations. Additional excavations by Apostolakou on the island of Chryssi in 2008 and 2009 and Chrysa Sofianou from 2016–2018 recovered parts of multiple purple shell middens (Fig. 8) produced by groups who began exploiting the island's unique marine



**Fig. 5** View of the MM IIB rock-cut basins at Alatzomouri-Pefka (Chr. Papanikolopoulos).



**Fig. 6** MM IIB Cookpot PAI 380 from Alatzomouri-Pefka (Chr. Papanikolopoulos).



**Fig. 7** MM IIB Cistern or well cut into a rockcut basin from Alatzomouri-Pefka (K. Chalikias).



**Fig. 8** MM II purple shell remains at Site 1 on Chryssi Island (T. Brogan).

27 Betancourt et al. 2012.

resources in MM IIB.<sup>28</sup> Study of the Chryssi pottery has revealed significant amounts of Mirabello Ware, including cooking pots, transport jars, and consumption vessels, perhaps left behind by groups visiting the island temporarily in the Protopalatial period.<sup>29</sup> Together, these finds from Chryssi and Pefka present some of the earliest and best evidence for purple and textile production in the entire eastern Mediterranean, as well as for East Crete's significant role in what would remain an important industry for millennia.<sup>30</sup>

## The underwater seascape

Evidence for Protopalatial sea traffic and trade was recently discovered by Elpida Hatzidaki during her excavation of a Middle Minoan II shipwreck at a depth of 45 m, nearly 400 m east of the island of Pseira (Fig. 9).<sup>31</sup> The pottery on board the ship included large numbers of MM II transport vessels, many of which come from the Gournia area as well as other sites



**Fig. 9** MM II jar recovered from the Protopalatial shipwreck at Pseira (E. Hatzidaki).

28 Apostolakou et al. 2012, 2016; Brogan et al. 2019.

29 Study of the MM II pottery from House A.2 at Chryssi is being undertaken by Chrysa Sofianou, Philip Betancourt, and the author of this paper.

30 *Supra* n. 26.

31 Hatzidaki and Betancourt 2005–2006; Hatzidaki-Marder 2021.

on the north coast of Crete between Malia and Petras.<sup>32</sup> No traces of the boat itself were preserved, but the unique nature of the cargo makes a convincing case.

## The landscape of burial

According to Borja Legarra Herrero, there was a sharp decline in the number of cemeteries in use on the isthmus in MM II, with activity limited to Pseira, Gournia/Sphoungaras, Pacheia Ammos, and Kalo Chorio Tomb A.<sup>33</sup> The most interesting case for this paper is Gournia/Sphoungaras where a two-part cemetery emerges in MM I, with wealthier burials in House Tombs I and II at Gournia and poorer pithos burials at Sphoungaras.<sup>34</sup> A similar pattern of pithos burials also appears at Pacheia Ammos in the same period, but further study and publication is needed to clarify the situation in MM I–II.<sup>35</sup> The decline in the number of cemeteries is noteworthy because it appears in striking contrast to the increase in the number of MM IB–II sites recorded across the plain by the Gournia Survey Project.<sup>36</sup>

## The landscape of ritual

Finally, two significant peak sanctuaries were recorded in the last 15 years: one by Watrous at Ephendis Stavromenos in Thripti, with commanding views of Gournia, Mochlos, and both the north and south coasts, the other by Sofianou and Yannis Papadatos at Pantinou Korifi below Stavromenos Anatoli.<sup>37</sup> According to the excavators, the latter is dated MM II and was replaced in the Neopalatial period by another peak sanctuary nearby. Watrous dated the Thripti example to the Neopalatial period, linking its appearance to the construction of a Gournia palace in MM III. With the recent discovery of a monumental structure at Gournia in MM II, it may be worth revisiting this site to see if there are any traces of MM II material.<sup>38</sup>

Together the finds from all these sites provide small platforms for viewing the Protopalatial landscape of the isthmus and its associated coastal plains. While none is particularly

32 Hadjidaki and Betancourt 2005–2006, 84–5; Betancourt 2021.

33 Legarra Herrero 2014, 110–11.

34 Hall 1912, 55–60 (described as MM I in the volume but now better understood as MM IB–II); Soles 1992; Legarra Herrero 2014, 107–34.

35 Seager 1916, pl. XI (again described as MM I in the volume but now better understood as MM IB–II).

36 Watrous and Schultz 2012a, 41–42.

37 For Ephendis Stavromenos, see Watrous and Schultz 2012b, 56–57; for Pantinou Korifi, pers. comm. Chrysa Sofianou and Yiannis Papadatos.

38 Buell and McEnroe 2017.

impressive (and some are actually or nearly impossible to visit), together the excavated contexts offer much more than simple dots on a survey distribution map.

## **Material studies which infer the use of the landscape**

In this section I want to show how material studies targeting the production of food, pottery, and textiles from many of these sites can help us construct a much more compelling narrative of Protopalatial life and death in this part of Crete. Paying particular attention to the selection and management of natural resources, this same research also incorporates the physical landscape into the emerging regional narrative.

### **Foodways**

Environmental data from excavations provides the starting point. Recent excavations at Gournia recovered extensive remains of grapes, suggesting that viticulture in the surrounding hillsides and terraces between the town and harbor was significant in all periods.<sup>39</sup> The finds also suggest that many of the MM II amphoras produced at the site and found on the Pseira shipwreck (Fig. 9) were destined for the export of wine.<sup>40</sup> Extensive faunal but limited botanical remains were recovered in the MM II dye workshop at Alatzomouri-Pefka. Study of the animal remains by Dimitra Mylona suggests that shepherds were raising flocks of sheep and goat in a mixed meat and wool strategy.<sup>41</sup> The cookpots from contemporary MM II sites across the isthmus of Ierapetra (Fig. 6) suggest that food was being fried in distinctive sets of cooking dishes and trays or stewed in tripod cookpots. Recent experimental studies by Morrison (Fig. 10) have demonstrated how these shapes could have been used to cook a variety of foods and then potentially store the meals for one or two days with the use of lids.<sup>42</sup> Recent excavations have not recovered extensive evidence for cereal production, but I would like to draw attention to Sabine Beckman's research on Minoan settlements in the hills west of Hagios Nikolaos.<sup>43</sup> She observed an extensive system of farmsteads with field walls, paths, and associated agricultural tools. Preliminarily, she dated much of this to the Protopalatial period, though some may belong to the Neopalatial. Even more importantly, she has conducted experiments on the effort and land needed to raise enough barley

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39 Watrous et al. 2015, 45–51; Watrous 2012, 538–39.

40 For the amphoras, jugs, and jars that are found at sites across eastern Crete, see Boyd Hawes et al. 1908, 38–39, pl. VI; Betancourt and Silverman 1991; Betancourt 2021.

41 Mylona 2020.

42 Morrison et al. 2015.

43 Beckmann 2012.





**Fig. 10** An experiment by Dr. J. Morrison to understand the manufacture, use, and performance of Minoan cooking vessels (T. Brogan).

to feed a family of four and then convert the grains into hardtack bread.<sup>44</sup> More of this type of work is needed and likely would be greatly appreciated by the general public.

### Pottery manufacture

Macroscopic and microscopic fabric analysis indicates that pottery was produced at sites in the region from the Final Neolithic and exported widely across the isthmus from EM II.<sup>45</sup> If anything, this traffic increased during the Protopalatial period. Finds from the recent excavations at Gournia, including potters' wheels, bats, pits for clay, and kilns of various dates indicate that some or much of this pottery was being manufactured in the artisan's quarter on the north side of the town from EM III/MM IA.<sup>46</sup> To locate the source of both the clay and the characteristic black and white temper, Eleni Nodarou and A. Georgatos conducted

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44 Beckmann 2014.

45 Whitelaw 2015; Brogan et al. 2018; Brogan 2021.

46 Watrous et al. 2015, 409–23.



a geological sampling project (Fig. 11).<sup>47</sup> The results, which included firing experimental briquettes, suggest that the clay comes from the area just north of Vasiliki and the granodioritic temper from outcrops near Gournia. All of this has given us a much more dynamic picture of both material selection and the actual locus of pottery production, providing a nice compliment to the much wider distribution of these products all over central and eastern Crete in MM II. In this period the potters were producing a wide range of shapes, including the amphora, as transport containers for liquids produced by other craftsmen at Gournia (e.g., wine, oil, and perfumes). These Mirabello pots have very distinctive decorative patterns that would have made them instantly recognizable in MM II.<sup>48</sup> The pottery was circulated by boats like that of the Pseira shipwreck or overland on donkeys as Whitelaw has suggested already from EM IIB.<sup>49</sup> This was not an empty landscape.



**Fig. 11** View of Georgotas collecting clay samples in the isthmus region (E. Nodarou).

47 Georgatos 2013; and Nodarou (who supervised the MA thesis on the subject by Georgatos), forthcoming.

48 *Supra* n. 8.

49 Hadjidaki and Betancourt 2005–2006; Whitelaw 2015, 45; Betancourt 2021.

## Textile manufacture

The discovery of the purple workshop on Chryssi and the dyeworks at Pefka offers a unique perspective on another major element of the Minoan economy: textile production.<sup>50</sup> Shepherds were raising flocks of animals in summer pastures in the mountains and winter pastures in the lower plains, and even on islands like Chryssi, Koufonisi, and Pseira.<sup>51</sup> At the same time families were collecting purple shells to make color, with some intensification of the process at sites like Chryssi where groups were probably staying only temporarily to collect shells and produce color for more specialized workshops like that excavated at Pefka.<sup>52</sup> Wool was delivered and cleaned before being sent to the dye workshop where hundreds of cookpots, jugs, and basins aided in the preparation of colors which were then used in the large rock-cut basins found on the site.<sup>53</sup> The absence of spindle whorls and loom weights at Pefka suggest that spinning and weaving took place elsewhere, probably back at Gournia, and provide a hint of the organizational complexity of the work.<sup>54</sup> Cutler's functional analysis of the MM II weights from Alatzomouri-Pefka (Fig. 12) and MM II Pseira



**Fig. 12** View of the Teloneion or Custom's House in Pacheia Ammos, Crete (T. Brogan).

50 *Supra* n. 29.

51 For an ethnographic study of recent practices in the area, see Chalikias 2013, 45–47.

52 *Supra* n. 27–8.

53 *Supra* n. 28.

54 Ongoing studies by Sofianou, Betancourt, and the author of the paper.

suggests that there was a focus on producing textiles with very fine thread and that more than one variety of textile could have been produced: both relatively dense, balanced textiles, and more open and/or weft-faced textiles.<sup>55</sup> The presence of the monumental building at Gournia suggests that groups there may have been managing the specialized workshop at Pefka and at least part of the textile economy, along the lines of the finds from Building D of Quartier Mu at Malia.<sup>56</sup> Again this one industry provides a useful link for sites recorded in the landscape and a plausible narrative for the “spaces between” which were obviously used for flocks and sourcing the plant and animal dyes.

## Conclusions

All this evidence helps us begin reconstructing the Protopalatial landscape of the isthmus of Ierapetra with people and tangible stories. What is surprising is just how little of any single context is preserved. The MM II palace at Gournia is covered over; direct evidence for pottery, wine, and oil manufacture from this period is no longer visible; nothing remains on the sea floor from the Pseira shipwreck, and the site of Katalimata is perched on a nearly unreachable cliff. The story of MM II purple production on Chryssi relies on the remains of crushed shells, while not a trace of the MM II dwelling at Bramiana was recovered (it was bulldozed to create the reservoir). The one exception is the dyeworks installation at Alatzomouri-Pefka where nine rock-cut basins are preserved; however, the peripheral buildings were knocked down in antiquity and their contents packed into a nearby well.

While the new museum in Hagios Nikolaos will highlight a sample of the Protopalatial artifacts from all these sites, the poor preservation of the contexts remains a significant hurdle to more dynamic narratives and actual autopsy. For this reason, I suggest that the subject might be better suited to a small museum with posters and video emphasizing an archaeological synthesis of the region or landscape along the lines of what Efi and Yiannis Sakellarakis have done for the sites of Archanes and Zominthos.<sup>57</sup> A great location for such a display is available in the village of Pacheia Ammos, which would otherwise never be suitable for a museum, but is located conveniently close to the sites of Gournia and Alatzomouri-Pefka. The village already has a suitable venue, the local Teloneion or Customs House (Fig. 12), which was recently restored for events organized by the local community. My proposal calls for displaying a series of posters targeting one or more phases of local settlement history on the isthmus.

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55 Cutler et al. 2021.

56 Supra n. 20; Cutler et al. 2013.

57 For Archanes, see <https://www.archaiologia.gr/blog/issue/the-museum-of-archanes-2/>.

A similar museum has now been constructed in the village of Anogeia for the site of Minoan Zominthos.

For this paper I have tried to show how much can be done with the Protopalatial narrative, even when no single site is well preserved. I also hope to have shown how several features of the landscape (the coasts, foothills, gorges, and upland) can be highlighted and integrated (Fig. 1). The result would not only offer a unique synthesis of what is otherwise a fragmentary and elusive period, but also one which comes together nicely when viewed on a larger scale. The optics would also, I believe, generate more interest in the efforts necessary to preserve even partial glimpses into the past, which in this case also happens to capture Crete's first state-level society.

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