

EULIMENE

Vol 22 (2021)

EULIMENE 22 (2021)

ΕΥΛΙΜΕΝΗ
EULIMENE

ΤΟΜΟΣ 22
ΜΕΣΟΓΕΙΑΚΗ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΚΗ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑ
ΡΕΘΥΜΝΟ 2021

Sacred, Communal or Private “Oikoi”? Ambivalent edifices of the Archaic period on the island of Despotiko in the Cyclades

Alexandros Mazarakis Ainian, Alexandra Alexandridou, Kornilia Daifa, Eleni Chatzinikolaou

doi: [10.12681/eul.34053](https://doi.org/10.12681/eul.34053)

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Τόμος 22
Μεσογειακή Αρχαιολογική Εταιρεία
Ρέθυμνο 2021

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EULIMENE

2021

Online ISSN: 2945-0357

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Περίληψεις / Summaries / Zusammenfassungen /

Sommaires / Riassunti

Angeliki Lebessi, “The Erotic Goddess of the Syme sanctuary, Crete”: Additions and corrections to the 2009 article, *EYAIMENH* 22 (2021), 1-8.

Η πρόσφατη δημοσίευση των 238 αναθημάτων από πηλό, τα οποία εικονίζουν μορφές διαφορετικού φύλου και οντότητας (υπερβατικής ή θνητής) κατά περιόδους της λειτουργίας του ιερού της Σύμης, όπως και η ολοκληρωμένη μελέτη της κεραμικής της 2ης χιλ. έως και του 4ου αι. μ.Χ. καθιστούν αναγκαίες ορισμένες προσθήκες στο τιτλοφορούμενο άρθρο. Παράλληλα επιβάλλουν και την αναθεώρηση μερικών υποθετικών εκτιμήσεων μου, οι οποίες σχετίζονται με την Ερωτική Θεά του ιερού της Σύμης.

Following the recent publication of the clay anthropomorphic votives from the Syme sanctuary (Crete) and their comparable thematic relation to the anthropomorphic bronze offerings from the same sanctuary published back in 1985, I realized that certain hypotheses, which I had formulated in my 2009 article concerning the Erotic Goddess at Syme, were wrong. The isolation of two transcendental female figures out of a total number of 238 anthropomorphic votives, which depict both male and female figures either mortal or immortal, necessitates additions to and, even more so, the revision of my erroneous assessments in the 2009 article.

Alexandros Mazarakis Ainian – Alexandra Alexandridou – Kornilia Daifa – Eleni Chatzinikolaou, Sacred, Communal or Private “Oikoi”? Ambivalent edifices of the Archaic period on the island of Despotiko in the Cyclades, *EYAIMENH* 22 (2021), 9-40.

Το πλούσιο αρχαϊκό ιερό του Απόλλωνα, που βρίσκεται στη θέση Μάνδρα στο Δεσποτικό, δυτικά της Αντιπάρου, αποτελεί τον κύριο πόλο ερευνητικού ενδιαφέροντος για την ακατοίκητη νησίδα. Ωστόσο, η εν εξελίξει ανασκαφή έχει φέρει στο φως μια εκτεταμένη εγκατάσταση, που περιλαμβάνει 22 κτίρια, που εκτείνονται χρονολογικά από την Πρώιμη Εποχή του Σιδήρου έως την ελληνιστική περίοδο.

Η κατανόηση του χαρακτήρα και της χρήσης αυτών των κτηρίων είναι ουσιαστική για την ερμηνεία της θέσης. Η αποσαφήνιση των ορίων μεταξύ «λατρευτικού» και «κοσμικού» σε χωροταξικό επίπεδο μπορεί να επιτευχθεί με την εφαρμογή αυστηρής μεθοδολογίας.

Στο πλαίσιο Ερευνητικού Ευρωπαϊκού Προγράμματος προορισμένου για υποψήφιους διδάκτορες, επιχειρήθηκε η συστηματική μελέτη της αρχιτεκτονικής και της υλικής σκευής συγκεκριμένων οικοδομημάτων που χρονολογούνται πριν την διαμόρφωση του αρχαϊκού ιερού με στόχο τη διασαφήνιση της λειτουργίας του.

Στο παρόν άρθρο συζητείται η μεθοδολογία που υιοθετήθηκε για την επίτευξη των παραπάνω, καθώς και τα διαφορετικά τεχνολογικά μέσα (φωτογραμμετρία, Γεωγραφικά Συστήματα Πληροφοριών [GIS] και τα Εφαρμοσμένα μαθηματικά). Έμφαση δίνεται στα πρώτα αποτελέσματα της συνδυαστικής μελέτης των αρχιτεκτονικών καταλοίπων και των κινητών ευρημάτων.

The recent discoveries at the site of Mandra on the island of Despotiko in the Cyclades is here used as a case study for showing the blur and rather unnecessary divisions between these notions and the need to adopt a more inclusive view of life and activity in the early Aegean.

In the frame of the Research Project Sacred, Public or Private Buildings? Ambiguous sites and structures in the Early Cyclades, a strict methodology has been adopted, aiming at deciphering the “character” of a number of buildings. The adopted methodology has been based on the detailed documentation of the architectural remains and the related finds. In the former case, the photogrammetry of the buildings, including ground plans and wall sections, has been combined with a structural analysis mainly involving the descriptive representation of the architectural remains and the examination of the techniques and materials used during the construction process. The various types of finds from each building have not been only classified according to their types, but an emphasis has been placed on their spatial distribution revealed through the use of the Geographic Information System (GIS). On this basis, a synthetic study both of the architectural remains and of the artefacts in their original context was possible, elucidating the function of the selected buildings and their components. At the same time, a list of material correlates was created to provide a basis as secure as possible for designating each building’s “character”.

Μαρία Γκιώνη, Η κατοικία στην επικράτεια της Κορίνθου από την Αρχαϊκή έως και την Ελληνιστική περίοδο. Μια πρώτη κριτική προσέγγιση, *EYAIMENH* 22 (2021), 41-111.

The examination of the evolution of the Corinthian houses from the Protocorinthian to the Hellenistic period through published material has shown that their walls were mostly made of stone foundations, on which were placed mud bricks. Initially the walls are sometimes curved and tangled in slightly blunt or acute angles. Gradually this trend tends to be reduced until the 4th c. BC. The openings between the inner rooms probably didn’t bear doors.

During the Protocorinthian period the houses are carefully constructed. They already have courtyards, whose place is not yet at the southern part of the house. The arrangement of each house is very different. The great majority of the archaic houses in Greece had just one or two rooms, so the number of five or six rooms of Houses 2 and 6 (see Appendix 4 with the catalogue of houses) respectively in the city center displays a complex social differentiation in Corinth during the Protocorinthian period, that is relevant with the commercial and industrial bloom of Corinth, as well as the making of the city-state. In the 6th c. BC the houses are equally good constructions, almost rectangular in plan, some of them more irregular. The court appears in the middle and there are series of rooms around it. From the 5th c. BC onward the tile roof appears, the courtyard is located in the southern part or in the center of the house, and a *pastas* appears at its north or west. *Pastas* is absent during the centuries to follow, even though it occurs elsewhere during this period, e.g. at Olynthus. During the 5th c. BC the houses had no regular plan or common size. However, in the houses that were not erected on previous constructions one can better discern the new characteristic elements of the era, such as the direct course of the walls, the right angles, the big cut stones for the walls.

Even in the 5th c. BC, the spaces cannot be identified with a certain use, except for the court. In the beginning of the 4th c. BC the cellar for the storage of food appears. Cellars are also used in the Hellenistic times. In a fourth c. BC house the possible traces of the evolution of the *pastas*, the *peristyle* was also found. In the 3rd c. BC the Long Building no. 28 in the Panagia Field and the long 5-room Building in the north side of the Rachi settlement at Isthmia probably were used as storage buildings that served houses with industrial character. The houses themselves on Rachi have a simpler plan than those of the previous period, less rooms with more linear arrangement, but they usually include a court at the south. Pits for storage amphoras with a formed floor occasionally occur through all the periods examined.

During the whole period examined there are a lot of examples of house industry, however due to lack of further evidence we do not know the percentage of them in relation to the non-industrial houses. A new type of house industry emerges on the Rachi settlement in the 3rd c. BC, with alike pressing rooms for making oil or wine. The character of the settlement on Rachi suggests that there was a central organization of its enterprise, probably forced by the Macedonians who held Corinth at the time.

The Protocorinthian wells were a distance of a few meters away from the houses they served. From the 6th c. BC onward the wells appear in the courtyards, in the course of change of the house plans towards a more introverted character. In the Hellenistic settlement of Rachi at Isthmia, one single well and one pear-shaped cistern served the whole of the settlement, showing that the settlement was under central management. During the Hellenistic period pear-shaped cisterns are dominant. The first example lies beside House no. 41 at Perachora.

The great cisterns that were used as part of a house industry appear in the 4th c. BC. The hard plaster with which they are covered inside shows their probable use as rainwater collectors.

The floors of the Protocorinthian houses are quite elaborate. Pebble floors are mostly preferred at the time. In the 5th c. BC the most common floors were made from clay or from plaster. The plaster floor appears then for the first time and is mostly used in the *andrones*. From the end of the 5th c. BC appear the pebble floors with a presentation of animals or plants that are used in the *andrones* as well. The floor from chipped limestone is used in the courtyards because of its great endurance. The pebble and the hard plaster floors are more elaborate to construct, whereas the clay floor is more careless.

The first *andron* appears in the 6th c. BC at Perachora. This innovation maybe has to do with the nearby Heraeum which at that time was an important centre of circulation of ideas from all over the known world, especially from the East. In the 4th c. BC *andrones* occur at the Houses nos 12 and 40, but then they disappear.

In the Archaic Era no traces of decoration have been saved. From the end of the 5th c. BC there is a tendency to decorate the interior, for example with painted walls, pebble mosaics in *andrones* and a peristyle. In the circumference, Perachora doesn't follow the trend for decoration. In the 3rd c. BC there is a turn towards industrial or rural houses, probably due to the Macedonians holding Corinth at the time.

Three Protocorinthian houses in the city centre were built in linear alignment, which is a characteristic element of the making of the *asty* throughout the Archaic era.

The same alignment appears at the same spot in the 4th c. BC during the erection of three new houses, however, we're left with no other traces for a similar system of city blocks in the city. In the 5th c. BC the houses (especially those with older phases) have a lack of symmetrical elements in plan, and the public streets follow the course of the irregular house walls. The houses at Perachora are mostly solitary structures and not parts of an organized settlement plan. In the Hellenistic period the Rachi settlement grows in between streets that cross each other at right angles, however the houses are irregular in plan and different in size.

Aqueducts are used for the first time along with wells in the 5th c. BC and continue in the 4th c. BC. In the 3rd c. BC only one example of a house aqueduct is known.

In the 6th and 5th c. BC local sanctuaries were occasionally established over abandoned houses within the *asty*, a practice not found elsewhere.

Mariusz Mielczarek, Rhodes and the Bosphorus. A contribution to the discussion, *EYAIMENH* 22 (2021), 113-120.

An inscription dated to the reign of King Pairisades II (284/3-ca 245 BC), the son of King Spartocus III (304/3-284/3 BC) and carved on the base of a monument aroused great interest, becoming the main argument in the discussion about the relationship between Rhodes and the Bosporan state in the 3rd c. BC.

SACRED, COMMUNAL OR PRIVATE “OIKOI”? AMBIVALENT EDIFICES OF THE ARCHAIC PERIOD ON THE ISLAND OF DESPOTIKO IN THE CYCLADES*

Archaeologists are still struggling with the definition and use of the terms “ritual”, “religion”, and “cult”. The relevant bibliography is vast and new archaeological material is posing new questions, seeking for more answers through the application of new methodologies and approaches. Both cult and religion are ideologically loaded holistic concepts, with rituals, which represent actions, forming part of them¹. Ritual, the “paramount archaeological safe-word”², regularly follows anything that cannot be understood or functionalised in the archaeological record for three decades now³. Archaeologists largely draw from the related extensive anthropological studies⁴ with those by Catherine Bell being the most used⁵. Bell underlined the difficulty of separating clear-cut ritual and profane activities by shedding light to a series of intermediate zones between the two ends consisting of ritualised events, that is ritual-like activities. According to her, ritual does not solely apply to religious institutionalised activity, but it has rather more to do with the process of ritualisation and the degree to which activities are ritualised⁶. In Geertz’s framework, rituals are knitted with humans’ everyday existence⁷. Despite the interchangeable use of the terms cult and ritual, the latter is deeply rooted in the wider context of religion⁸. Religion has been rightly seen as an umbrella notion covering –the non-easily traceable in the archaeological evidence– ritual and cult⁹. In the highly influential anthropological framework, proposed by Clifford Geertz, religion has been

* The present article is the fruit of the research project *Sacred, Public or Private Buildings? Ambiguous sites and structures in the Early Cyclades*, which lasted for 15 months (2020-2021), and was funded by the European Social Fund (EΔBM103). It was directed by A. Mazarakis Ainian with A. Alexandridou being an academic consultant [see the relevant website at <http://extras.ha.uth.gr/oikoi/index.php?page=home>, last accessed 22-02-2023]. The contributors would like to thank sincerely Yannis Kourayos, the director of the Despotiko Project, for granting access to unpublished material from the excavation at Mandra on Despotiko.

¹ Pakkanen 2015, 29.

² Haysom 2019, 54.

³ For the criticism against the archaeological conception of ritual: Bradley 2003, 5-8; Insoll 2004, 15-7; Fogelin 2007, 58-59; Insoll 2007, 3-4; Kyriakidis 2007, 290-294.

⁴ Pakkanen 2015, 25-30; Haysom 2019, 53-56.

⁵ Bell 1992, 1997.

⁶ Bell 1997, 164, 169.

⁷ For the application of Geertz’s framework at the case of Karphi: Haysom 2019.

⁸ Insoll 2004, 11-12; 2007, 3.

⁹ For the problems concerning the archaeological approach of religion see Insoll 2007, 3-4.

termed as a system of symbols, a symbolic communication between people¹⁰. Cult stands between religion and ritual as a pattern of ritual behaviour within particular geographical and temporal frameworks¹¹. According to Pakkanen, “cult is like a long necklace made out of separate beads, rituals and rites”¹².

The relationship or rather the distinction between religious/cultic on one hand, and secular/profane on the other has long occupied archaeological research. Colin Renfrew’s anthropologically inspired framework for identifying ritual based on specific archaeological correlates, though criticized by several scholars¹³, has been largely used in Greek archaeology¹⁴. The last three decades saw adaptations of this scheme for the characterisation of Early Iron Age sites and the associated material remains¹⁵. In all cases, the dichotomy imposed between these notions rises as a central issue, even though it has been long criticised since the use of the terms reflects the western rather than the ancient belief system¹⁶.

Indeed, the archaeological data from the Early Iron Age and Archaic Cyclades are indicative of our inability to draw clear lines between cultic and profane and consequently to characterise as such specific spaces, edifices or objects¹⁷. The recent discoveries at the site of Mandra on the island of Despotiko in the Cyclades is here used as a case study for showing the blur and rather unnecessary divisions between these notions and the need to adopt a more inclusive view of life and activity in the early Aegean.

Mandra, a plateau at the northernmost and largest peninsula of the uninhabited islet of Despotiko (fig.1), has risen as one of the most important cultic centres in the Cyclades, due to the discovery of an extended temenos dedicated to Apollo¹⁸. The number, variety and spatial organization of the discovered buildings mark the site as rather unique for the Archaic Cyclades. Except for two buildings (Buildings A and Δ), securely recognised as cult edifices, the function of the rest 24 had to be explored.

In the frame of the Research Project *Sacred, Public or Private Buildings? Ambiguous sites and structures in the Early Cyclades*, a strict methodology has been adopted, aiming at deciphering the “character” of a number of buildings. The adopted methodology has been based on the detailed documentation of the architectural remains and the related finds. In the former case, the photogrammetry of the buildings, including ground plans and wall sections¹⁹, has been combined with a structural analysis mainly

¹⁰ Geertz 1966.

¹¹ Pakkanen 2015, 29.

¹² Pakkanen 2015, 29.

¹³ For these see Pakkanen 2015, 26, n. 1; Haysom 2019, 54, n. 3. See also Brück 1999 and Bradley 2003, who emphasized on the difficulties of understanding the relevant past conceptions and practices. For more recent attempts to define contextual criteria for identifying cultic activity, see Barrowclough 2007; Insoll 2007, 1-9.

¹⁴ Renfrew 1985, 11-26; 1994, 51-52; 2007, 114-119.

¹⁵ Morgan 1999; Kerschner 2003, 248 (sanctuary of Artemis at Ephesos); Eder 2006, 202-10; Verdan *et al.* 2011 (sanctuary of Apollo at Eretria).

¹⁶ Cf. Brück 1999, 328-335; Insoll 2004, 73-74.

¹⁷ Mazarakis Ainian (1997) argued that there is no clear distinction between the sacred and the secular space until the first half of the 8th c. BC, concluding that communal cult activities took place in dwellings of members of the elite.

¹⁸ See indicatively: Kourayos and Burns 2004-2005; Kourayos 2009, 2012, 2018; Kourayos *et al.* 2012.

¹⁹ Moysiadis and Perakis 2011.

involving the descriptive representation of the architectural remains and the examination of the techniques and materials used during the construction process. The various types of finds from each building have not been only classified according to their types, but an emphasis has been placed on their spatial distribution revealed through the use of the Geographic Information Systems (GIS)²⁰. On this basis, a synthetic study both of the architectural remains and of the artefacts in their original context was possible, elucidating the function of the selected buildings and their components. At the same time, a list of material correlates was created to provide a basis as secure as possible for designating each building’s “character”.

A short journey around Mandra

Mandra dominates the northernmost, largest, and most fertile peninsula of the Despotiko island (fig. 2). Systematically excavated since 2001, the site is now one of the largest in the Cyclades, with its history extending from the Early Iron Age to Late Roman period²¹. Twenty-six buildings have been unearthed so far: the temenos of Apollo formed its nucleus with various buildings extending outside of it (fig. 3).

The earliest period of activity at Mandra dates back to the Early Iron Age. Except for the numerous pottery sherds found dispersed at the site, two partly preserved buildings came to light under the Archaic temenos: the apsidal or oval Building O, built in the late 9th or early 8th c. BC, and the rectangular Building Ξ that seems to have replaced Building O towards the end of the 8th c. BC (fig. 4)²². A rich deposition, extending over the northern part of Building O contained large portions of Early Iron Age pottery sherds, mostly spanning the second half of the 8th c. BC, a few terracotta animal figurines, more than 60 metal objects, as well as large quantities of animal bones²³, which allow the reconstruction of a domestic nucleus, where cultic activities operated too²⁴.

Occupation at the site continued into the 7th and early 6th c. BC, as reflected by the discovery of other structures and buildings within or in close distance to the later Archaic temenos, which were either built over or abandoned later in the 6th/early 5th c. BC, like Buildings X, Φ, T, B, H, P²⁵. Cult activities at the site did not cease at the time, as indicated by certain objects of votive character²⁶, as well as the so-called “Semicircular Structure” in the centre of the later temenos, which most probably served as an altar already since the 7th c. BC²⁷.

²⁰ Bevan and Conolly 2002.

²¹ Excavation campaigns (under the direction of Yannis Kourayos, Ephorate of Antiquities of the Cyclades): 2001-2005: Kourayos 2005a, 2005b, 2006; Kourayos and Burns 2004-05. Excavation campaigns 2006-2012: Kourayos *et al.* 2012. Excavation campaigns 2012-2021: Kourayos and Daifa (forthcoming a, b, c); Kourayos *et al.* (forthcoming a). For a general presentation of the site: Kourayos 2018.

²² Alexandridou 2019; Kourayos and Daifa (forthcoming a); Alexandridou and Daifa (forthcoming); Alexandridou (forthcoming a).

²³ For a preliminary presentation of the Early Iron Age pottery and figurines from Mandra: Kourayos *et al.* 2017, 356-359. See also Alexandridou 2019. The Early Iron Age material is currently under study by A. Alexandridou and it will form the core of a separate publication. Animal bones are studied by Dr. Simon Davis and metal objects by Dr. Manolis Petrakis.

²⁴ Alexandridou 2022; Alexandridou (forthcoming b); Alexandridou and Daifa (forthcoming).

²⁵ Kourayos and Daifa (forthcoming b, c); Alexandridou and Daifa (forthcoming).

²⁶ Alexandridou 2018.

²⁷ Kourayos *et al.* 2012, 148-149.

A radical transformation took place at the site around 560-550 BC, probably led by the wealthy polis of Paros (fig. 5)²⁸. A temenos, well-defined by an enclosure, was founded, covering an area of ca. 1600 m². It was dedicated to Apollo as testified by the numerous inscribed vessels and sherds²⁹. The temenos was established right above the Early Iron Age Buildings O and Ξ with the “Semicircular Structure” at its centre³⁰. Access to the temenos was possible through three gates at the north, east and south sides of the peribolos. On either side of each gate, rows of small rooms formed “stoas”. The west part of the temenos was occupied by Building A, comprising the “temple” and the “hestiatorion”, built around 560/550 BC and 540/530 BC, respectively. Both structures had monumental facades with colonnades carved in Parian marble³¹. More buildings were constructed in the second half of the 6th c. BC, creating a dense grid around the sacred peribolos. The temple-shaped Building Δ occupied its northwest³², and Building E and the so-called “Connecting Building” stood attached to its east part³³.

The extensive “South Complex” occupied the area south of the temenos. It met various construction phases, built on top of at least one earlier edifice, Building X. The “Square Building” and the so-called “Loutron” were founded during the second half of the 6th c. BC³⁴, and they were followed by the “Trapezoidal Building” and Building I in the course of the 5th c. BC³⁵. Building Π and a cistern, both dated to the 6th c. BC, stood in close distance. In the beginning of the 5th c. BC they were succeeded by Buildings M and N, as well as the “East Complex”, that comprised at least nine rooms and small annexes. Comparably to the “South Complex”, the “East Complex” was also built on top of earlier Building Φ³⁶. Buildings B, H, and P, along the modern path leading from the coast up to the temenos, remained in use until the first half of the 5th c. BC. Buildings Γ, Z and Y and the small one-room Buildings K, Λ, Σ stood in close distance. In the southern part of the site, a well-organised system of cisterns for water collection and supply operated³⁷. Eight buildings of large dimensions have been unearthed along the east coast of the islet of Tsimintiri, connected to Despotiko through an isthmus at least up to the Hellenistic period³⁸.

The buildings on both Despotiko and Tsimintiri have been assigned to an extended establishment with the temenos forming part of it. Their “character”, however, is not clear; therefore, Buildings B, H, P, K, Λ, T, Φ, X, and Π, located outside the temenos have been inserted in the frame of the above-mentioned project. This choice has been dictated by their date of construction, preceding the middle of the 6th c. BC, and the creation of the Archaic temenos, but also by the volume of their contents. This paper concentrates on the

²⁸ Kourayos and Daifa 2017.

²⁹ Kourayos *et al.* 2012, 126, fig. 39; Kourayos 2018, 64-65; Matthaïou 2020, 67-69. Inscriptions and graffiti from the sanctuary are currently studied by Angelos Matthaïou.

³⁰ Kourayos 2018, 35.

³¹ Kourayos *et al.* 2012, 99-124.

³² Kourayos *et al.* 2012, 133-139; 2017, 345-351.

³³ Kourayos *et al.* 2012, 146-147.

³⁴ Ohnesorg and Papajanni 2018.

³⁵ Kourayos *et al.* 2012, 150-161; Kourayos 2018, 53-55.

³⁶ For a preliminary report on the architecture of these buildings: Kourayos and Daifa (forthcoming a, b).

³⁷ Excavation of the cisterns is still in progress.

³⁸ The systematic exploration of Tsimintiri began in 2019 and is still in progress. For preliminary results see: Kourayos *et al.* (forthcoming).

results of such a synthetic approach as it has been applied to Buildings B, H, P, T and Φ, while juxtaposing them with the cultic Buildings A and Δ, setting them all within the broader context of the site during the early Archaic period.

All buildings chosen for the present study have been through two major construction phases with the second in all cases placed in the second half of the 6th c. BC. Buildings B and H were built by the very end of the 7th, around 600 BC with their main period of use spanning the first half of the 6th c. BC. Buildings P and Φ were built slightly later during the first half of the 6th c. BC, succeeded by Building T, the construction of which dates to the middle of the century or slightly earlier. They all thus predate the construction of the temenos and the major transformation of the site and remained in use until the early 5th c. BC. The only exception is Building T, which seems to have been already abandoned by that time.

Architecture

Buildings B, H and P form a kind of cluster occupying a prominent position at a distance of ca. 130-150 m northeast of the north gate of the Archaic temenos (fig. 6)³⁹. They all share an E-W axis with the façade of the compartments set towards the south. Building B is one of the largest buildings at Mandra⁴⁰, with a particularly elaborate ground plan differentiating it from the rest of the examined buildings. Eight rooms represent its initial phase, followed by the addition of six more and some open spaces, each of different plan and dimensions. Buildings H and P are both rectangular consisting of a number of rooms set next to each other. The former is more elongated and consists of seven rooms – and possibly of one more to the east – and an open-air space⁴¹. The latter has a much simpler rectangular plan with five rooms⁴².

The smaller Buildings Φ and T are located much closer to the temenos both extending along an E-W axis. Building Φ with a rectangular elongated plan was found in the area between Building N and the western rooms of the East Complex (fig. 7)⁴³, while the square Building T is situated just north of Building E. Building Φ consists of two unequally-sized rooms and Building T of four⁴⁴: two main rooms with independent entrances, sharing a common wall and two rooms open to the north with a common intermediate wall (fig. 8). Building Φ is an oikos with main front room and smaller rear chamber, occasionally attested in Early Iron Age and Archaic sites, mainly settlements⁴⁵. Building T has the plan of a double oikos with porches, comparable to examples of houses excavated in Zagora and Agios Andreas on Siphnos⁴⁶.

Despite the differences in their plan, all these buildings present several similarities. The width of all walls varies from 0.45 to 0.60 m (0.50 in the case of Building P). The

³⁹ Kourayos 2018, 59-62.

⁴⁰ 29,80 m long with a width varying between 5,80 and 9,50 m. Kourayos *et al.* 2012, 161-162; Kourayos 2018, 59.

⁴¹ Building H: 23 m long, width varies from 5,10 to 11,30 m.

⁴² Building P: 15 m long.

⁴³ Kourayos 2018, 58; Kourayos and Daifa (forthcoming b).

⁴⁴ Building T: 7,80x7,45 m.

⁴⁵ Mazarakis Ainian 1997, 267: “...it seems then that EIA rectangular oikoi (houses and temples) with main front chamber and smaller back room were exceptional” (see also table VIII).

⁴⁶ Cambitoglou *et al.* 1971, 1988; Cambitoglou 1991; Televentou 2017, with earlier bibliography.

preserved walls might be 0.20 to 0.40 m high, with some walls of Building B reaching a height of 0.65 m. The width of the walls of Buildings Φ and T is slightly larger (0.50-0.55 m). The structural analysis showed that they were all built of the same materials, namely the local gneiss, schist and limestones, easily obtained by the island's quarries situated very close to the site⁴⁷.

The walls were built in rubble masonry of small and medium-sized slab-like schist stones and medium-sized gneiss stones. Small-sized schist stones have been used as wedges or fill between the larger blocks. Most walls have roughly dressed faces with no remains of any kind of plaster. Large dolomitic or thick gneiss stones with dressed faces mark the exterior corners of some walls (Buildings B and P). A sense of polychromy is created by the various rocks of different colours (grey, white, ochre) used for the wall faces both inside and out of Building B.

The plan of the rooms varied, and their inner layout is usually simple. They can be square or rectangular of different size. The rooms of Building H, for example, are quite spacious with a surface measuring 11 to 16.40 m². Both rooms of Building T have openings, 0.65-0.70 m wide, placed in a non-axial position by the south wall of each room.

All rooms have schist monolithic thresholds in most cases preserved in situ. Vertically set dolomitic stones or schist slabs have been used as pilasters. The floors of most rooms were made of beaten earth. Two rooms of Building P ($\Delta 2$ - $\Delta 3$) preserved slabs horizontally placed on the ground or slightly elevated at almost the same level as the entrances of the rooms. Rooms 1 and 2 of Building T had paved floors, made of irregularly shaped schist slabs. They laid ca. 0.10 m lower than the threshold.

All buildings examined here had clay roofs the form of which could be more or less well reconstructed. Building P had a "hybrid" roof, representing the oldest type of roofing at Despotiko. The roof tiles were of both the Laconian and Corinthian type, as well as of a composite Laconian type, identified by A. Ohnesorg, a combination of a pan and cover tile⁴⁸. The co-existence of roof tiles of different chronology implies some repair of the roof in the Classical period.

Buildings B, H and T had a simple pitched tiled roof with its ridge running along the E-W axis⁴⁹. The variety in the size and type of the tiles reflects the different size of the roofed spaces. They belong to the Laconian and the composite Laconian type. Buildings B and H had antefixes in the form of a Gorgon's head dating to second half of the 6th c. BC⁵⁰. A flat round stone with a diameter of 0.30 m resting on the floor of Room 2 of Building T might have been the base of a wooden support for the roof⁵¹.

Some rooms of these building preserved elements of the interior furnishing. Benches of various heights and lengths more or less carefully constructed run along the walls of a number of rooms of Buildings B, P and T. Room B $\Delta 3$ presents an interesting internal arrangement with three benches –one by the entrance and the other two on either

⁴⁷ Draganits 2009, 95-98.

⁴⁸ Ohnesorg (forthcoming).

⁴⁹ Kourayos *et al.* 2012, 163; Ohnesorg (forthcoming).

⁵⁰ Kourayos *et al.* 2012, 162-163.

⁵¹ In Zagora and Emporio there was usually a second support for the roof at a close distance (Cambitoglou *et al.* 1988, pl. 12; Hoepfner 2005, 180).

side of a narrow corridor⁵². The top surface of all benches were filled with earth and rubble (small and medium-sized stones). More stones, binding mortar or even some perishable material might have existed over and between them. Benches were very common in the houses of the Cycladic settlements of Zagora and Hypsili on Andros, Koukounaries on Paros and Emporio on Chios⁵³.

A L-shaped hearth, framed by two thin, low walls, was found inside Room 3 of Building P. Another trapezoid hearth, formed by four schist slabs, was recognised inside Room 1 of Building Φ⁵⁴. A rectangular hearth was found inside Room 2 of Building T. A number of rooms provided structures for storage, though of limited capacity. They can be square or rectangular formed by schist slabs placed vertically on the ground⁵⁵. A cooking vessel found in situ by the NW corner of the Room 1 inside Building Φ might have served for storage. It was stuck in the ground with small stones around its body. A similar use might be possible for the rectangular spaces demarcated by rows of stones found next to two of the benches of Room 3 in Building B. One of them contained several clay sherds and olive kernels.

If not water collectors, pithoi served storage too, as indicated by the example found in situ exactly outside the SW corner of Room BΔ6, almost in contact with its south wall.

The buildings' contents

The exploration of the buildings' rooms revealed mostly pottery, followed by clay, metal and glass objects, sea shells and animal bones. Clay sherds and animal bones might be present in all buildings, but metal objects, clay figurines and clay lamps are not attested everywhere. In many cases, the finds do not originate from the interior of the buildings' rooms, but they either formed part of their filling or they were found outside of them. In the case of Building P, except for an amphora from Room 3, the large percentage of characteristic finds, including most of the pottery, was collected from outside the rooms, south of Rooms 2 and 3 and west of Room 5⁵⁶. Moreover, the poor condition of some buildings, like Building Φ, did not allow to the application of GIS to enlighten the spatial context of individual finds. Despite these limitations, the quantification of the entity of the material provides some idea of the original content of the examined buildings and allows thoughts on the operating activities.

In some buildings fine-painted pottery dominates over plain ware, exceeding 70% in Buildings B and H, and forming almost the entity in Building Φ (fig. 9). Tableware dominates in each building, though the correlation of the open with the closed shapes may vary from one building to another or even between the different rooms of a building.

Drinking is the best discernible activity on the basis of the clay utensils of the

⁵² Bench 1: 3,20x0,85/0,90x0,20 m / Bench 2: 1,65x0,80x0,40 m / Bench 3: 1,90x0,85/0,90x0,20 m.

⁵³ Zagora: Cambitoglou *et al.* 1988, 154-158; Hypsili: Televantou 2008, 38; Koukounaries: Schilardi 1988, 205; Mazarakis Ainian 1997, 185; Emporio: Boardman 1967.

⁵⁴ Dimensions: 0,80x0,60x0,80x0,40 m.

⁵⁵ These are the cases of a small square pit (0,40x0,39 m, 0,45 m deep), lined with was found inside Room 4 of Building P, and of a rectangular structure (0,80x0,50 m, 0,40 m deep) formed by two parallel slabs in the NE corner inside Room 1 of Building Φ. A small space (1,68x1,20 m) by the southwest corner of Room 2 inside Building Φ might have been used for storage. A rectangular structure (0,50x0,45 m) consisting of four schist slabs placed vertically in the ground in the middle of space 1 of Building T might have been a hearth.

⁵⁶ Pit dimensions: 3,40 m (E-W) x 2,10 m (N-S).

various types, and the strong presence of kraters, destined for mixing wine with water⁵⁷. The discovered jugs could have been used for ladling the wine from the krater and pouring it into the drinking vases. Since shapes designated as food receptacles are almost absent, it is possible that some of the drinking cups or bowls could have been used for eating too⁵⁸.

The majority of the closed shapes represents either part of the table equipment or storage vessels. Though it might have been used for serving liquids, the painted solid olpe, a common Parian shape with round mouth, ovoid body and flat base, could be also associated with food consumption, since it may well have contained some liquid like vinegar, as also deduced from the black-glazed and banded olpai from the Athenian Agora. The aryballoid and anthropomorphic lekythoi from these buildings are oil containers, the content of which was not only destined for body cleansing, but for table use⁵⁹.

The multi-functional lekane, used for carrying, washing, mixing, could have been used for serving food, if judging from the Athenian vase-iconography of the 6th and 5th c. BC⁶⁰. Mortars can be associated with food preparation since they were used for milling grain⁶¹. Since flotation was not possible at the site, no conclusions can be made on the fruits, vegetables, or grains consumed in the buildings. On the other hand, the faunal remains from the buildings point to the consumption of sheep and pigs. Cooking shapes, attested in Building Φ and Δ, are limited to chytrai, a shape destined for the preparation of liquid food, like soups, broths, and stews. Pithoi and amphoras are the best represented closed shapes for storage. Much fewer and not present in all buildings were the perfume containers, represented by askoi, alabastra and aryballoi.

Pithoi were present only in Buildings B, H and P, while completely absent from Buildings T and Φ. Except for the example found in situ outside one of the rooms of Building B⁶², more sherds were revealed from the rooms. Fragments of pithoi with incised or impressed decoration were more numerous in Building H. Pithoi were concentrated inside Room 5, including part of an example with the inscription ΙΑΣΤΕΟΝΕΙΜ, written in the Parian alphabet, dating to late 7th/first half of the 6th c. BC⁶³. Pithoi with incised decoration are well represented in Room 2 of Building P. A support with riders in relief of the first half of the 6th c. BC comes from the same room. The discovered lamps might be few, but they were attested in all buildings. Buildings B and T produced four examples each, while a single lamp comes from the rest of the buildings.

If treated as a whole, the majority of the clay vases from all buildings can be linked to food preparation and consumption, but mostly to drinking, either set in the framework of a symposium or of a daily meal. Storage and personal adornment is attested in the shapes as well. Nevertheless, differences in the distribution of the vases within each room or unit

⁵⁷ For the krater, see esp. Lissarrague 1990; Luke 1994.

⁵⁸ In favour of a dual use of the skyphoi for drinking and eating: Courbin 1966, 470; Coldstream 1995, 267; Morgan 1999, 323; Kerschner 2003, 248; Kerschner and Prochaska 2011; Luce 2008, 279; Vlachou 2011, 90-91.

⁵⁹ Lynch 2011, 140-141.

⁶⁰ Lüdorf 2000, 11, n. 60.

⁶¹ Villing and Pemberton 2010.

⁶² The fragment can be dated to the first half/middle of the 6th c. BC: Brock 1949, pl. 20, no. 3; Brann 1961, 102, no. 609, pl. 40; Sparkes and Talcott 1970, 342, no. 1508, pl. 65; Kahil 1960 116-118, pl. 29.

⁶³ Matthaïou (2020) suggests: [ΝΕΩΜΕΝ] ΑΣΤΕΟΝ = [ΝΕΟΜΗΝ] ΑΣΤΕΩΝ.

of rooms of some buildings can be noticed (fig. 10). The west and east units of Building B produced different clay assemblages. Open shapes, including drinking vessels, deep basins and kraters combined with a good percentage of amphoras and olpai come from the west unit. In the area west of Room BΔ1β and north of Rooms Δ2β, a concentration of both open and closed shapes at the same percentage was noted. Except for a single amphora, the rest of the closed shapes were oil vessels. The east unit of the building revealed smaller quantity of pottery, composed of pithoi, plain amphoras and basins (fig. 11). The ceramic material of the building's second period of use was marked by the prevalence of closed shapes, such as small pithoi, amphoras, oenochoai, olpai, followed by shallow basins and drinking vessels. Cooking pots are almost absent in all phases and units. It should be noted that except for the products of Parian workshops, the presence of vases imported from Corinth and East Greece is strong.

The bulk of sherds from Building H belong to small or medium-sized open vases, most of which are banded or painted solid. Fewer were the fragments of closed vases, such as jugs and amphoras. Imports are few.⁶⁴ A concentration of mostly tableware amphoras and pithoi finds is noted in Room 5. Buildings B and H revealed no cooking pots.

Pottery from all four central rooms of Building P presents a homogeneity in terms of quantity and variety. The percentage of open and closed shapes is almost the same corresponding to that of the pithoi. A transport amphora from Clazomenae of the second half of the 6th c. BC was found possibly in situ close to the NW corner of Room 3⁶⁵. Room 5 contained an abundance of clay sherds of small- and medium-sized vases of various shapes, most of them banded, such as strainers, lekanai, jugs, skyphoi, amphoras, pithoi. Room 2 produced medium and large-sized open vases with painted decoration, such as skyphoi and lekanai, whereas clearly fewer are the fragments of closed vases, such as amphoras. A faience aryballos of the first half of the 6th c. BC is the only oil shape from the building⁶⁶.

Open shapes prevail in Building Φ. Corinthian oil vessels⁶⁷, and an East Greek painted phiale (late 7th/first quarter of 6th c. BC)⁶⁸ are imports, followed by the unique for Despotiko so far Attic black-figured horsehead amphora of the second quarter of the 6th c. BC⁶⁹. Amphoras are also present.

Building T contained mostly banded vases with the plain sherds representing 14% of the total and those painted black even less. Open shapes of medium or large size, such as lekanai, lekanidai and kraters predominate. Fewer are the drinking vessels, such as the

⁶⁴ Compare to: Brock 1949, pl. 16, no. 3; Boardman and Hayes 1966, 113, no. 1218; Sparkes and Talcott 1970, 90, 262, no. 390, pl. 18; Kaltsas 1998, 164, no. 827, pl. 174στ.

⁶⁵ Sezgin 2004, 177, fig. 13 (Group VI); Filis 2012, 269-270, figs 5-6.

⁶⁶ Boardman and Hayes 1966, n. 87, 88, pl. 105; Stampolides 2003, 489, n. 899.

⁶⁷ Alabastron of the Early or Middle Corinthian Period: Payne 1931, 283-284, type C, I, fig. 121b; Ure 1934, 20, 25-26; Dugas 1928, pl. XXVIII, nos 376-377; Boardman and Hayes 1973, no. 30; Stillwell *et al.* 1984, no. 1559, pl. 63.

⁶⁸ Boardman and Hayes 1966, nos 610, 615, 621-633, 635-638; 1973, nos 1980-1982, 2056; Isler and Kalpaxis 1978, nos 106-107; Cook and Dupont 1998, fig. 8.18; Stampolides 2003, 304-305, n. 301 (Paros), 302 (Naxos), 304 (Syracuse); Koutsoumpou 2017, 168, no. 8 (Kythnos).

⁶⁹ Beazley 1956, 15-1; Picozzi 1971; Birchall 1972; Boardman 1994, 18; Kreuzer 1998; Alexandridou 2011, 75; Palaiothodoros (forthcoming).

dot-band skyphoi⁷⁰. Amphoras are absent with the closed vessels being of medium size. Very few sherds belong to cooking vessels. An oil vessel in the form of an anthropomorphic lekythos was found in Room 2⁷¹.

Leaving aside pottery, a concentration of bronze and iron objects is attested only in Building T. It included weapons (bronze spearhead), tools (including an iron axe), dress ornaments (bronze pins, bronze bow-shaped fibula), as well as nails and other unidentified objects. A bronze disk with a suspension hole was among the finds too. A few bronze nails and sheets from Building B are the only metal objects from other buildings. Fragments of the only glass objects come from Building T.

Clay figurines were present in three of the examined buildings. Buildings H and P produced a single example each, while the rest come from Building T, where most of the metal objects were concentrated too. Room 1 contained an animal figurine, probably of a dog⁷², Room 2 revealed two female protomes and a clay seated female figurine, all dating to the second half of the 6th c. BC⁷³. A contemporary standing female figurine was detected by the corner of the south and west wall of the building⁷⁴.

Textile production implements come only from Buildings B and H. A pyramidal loom weight was found inside Room 7 of Building B⁷⁵, and a fragment of another outside of it. Two clay spindle whorls, as well as a pyramidal loom weight come from the adjacent Room 9. Three pyramidal loom weights and a spindle whorl were found inside Room 5 of Building H⁷⁶, while three more were located exactly outside the entrance of Room 4, which communicated internally with Room 5.

Except for any disturbances, which might have altered the distribution of their contents, the presence of the same type of vases, clay and metal objects in the examined rooms and buildings, do not facilitate the identification of the activities served by the excavated spaces and consequently of their function in all cases. The overall picture of each building might remain mostly a blur, but a number of differences between the buildings and particularly between Buildings T and Φ on one hand and Buildings B, H and P on the other, can be noted.

In the case of Building B, its east part served for storage, as indicated by the concentration of pithoi, while food and drink consumption took place in the west units as reflected on the discovered tableware. On the other hand, no hearth has come to light and there is no material evidence related to food preparation. A large concentration of closed shapes, almost entirely plain, is noted inside Rooms 1 and 2. The decorated vases represent a small percentage particular in Room 1. Textile production must have operated in Rooms 7 and 9 of its east part. Both rooms revealed the same type of vessels, with closed vessels being more in Room 7 and lekanai/kraters more dominant in Room 9.

⁷⁰ Indicatively, Furtwängler 1906, 455, n. 236, pl. 128.32; Dugas 1928, pl. 55, 664; Boardman and Hayes 1973, nos 2119, 2120; Blondé *et al.* 1992, 28-30, 33.

⁷¹ Payne 1940, 251; Higgins 1954, 48, pl. 13: 57; Stampolides 2003, 313.

⁷² Mylonas 1975, no. 18, pl. 219.

⁷³ For instance, Higgins 1954, 67-70, pls 25-28; Laumonier 1956, 73-80, pls 9-18; Rubensohn 1962, 143-148, pls 26-27; Croissant 1983, 1-14.

⁷⁴ Karakasi 2006, 161-163.

⁷⁵ Gavalas 2014, 79-81.

⁷⁶ Gavalas 2014, nos A2, A5, A6.

Building H seems to have also had a storage area –Room 5–, where closed vases, including amphoras, dominated, with lekanai/kraters following. A number of pithoi were also recovered. The high number of amphoras in Room 6 is worth mentioning, combined with open shapes and banded lekanai/kraters. Textile production might have taken place in Room 4 and possibly Room 5. Banded and painted solid open and closed vessels of various shapes come from all rooms which do not allow some conclusions other than their use for eating, drinking, pouring and storage, though as in the case of Building B, vases for food preparation are missing.

Although a built hearth is not necessary for cooking, since portable devices could have been used for this purpose⁷⁷, the absence of cooking ware from both buildings does not allow for setting food preparation in their context.

In Building P, loom weights were absent, while the quantity of decorated pottery was significantly smaller. Cooking pots are also missing, while, on the other hand, pithoi, amphoras, strainers, drinking and food-serving vessels are present throughout the building’s period of use. One of the building’s rooms had a hearth (Room 3) and contained an imported transport amphora pointing to storage. Open shapes dominated in all rooms. Many pithoi were recovered from Room 5, while many fragments came to light in the section south of Rooms 2 and 3.

Both Buildings Φ and T contained a hearth in one of their rooms. A rectangular structure possibly for storage and a cooking pot were found in situ inside Building Φ . The type of the discovered pottery fits with household activities (tableware and storage vessels). The Athenian horsehead amphora must have been imported for its contents and continued its life as a storage vessel⁷⁸. Large storage containers were absent in Building T. Room 1 contained a large percentage of open shapes, plain rather than decorated, the largest number attested in the examined buildings. The contents of Room 2 differ significantly: the number of closed shapes, including amphoras, is high. Both rooms share many lekanai/kraters. Interestingly, the hearth was located inside Room 2, suggesting that cooking activity was combined with storage rather than with eating and drinking. Building T is the only one, where pottery is combined with several metal objects and clay figurines. In contrast to Building T, the vases from Building Φ were mostly decorated rather than plain. Open shapes dominate, comprising of both drinking vessels and large open containers like kraters or lekanai. And here their presence in Room 1 is combined with a hearth.

In sum, the clay vases, which form the core of evidence, show that drinking played a major role, though mostly combined with food preparation and storage. At the same time, toilet items related with personal adornment are rare or absent in all buildings, though representing a large percentage of the votive offerings deposited in the “temple”, as it will be shown below. Moreover, the contents of some buildings allow glimpses to the operation of other activities, such as textile production, evidenced in Buildings B and H.

The character of the above-discussed buildings can be further enlightened, if juxtaposed with Building A, identified as the “temple” of the temenos.

⁷⁷ Lynch 2011, 155.

⁷⁸ Alexandridou 2011, 75.

The “temple” and its contents

Building A, composed of five rooms, representing two main construction phases in the second half of the 6th c. BC, was the first to be unearthed in 2001. It occupies the west side of the temenos. Rooms A1 and A2 –the North Part– have been recognised as the “temple”, with the two same-sized rooms acting possibly as a “double oikos”, where two gods might have been worshipped. The cultic function is further suggested by the orientation of the building to the east, towards the centre of the sanctuary⁷⁹. Rooms A3, A4 and A5 formed a separate unit, its South Part, might have served as a *hestiatorion*, though the placement of the doors is rather obstructive to their furnishing with *klinai*, while hearths are missing⁸⁰.

The North Part of Building A has been designated as the “temple” not only due to its axial placement in relation to the “Semicircular Structure” at the centre of the temenos and its similarities with roughly contemporary cultic structures, but more importantly due to the discovery of an assemblage of hundreds of votive offerings, mostly dating to the 6th c. BC, found below the floor slabs of Room A1. The material consists primarily of clay vases, deposited on different occasions. The richest deposition that took place not long before ca. 550 BC, contained mostly pottery, including many intact scent vases, as well as a variety of objects made of metal, ivory, faience, amber, gems, and the upper half of a large clay female figure. It yielded the highest number of weapons and agricultural tools known so far in the Cyclades. The metal objects included dress ornaments too, primarily of bronze. Fibulae comprise the majority, followed by just a few pins. A second deposition, composed mostly of terracotta figurines, has been dated around 500 BC.

Most of the vases of the first deposition date to the last quarter of the 7th and the first quarter of the 6th c. BC. Cups comprise 58%; closed shapes, mainly oinochoai, account for 11%; large open shapes (kraters and basins) account for 12%. Cookware is negligible. Aryballoi, alabastra and other small oil vessels, largely Corinthian imports, represent 16% of the estimated number of vessels. Over half of the vases, mostly containers of scented oil, were recovered intact or essentially complete. This deposition contained all iron weapons and tools recovered from the “temple”. Moreover, a fragmentary bronze aryballos, a faience perfume vessel and an ostrich egg have been recovered. Drinking shapes represent the large percentage of the clay vases recovered from the rest of the layers of Room A1, followed by closed shapes and scent vessels in different percentages (fig. 12).

Open shapes both drinking cups and mixing vessels might dominate in the temple deposition, but this high percentage is followed by a large number of scent vases, poorly represented in the examined buildings. Moreover, the small percentage of closed vessels includes oinochoai, while large storage vessels and amphoras are missing. This is also the case of the clay lamps discovered in most of the buildings. Finally, miniatures are not attested in any other of the examined buildings. Unlike the fragmentary state of preservation of the vases from the buildings, half of the deposit’s contents was complete. More importantly, imports especially from Corinth dominate in this context, while these

⁷⁹ There is no rule for the orientation of cultic buildings in the Cyclades: Gruben 1997, 410 with n. 396; Hellmann 2006, 186-193.

⁸⁰ For the architecture of Building A: Kourayos 2009, 69-130; Kourayos *et al.* 2010, 2011 and especially 2012, 99-124.

are rather rare in the rest of the buildings. The clay and other objects from the “temple” represent both votive dedications that have been stored under the room’s floor, as well as an accumulation of discarded forms of more general usage. The prominence of drinking cups, jugs, and kraters, seen most emphatically in the raw sherd counts from the “temple” has been linked with the main role that communal drinking must have played in the ritual activities at Mandra. Drinking vases, mostly cups, typically account for 30% of pottery at sanctuaries⁸¹.

The identification of Building A as the centre of the Archaic temenos has been further secured by the material used for its construction. Nine different lithologies have been determined, eight of which most probably originate from the site and its immediate surroundings. Draganits’s detailed study clearly showed that specific rocks were destined for certain parts of the building, much more due to their lithological properties than to their availability. Unlike the local gneiss, schist and limestones used for the construction of the buildings outside the temenos, local calcitic marble has been used for most parts of the “temple” while grey orthogneiss and dolomitic marble are rare in Building A, due to their properties⁸². Monumentality has been achieved with imported white marble for the colonnades of the “temple” and the “hestiatorion”.

Balancing between cultic and secular

Recent research in combination with the ongoing excavations on the Cycladic islands has demonstrated the high complexity of spatial organisation of the sacred landscapes in the Early Iron Age and early Archaic period. Sacred spaces might be clearly defined and set apart from the settlement⁸³, but there are sanctuaries founded in the heart of a residential area, as in the cases of Ag. Andreas on Siphnos⁸⁴, Hypsili⁸⁵, and Zagora on Andros⁸⁶, and many more⁸⁷. Even during the Archaic period when these sanctuaries acquired temples, the boundaries between secular and cultic space remained vague.

On Delos, after a gap of approximately three centuries after the Late Helladic III period, activity at the site of the sanctuary of Apollo on Delos was resumed in the Protogeometric period⁸⁸. The study of a small fraction of the ceramic material, originating from various areas of the island, aimed at deciphering the nature of the island’s occupation during the Early Iron Age⁸⁹. Brisart chose to examine the pottery from the sanctuary mainly through the “angle de la céramique funéraire”, appearing quite reluctant to recognize a function other than funerary for most of the examined shapes, since the closest parallels for those come from the purification pit of Rheneia and other early necropoleis

⁸¹ Stissi 2002, 248.

⁸² Draganits (forthcoming).

⁸³ The case of Kythnos is characteristic. The sacred space seems to have been more clearly demarcated in the ancient city at the site of Vryokastro. It is still unknown, however, whether the buildings adjacent to the temples, were houses, public or cultic edifices. Mazarakis Ainian 2019.

⁸⁴ Televantou 2017.

⁸⁵ Televantou 2008.

⁸⁶ Cambitoglou *et al.* 1971, 1988; Cambitoglou 1991.

⁸⁷ Mazarakis Ainian 2017.

⁸⁸ Gallet de Santerre 1958, 1975; Duchêne *et al.* 2001; Bruneau and Ducat 2010, 32; Earle 2010.

⁸⁹ Brisart 2018.

in both the Cyclades and mainland Greece. At the same time, some of the shapes, like the kraters have been interpreted as household utensils⁹⁰.

Brisart concluded that the sanctuary of Apollo coexisted with a domestic nucleus and its burial grounds during the Early Iron Age. The foundation of the sanctuary has been assigned to the local community residing at the site since the 10th c. BC⁹¹. It gradually acquired a panhellenic character with the space dedicated to the cult of the twin deities being clearly demarcated since the Archaic period. Nevertheless, the dense building activity at the site during the Hellenistic period does not allow one to visualize the pattern of the early occupation outside the temenos.

On the other hand, the data from Mandra on Despotiko provide a clearer view of an extended establishment composed of numerous buildings outside the Archaic temenos. Its heart, Building A, stands out and differs significantly from the rest of the buildings. The objects from the deposit detected inside Room A can be securely interpreted as votive dedications, throwing light on the dedicatory practices mostly during the 6th c. BC.

The contents of the rest of the examined buildings present a richer and wider picture of other activities instead. And more importantly they cannot be designated as cultic, since their contents could easily form part of a household equipment: drinking vessels, storage containers, oil vases, cooking pots. Could the terracotta figurines and the metal objects be treated as material correlates for identifying some buildings as cultic or at least as structures housing such activity?

Building T contained not only large- and medium-sized open and closed shapes, cooking pots, combined with a hearth inside one of its rooms, but also a concentration of clay figurines, followed by metal objects and glass vessels (fig. 13). As small and handy, clay figurines were typical dedications in the Greek sanctuaries since the Early Iron Age⁹². On the other hand, they are not absent from households of the Archaic and Classical periods⁹³. Household ritual life might not be well archaeologically known, but the ancient sources refer to household altars and to the role of the house's hearth in domestic cult⁹⁴.

The few terracotta female and animal figurines, representing common Archaic coroplastic types from the "temple's" deposit are indeed dedications. But they are also present in Buildings H and P. The figurines from Building T are contemporary and belong to the same types with those from the "temple". They were found together with ca. 25 metal objects, mostly of iron (fig. 14). Although their condition did not allow the identification of their type in all cases, it seems that the assemblage contained tools, such as an iron axe, a single bronze spearhead and dress ornaments, including bronze pins. Interestingly, they are of different types from those from the "temple", where the two spearheads were of iron and none of the pins were made of bronze. Moreover, a bronze disk detected in the building is missing from the "temple". Weapons and agricultural

⁹⁰ Brisart 2018, 333, 336. This is also the case of some large vases from the Prytaneion of Delos: Étienne and Braun 2007, 327.

⁹¹ Poulsen and Dugas 1911, 385; Gallet de Santerre 1958, 219-220, 233-237; Etienne 2007, 331-332; Brisart 2018, 336-337, 345.

⁹² Simon 1986 (Ionian offerings); Dengate 1988 (Apollo sanctuaries); Brulotte 1994 (Artemis sanctuaries); Baumbach 2004 (Hera sanctuaries).

⁹³ On the domestic use of terracotta figurines, see Ammerman 1990, 43, n. 69; Merker 2000, 322; 2003, 240. The case of the house in the Athenian Agora is characteristic: Lynch 2011.

⁹⁴ Lynch 2011, 161 where the relevant references.

implements are common in Greek sanctuaries during the Early Iron Age and the Archaic period⁹⁵. The deposit of the Despotiko “temple” provided iron knives and daggers (more than 40), spearheads, axe heads and sickles, dated between the end of the 8th and the middle of the 6th c. BC⁹⁶. The size and shape of the knives and daggers are not part of military activities, but practical utensils, related to agricultural and pastoral life.

Does this type of assemblage point to a cultic building? Should the “cultic” elements provided by the clay figurines be set in a domestic setting? The evidence from the building is compatible with that related to the Early Iron Age Buildings Ξ and Ο, which revealed that life at Mandra was flowing into different directions at the time: cultic elements co-existed with domestic activities⁹⁷. Building T seems to confirm this reality for the Archaic period too. Its contents clearly differentiate it from the rest, but it is kept apart from the “temple”. Comparably to Buildings Ξ and Ο, Building T shows the inability to draw clear lines between “ritual” and “profane”, but also the futility of any modern efforts for clear designations of past activity.

In contrast to Building T, Buildings Β, Η, Ρ and Φ seem to represent residences. Their “humble” architecture strongly contrasts to the monumentality of the temple and to the buildings forming part of the temenos. Alternatively, they should be seen as part of the settlement, initially founded in the late 9th/early 8th c. BC, and expanding during the subsequent centuries. The existence of a domestic nucleus, where cultic activities operated too, might have been assumed for the Early Iron Age due to the relevant finds⁹⁸, but this reality did not change in the subsequent Archaic period. The temenos continued to co-exist with buildings serving as residences where preparation, consumption of food and drink, as well as storage took place. The institutionalised cultic activity centred around the temenos run along the daily life of the occupants of the site, living there since the Early Iron Age. Their dual role both as members of a community, and as worshippers, is compatible with an inseparable and dialectical relationship between cultic and secular. Since the early Archaic period, and, especially after the middle of the 6th c. BC, the sanctuary grew in reputation, and it started receiving visitors and seafarers from the wider Aegean, while the local community continued to thrive.

⁹⁵ Petrakis 2020, 97-409 with extended bibliography.

⁹⁶ Kourayos and Burns 2017; Kourayos *et al.* (forthcoming b).

⁹⁷ Alexandridou 2019; Alexandridou and Daifa (forthcoming).

⁹⁸ Alexandridou (forthcoming a); Alexandridou and Daifa (forthcoming).

Abbreviations

- AA: Archäologischer Anzeiger
 AAA: Αρχαιολογικά Ανάλεκτα εξ Αθηνών/Athens Annals of Archaeology
 AAIA Bulletin: Publications of Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens
 ArchEph: Αρχαιολογική Εφημερίς
 BCH: Bulletin de correspondance hellénique
 JdI: Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts
 JFA: Journal of Field Archaeology
 JHS: Journal of Hellenic Studies
 Prakt: Πρακτικά της εν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας
 StMisc: Studi miscellanei: Seminario di archeologia e storia dell'arte greca e romana dell'Università di Roma

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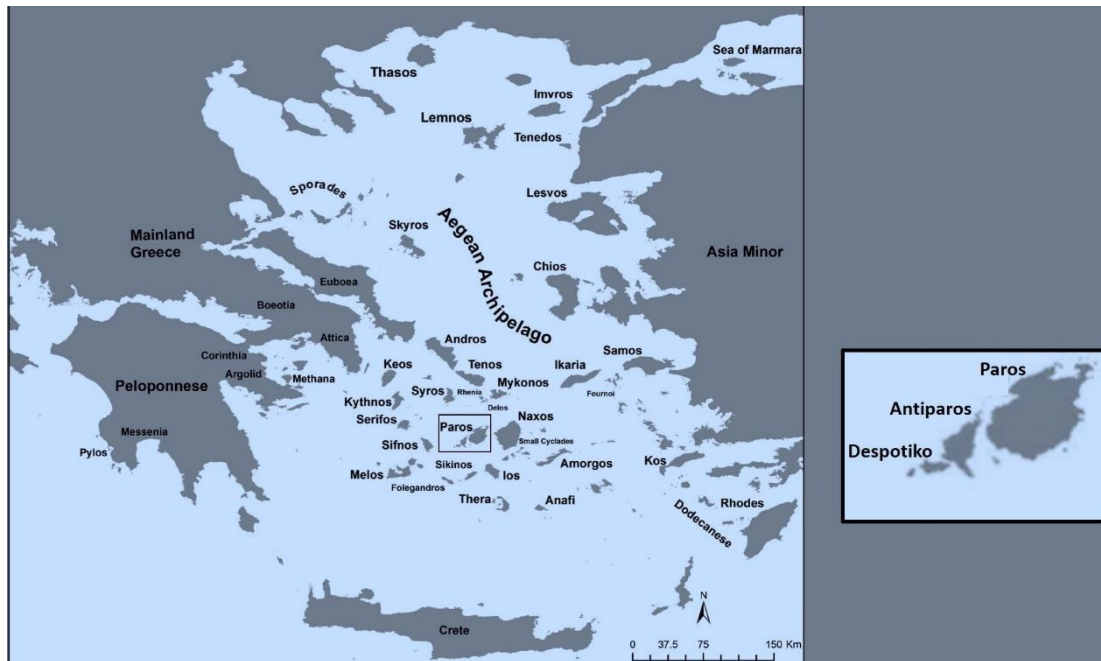


Fig. 1. Map of the Cyclades.



Fig. 2. Aerial photo of the site of Mandra on Despotiko (courtesy Y. Kourayos).

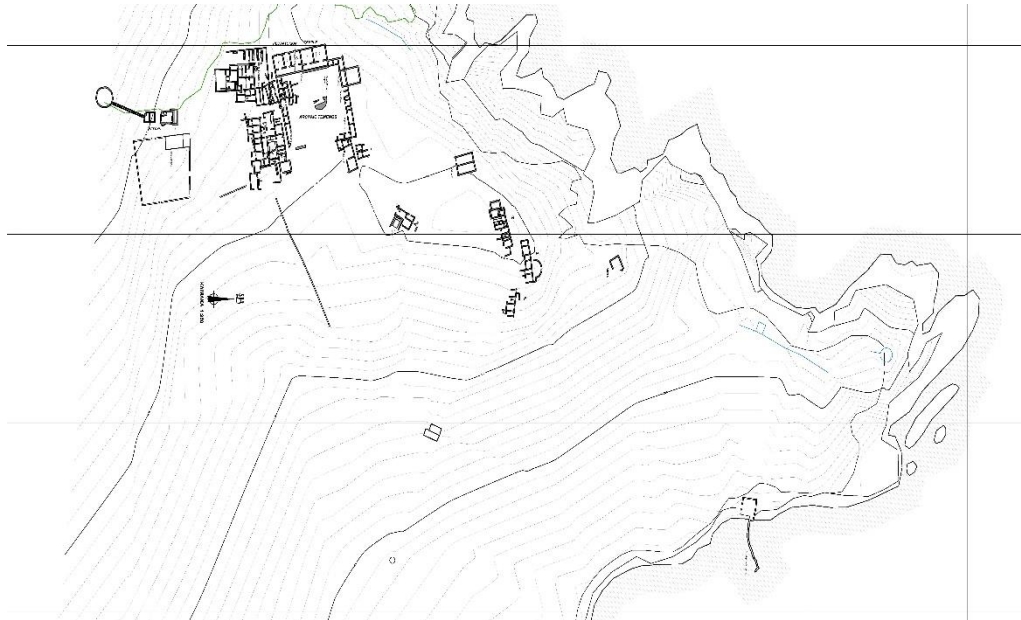


Fig. 3. Topographical plan of Mandra site (plan by G. Orestides, courtesy Y. Kourayos).



Fig. 4. Plan of the Geometric buildings E and O (plan by G. Orestides, courtesy Y. Kourayos).



Fig. 5. Aerial photo of the Archaic temenos and the south area of the sanctuary (courtesy Y. Kourayos).



Fig. 6. Aerial photo of Buildings B, H, P (courtesy Y. Kourayos).



Fig. 7. Photogrammetrical plan of Building Φ, marked in white (plan by G. Orestides, courtesy Y. Kourayos).



Fig. 8. Building T, view from W (courtesy Y. Kourayos).



Fig. 9. Number of vessels by category in various rooms of Buildings H, B, Φ, (Charts by K. Daifa).

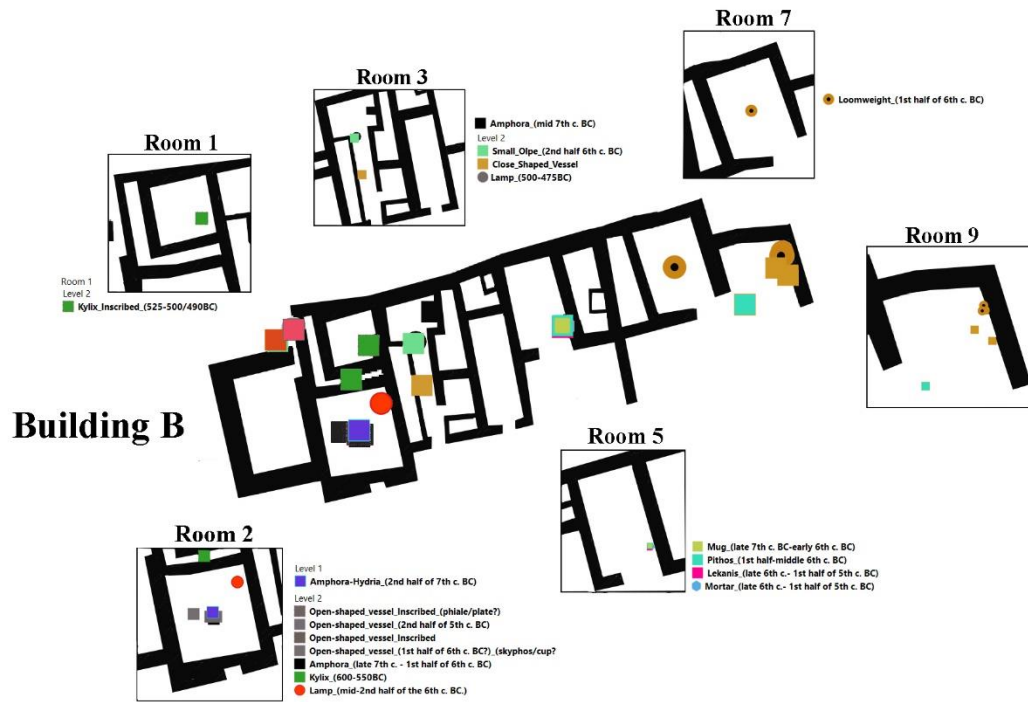


Fig. 10. Dispersion of special finds in the rooms of Building B (GIS application by E. Chatzinikolaou).

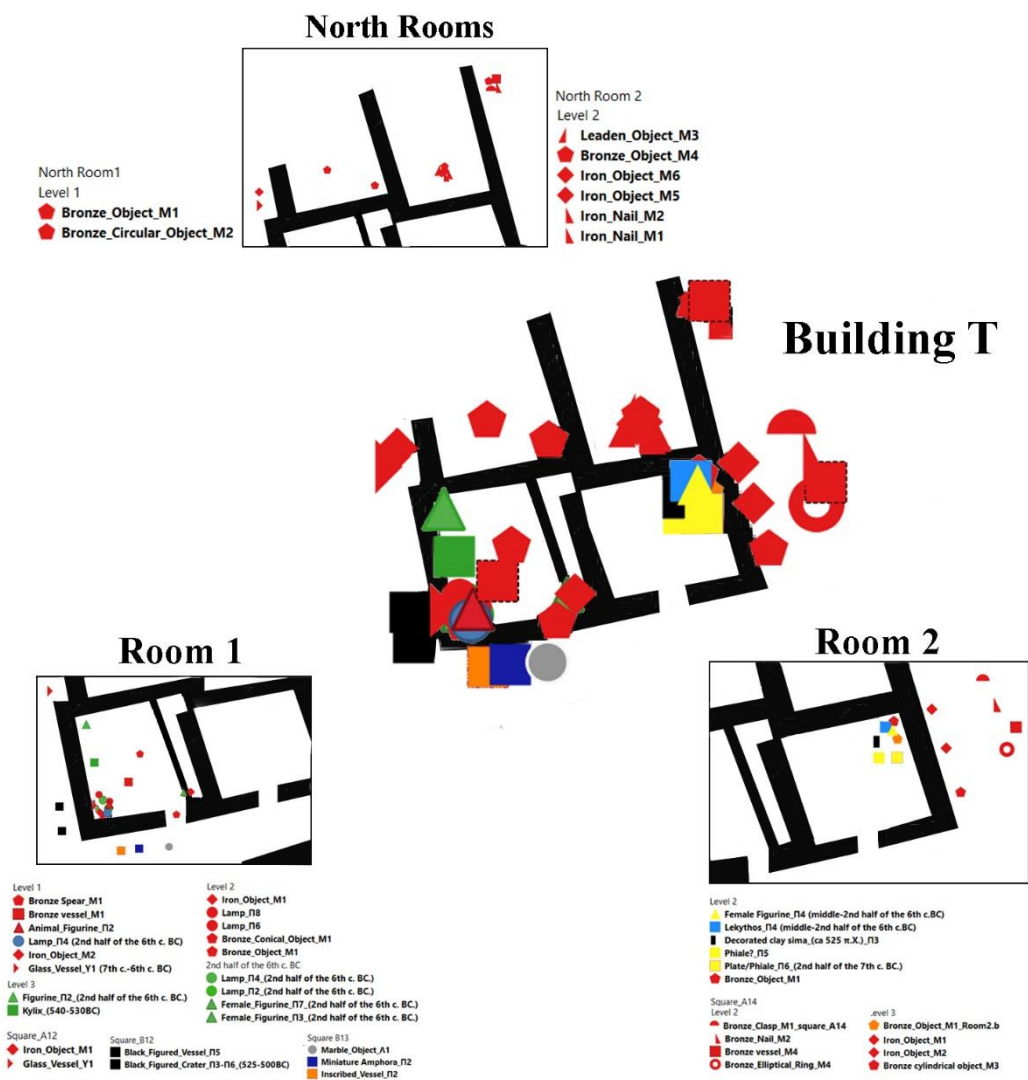


Fig. 13. Dispersion of special finds in the rooms of Building T (GIS application by E. Chatzinikolaou).



Fig. 14. Finds from Building T (courtesy Y. Kourayos).