

Building in Minoan Crete. An Energetic Approach of Neopalatial Architecture

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‘Architectural Energetics’ is a methodology which offers to estimate the time necessary to construct a building. It is based on standard labour-time units necessary for the accomplishment of the building tasks, namely the procurement of raw materials, their transport to the building site, their manufacture and their assembly into a final building. Such method mainly developed in the field of Meso-American archaeology, but it is here adapted to fit the requirements of an application to the Late Bronze Age Cretan record. A sample of 23 edifices dated to the Neopalatial period (1700-1450 BC) is considered, which offers to explore the size of the building gangs, their skills and, in some cases, their status as specialists. Specific choices made by the builders regarding the use of some materials and techniques over others, and the impact of such choices on the construction sequence are explored. More generally, ‘architectural energetics’ emphasizes the limited impact of building projects in Late Bronze Age Crete, in marked difference with large-scale projects in broadly contemporary societies, perhaps indicating the lack of interest of Minoans for a monumentality expressed through sheer size.

