

Reconstructing the Architectural Sequence of the Palace at Malia

Mycenaean Seminar

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Maud Devolder

Postdoctoral Researcher of the Gerda Henkel Foundation

UCLouvain – AEGIS and French School at Athens

Discovered in 1915 by Joseph Hazzidakis, the Palace at Malia has been under excavation by the French School at Athens since 1922. During the various campaigns, traces of occupation ranging from the Pre- to the Final Palatial period were noted, the chronological intricacies of which have occupied several generations of French School archaeologists. Indeed, after the general clearing of the ruins, a high number of stratigraphical tests were made under the latest floors, starting with F. Chapouthier, P. Demargne and, above all, continued by O. Pelon until 1992.

Although at times rather discrete, stratigraphical evidence attested a long sequence of occupation at the location of the Palace at Malia. Remains of several structures dating to the second half of the 3rd millennium were identified, some of which were incorporated in the Protopalatial building that was constructed at the onset of the 2nd millennium BC. Knowledge of the Protopalatial Palace was significantly reinforced by both the early excavations and recent soundings. Published studies have suggested a marked continuity between some areas of the Palace (i.e. Central Court, Hypostyle Hall, Eastern Magazines) from the Proto- to the Neopalatial period, while the northwestern area, a wing which sheltered activities related to storage and production, was abandoned after the Protopalatial period. As is the case for other Palaces on the island, the transition between the Proto- and Neopalatial periods is also accompanied by drastic changes in the Palace at Malia, especially where the construction of new façades and specific sets of rooms often incorporating new building materials and techniques is concerned. The current architectural study of the Palace at Malia focuses on the detailed understanding of the nature, plan and appearance of the First Palace, on the modifications that were made to it after the Protopalatial period, and on the extent of the Neopalatial reconstruction.

Based on detailed observations of standing architectural remains, this communication sheds light on the successive stages within the architectural sequence of the building. The state of the West Wing before and after the 1700 BC destruction is explored, providing relevant data for discussing the use of various building materials and techniques during the Proto- and Neopalatial periods. Also, the functions of masons' marks are explored, together with the involvement of specialised builders who participated to the building project.



GERDA HENKEL STIFTUNG



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