Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

The historiography of landscape research on Crete

Gkiasta, M.

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6. Using Landscape Research Data in Siteia, eastern Crete: a Case Study.

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to compare archaeological projects that have operated within the same wider region, as a case study in exploring the potential of integrating results of different landscape approaches over time so as to reconstruct an overview of human evolution in the area. The present attempt does not claim to be a complete study of the social evolution in the region; such an experiment would require the re-assessment of site interpretations and their classification into refined classes of function considering status, size and geographical location. In fact, we would need to study subsistence, population fluctuations, economic networks, spatial relationships, socio-political development, state/polity formation, hierarchy, ideology, cultural and social identity, combining both excavation and survey data at the level of a PhD thesis or Post-Doc research. Resent attempts show that there is a growing need and desire to use survey data for regional analysis, whether for the study of popular Minoan themes such as state emergence (Schultz-Barrick 2007) or for the understanding of social relations in a region (Relaki 2003). This chapter, however, will evaluate the acquired knowledge from a number of landscape research projects and synthesize a general picture of human activity over time, rather than focus on a specific social question in a particular period.

The area chosen is the eparchy of Siteia in eastern Crete, which has been the focus of exploration from the first days of archaeology and thus offers us a significant volume of archaeological information and a variety of approaches to compare. Dozens of archaeologists and explorers have walked and studied the archaeological landscape of eastern Crete and have discovered hundreds of sites; however, for the scope of this work I will be using a sample of projects that includes all latest survey projects and some representative ones from other traditions, but there are a number of other reports that should also be included in a more detailed study of the area, e.g. the work of Travellers (esp. T.W. Spratt), first archaeologists (A. Evans, Bosanquet, Xanthoudidhes etc), later Greek archaeologists (N. Platon, Davaras etc) and certainly the work of N. Schlager 1987; 1988, and I. Sanders 1982.

6.2 Methodology

In order to reconstruct a history of human activity in Siteia, site information, but also general knowledge acquired from each project will be used. The sample consists of 8 projects that provided a site catalogue, plus 4 more that give us insights into specific aspects of the past. Pseira demonstrates an exceptionally high site-number and therefore density, but sites are defined upon local questions and can not be used meaningfully in relation to other regional data / site interpretations. In figure 6.1 we can see the geographical spread of the projects and table 6.2 presents the projects used, their tradition, the size of the relevant areas explored, the number of sites discussed for each one and the overall density. Projects are presented in chronological order.

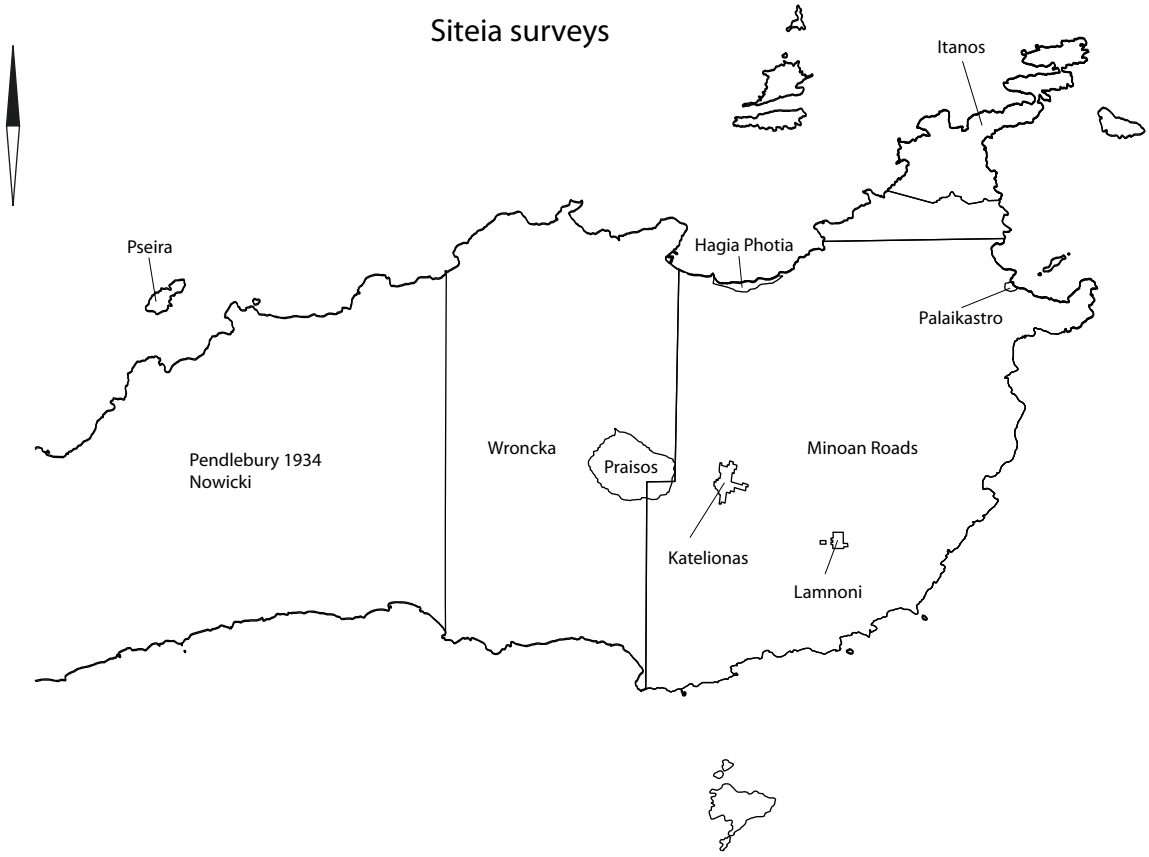

Figure 6.2 The areas covered by the sample of archaeological landscape projects in the eparchy of Siteia.

survey id	Tradition	Area surveyed km²	Total no of sites	Total density
Pendlebury 1934	Culture History	759,433[2]	30	0.039
Wroncka	Human Geography	900	94	0.104
Nowicki	Human Geography	759,433[2]	49	0.064
Minoan Roads	Topographic Tradition	318,3[1]	89	0.279
Hagia Photia	Landscape Tradition	4.05	10	2.469
Praisos	Landscape Tradition	9	85	9.444
Katelionas	Landscape Tradition	1.42	15	10.563
Lamnoni	Landscape Tradition	0.65	11	16.923
Itanos	Topographic Tradition	24.72[1]		
Palaikastro	Landscape Tradition	0.36		
Pseira	Landscape Tradition	1.75	314	179.428
Lehmann	Human Geography	759,433[2]		

Table 6.2 Sample of projects used, with respective tradition, total number of sites, area surveyed and total density.

[1] calculated from the published map
[2] the area of the modern eparchy of Siteia

The use of landscape research data in acquiring an overview of human evolution in the area of Siteia, is based on site interpretations classified upon the information supplied by researchers regarding the main types of human activity (function classes used are the same as in table 'Chronology / Functions', appendix two), and summarised into a chronological sequence that I have tried to balance between detail and importance (table 'Siteia sites summary'). Finer chronological categories were actually collected (table 'Siteia sites'), but are inconsistent among projects and are rather meaningless for the purposes of this attempt that covers the full span of human evolution from its earliest days to the present. Thus, both chronological and function interpretative classes are the result of the data/interpretations available and the purposes and potential of this chapter. The period frames that are considered more significant are transitional periods (Neolithic to Bronze Age and Bronze to Iron Age), periods in relevance to the phenomenon of the palaces in Minoan Crete (Prepalatial, Protopalatial, Neopalatial and Postpalatial), the period from Geometric to Classical times that is commonly described as 'Greek' or 'Hellenic', the end of the Greek world and the beginning of the Roman (Graeco-Roman), and the period from Byzantine to Turkish times, which has not been adequately studied and therefore does not allow a finer chronological classification.

The number of sites per interpretative class indicates in a way the amount and the kind of energy spent in the different periods, but often it depends on researchers' interests rather than being a real representation of the past. It is on site interpretations however, that we depend in order to reconstruct a picture of human behaviour in the past. Before we attempt a brief narrative of the history of human evolution in Siteia, a summary description and evaluation of the acquired knowledge per project is presented, so that we have a point of reference during subsequent survey data integration.

Tables: numbers of PH sites do not exclude coexisting numbers of 'PH?' ones (the same site could have a certain and a possible PH interpretation in different sub-periods); the aim is to see the number of sites for certain and uncertain PH interpretations respectively. Therefore we shouldn't use the total of both for a prehistoric landscape. The actual number of PH sites whether of a certain, uncertain or the coexistence of both interpretations is presented in table 6.3.1. This number could be used for a hypothetical PH landscape that includes sites of both certain and possible PH interpretation. The same is the case for the Greek, GR, and BVT landscapes.

6.3 Integration

Before we attempt a synthesis of the available survey data into what we ultimately know about the history of human evolution in the area of Siteia, I shall briefly present some of the problems we encounter in such integration, and the different foci of attention, methods, results and therefore knowledge we have from each project.

The most important problem encountered when using survey data is the difficulty to classify them in specific functional categories; as there is no standard form of classifying and publishing site interpretations, it is very often unclear whether a specific interpretation is suggested for a site or not. In multi-period sites in particular, the chronological periods attested in pottery are presented, but it is not often clarified whether the same function is implied throughout time. Moreover, site names, numbers and interpretations may vary between different publications of a project. Not all projects are fully published, and we lack vital information especially from most recent intensive surveys, which are expected to have produced a great volume of information regarding diachronic human activity. Intensive surveys can not be compared with non-intensive on the same ground, as the first may give us densities of a certain precision, but the latter do not. The different aims and methods also impose a low level of integration. Question-specific projects give us a lot of information about a specific period, but little or none about others. Finally, chronological precision may be variable, site size is not estimated and there are no specific criteria that define function and would allow a meaningful comparison of a greater spectrum of activities (e.g. different types of settlement). In fact, as there is no explicit terminology established for function characterisations, we would have to redefine functions and

reclassify sites according to our own criteria so that we can meaningfully compare settlement and habitation sites of different size and type, but this has not been within the scope and potential of the present work.

Table 6.3.1 gives us an overview of the knowledge acquired for the major and indeed very large slices of time, namely PH, Greek, GR and BVT. As it has been shown in previous chapters as well (especially chapter 4), the great preference for the Minoan landscape is clear. Post prehistoric sites are only a few, and comparatively much less than the PH ones in all but one project, Praisos, which focused on the landscape around the Greek city of Praisos. Our potential to reconstruct human activity over time is thus unequal for the different periods. Tables 6.3.2, 6.3.3 and 6.3.4 will be used to assess the level of continuity attested from one period to another.

survey id	Total PH	PH density	Total Greek	Greek density	Total GR	GR density	Total BVT	BVT density
Pendlebury 1934	20	0.026	10	0.013	10	0.013	1	0.001
Wroncka	93	0.103	1	0.001	0	0	0	0
Nowicki	47	0.061	24	0.031	2	0.002	5	0.006
Minoan Roads	82	0.257	7	0.021	6	0.018	0	0
Hagia Photia	10	2.469	3	0.74	4	0.987	1	0.246
Katelionas	10	7.042	0	0	6	4.225	0	0
Lamnoni	10	15.384	0	0	4	6.153	2	3.076
Praisos	28	3.111	32	3.555	8	0.888	14	1.555

Table 6.3.1 Total site counts of the main periods per project.

From PH to Greek			
survey id	No of sites	Prehistoric	Greek
Hagia Photia	1	habitation	agro-pastoral activity
Hagia Photia	1	presence	habitation
Hagia Photia	1	unknown activity	unknown activity
Minoan Roads	3	settlement	settlement
Nowicki	1	defence site	habitation
Nowicki	14	settlement	settlement
Pendlebury 1934	1	habitation	habitation
Pendlebury 1934	1	presence	unknown activity
Pendlebury 1934	1	settlement	settlement
Praisos	1	burial activity	burial activity?
Praisos	1	habitation?	habitation?
Praisos	1	unknown activity	installation/construction/industrial activity?
Praisos	1	unknown activity	ritual?
Praisos	6	unknown activity	unknown activity
Wroncka	1	unknown activity	burial activity

Table 6.3.2 Sites that continue from PH to Greek times per project.

From PH to GR			
survey id	No of sites	PREHISTORIC	GR
Hagia Photia	1	habitation	installation/construction/industrial activity?
Hagia Photia	1	settlement	settlement
Hagia Photia	2	unknown activity	unknown activity
Katelionas	1	burial activity	burial activity
Lamnoni	1	burial activity	burial activity
Lamnoni	1	settlement	settlement
Lamnoni	1	unknown activity	unknown activity
Minoan Roads	1	habitation	habitation
Minoan Roads	1	settlement	settlement
Nowicki	1	ritual	settlement
Pendlebury 1934	1	burial activity	settlement
Pendlebury 1934	1	defence site	burial activity
Pendlebury 1934	3	unknown activity	unknown activity
Praisos	2	unknown activity	unknown activity

Table 6.3.3 Sites that continue from PH to GR times per project.

From Greek to GR			
survey id	No of sites	Greek	GR
Hagia Photia	1	agro-pastoral activity	installation/construction/industrial activity?
Hagia Photia	1	unknown activity	unknown activity
Minoan Roads	3	settlement	settlement
Pendlebury 1934	1	settlement	burial activity
Pendlebury 1934	1	unknown activity	settlement
Praisos	1	settlement	settlement

Table 6.3.4 Sites that continue from Greek to GR times per project.

6.4 Summary of acquired knowledge per project

6.4.1 Pendlebury 1934 (table 6.4.1)

Pendlebury visited eastern Crete in 1934 for eleven days in order to revisit ‘as many as possible of the sites discovered by Sir Arthur Evans on his travels in the ‘nineties and to attempt to date the unexcavated remains more accurately than was then possible’. He describes sites he visits giving information on their existence, approximate location and history of research, but he also refers to sites giving only the references of their excavation or study. Therefore his study can not be taken to be representative of actual site numbers; it is basically an account of previously recorded and new sites.

	N/ FN/ EM I	Pre palatial	Pre palatial?	Proto palatial	Proto palatial?	Neo palatial	palatial	Palatial?	Post palatial	Post palatial?	PH
Settlement			1		2	4	4	1		1	**4**
Habitation	1										**2**
Habitation?	1										1
Burial activity		1							1		**2**
Burial activity?			1								
Defence site											**3**
Unknown activity						2	2				5
presence				1			1		1		2
total	2	1	2	1	2	6	7	1	2	1	**19**

	PH?	PG/ G	O/ A/ CL/ HL	Greek	HL/ R/ LR	GR	BVT	unknown
Settlement		1		**4**	3	**3**		
Habitation		1		**1**				
Burial activity		1		**1**		**2**		
Burial activity?	1							
Ritual?						1		
Unknown activity		2	2	3	3	4		1
presence		1		1			1	
total	1	6	2	**10**	6	**10**	**1**	

Table 6.4.1 Chronological and function interpretations of 'Pendlebury 1934' project.

As seen in table 6.4.1, the great majority of Pendlebury's sites are prehistoric and the information we receive about human activity covers the ancient world until LR times. Most sites are interpreted as settlements, but we are also informed of other activities such as defence and burial, whereas quite a few are of undefined function, even though some are known to be Minoan 'guard-posts'. Chronological certainty and precision are average.

Overall, we have evidence of human habitation from the end of the Neolithic / beginning of the Bronze Age, but we know very little of the Prepalatial and almost nothing of the Protopalatial landscapes. The highest settlement activity is attested in Neopalatial times (6 sites) and some activity is also noted for the Postpalatial. A connection between guard posts and routes is noted, a popular theory of Minoan archaeology that continues to the present (Minoan Roads) and which demonstrates palatial control and power, and implies conflict. Regarding the Greek and Graeco-Roman times we know less, but quite a few sites are defined as of habitational character. The Geometric is in fact the best represented with 1 certain settlement, 1 habitation and 1 burial site, while the observed pattern shows a need for refuge in high hills and protected areas. In the case of two sites (20%) we see them being used in both Greek and GR times (table 6.3.4), but not a continuation of function could be determined. Five sites exhibit reuse from PH to GR (26.31%), but when function can be determined it has changed over time (table 6.3.3). Finally, in 2 out of the 3 sites that show evidence of activity in both PH and Greek periods (15.78%), function remains the same (table 6.3.2).

To sum up, Pendlebury refers to sites several of which may be known and excavated, and most of which are of defined date and function; however, site definitions are often debatable. What we ultimately have is a general idea about the presence of human activity in various forms over time, and occasionally its continuation from PH to Greek times.

6.4.2 Wroncka (table 6.4.2)

Wroncka studies the relationships between geographical location and human activity in Minoan times from a historical perspective. Cultural development is seen as being strongly linked with environmental potential; together with a site catalogue and map, she provides an explanatory framework of the development of the palatial culture based on the study of environmental attributes. The sites considered are mostly known and excavated, but include sites from her own extensive research. All places of human activity are considered, even of debatable date and unknown type, however, interpretative certainty is quite high. The majority of sites with a usable function interpretation studied, concern habitational and even more so burial activity, thus her work gives us useful insights into the prehistoric habitational and burial landscapes. Habitation and in general activity is attested from the Neolithic and continues into Prepalatial times when as usual the majority of discernible activity concerns burials. The distinction between Protopalatial and Neopalatial is not always possible, therefore most sites belong to the palatial period in general, but the Neopalatial period is certainly more discernible than the Protopalatial and during palatial times we observe an increase in settlements and habitations, but also in other activity. The Postpalatial period is mainly represented through burials, but there is also evidence of habitation and other activity. Sites continue until the very end of the Bronze Age, but only one burial site is noted for the Geometric and therefore the Greek period, due to the researcher's interests. Overall, we observe an intensity of activity during palatial times, which is discussed in relation to the environment's influence on human locational choice and the possibilities it offers for further cultural development. Thus, most Minoan settlements were noted near the coast and alluvial plains, which open up to inland territory and this pattern is explained in terms of wine and olive-oil cultivation and exportation especially during LM.

	N/ FN/ EM I	Pre palatial	Pre palatial?	Proto palatial	Proto palatial?	Neo palatial	Neo palatial?	Palatial	Palatial?	Post palatial
Settlement					1	1	1	2		1
Habitation	1		2		3	5	7	7	7	2
Burial activity	1	6	2		4		5	2	4	13
Ritual			2	1	2	2		2	1	
Ritual?			1							
Defence site										1
Defence site?										
installation							2		2	
Unknown activity	4	4	1	1	5	8	5	11	2	4
presence	4	3	1	1	2	3	3	5	1	1
Various findspots										
Total	10	13	9	2	16	18	22	29	17	22

	Post palatial?	LM IIIC/ sub-Min	PH	PH?	PG / G	Greek	unknown
Settlement	1		**2**				
Habitation	7	1	**15**	7			
Burial activity	3	1	**22**	3	1	**1**	
Ritual			**3**				
Ritual?			1				
Defence site			**2**	2			
Defence site?			1	1			
installation	2		**2**				
Unknown activity	3	1	13	5			
presence	1	1	11	4			1
Various findspots			1				
Total	17	4	**73**	22	1	**1**	

Table 6.4.2 Chronological and function interpretations of 'Wroncka' project.

6.4.3 Nowicki (table 6.4.3)

Nowicki's work focuses on specific site-types, and more specifically on refuge settlements of the end of the Bronze Age, but the phenomenon is noted also for the Neolithic and the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age. The second focus of research concerns Peak sanctuaries of the Protopalatial period. As seen in table 6.4.3, the PH is expectantly represented by a much higher density of sites due to the researcher's interests and LM IIIC / sub-Min settlement is the major activity recorded showing a high level of continuation from PH to Greek times (table 6.3.2). Protopalatial ritual is the second most important. Activity lessens as we proceed towards the GR period and the BVT is represented mainly through 3 VEN settlements. Overall, certainty is high, but site numbers are not representative of the relative periods, as the researcher's questions were specific to a particular phenomenon, namely the choice of defensible locations for settlement towards the end of the Bronze Age. This pattern demonstrates social troubles and warfare with the coming of new people (defensible sites near the coast), but also among island communities, that continues into the Geometric and gives us insights into the genesis of the Greek polis. Defensive systems are observed both near the coast and inland and consist of sites of various sizes that seem to have a particular role in the system (from watch towers to extensive settlements and dual settlements). Defensive settlements in the MBA are again evidence of conflict, while the appearance of PK's are linked to the expansion of palatial ideology and control.

	N/ FN/ EM I	N/ FN/ EM I?	Pre palatial	Proto palatial	Neo palatial	Neo palatial?	Palatial	Palatial?	Post palatial	Post palatial?	LM IIIC/ sub-Min	LM IIIC/ sub-Min?
settlement	2	1	4	1	1	2	4	1	6	2	19	2
Settlement?	1								1			
Habitation					1		1					
Habitation?			1									
Burial activity									1		1	
Burial activity?												
Ritual				11	4		11					
Ritual?			1									
Defence site								1			2	
Unknown activity					1		2					
presence												
Total	3	1	6	12	7	2	19	2	8	2	22	2

	LM IIIC / PG	PH	PH?	PG / G	PG / G?	O/ A/ CL/ HL	O/ A/ CL/ HL?	Greek	Greek?	GR	BVT	BVT?
settlement	9	**25**	5	15	3	6	2	**16**	5	**2**	**3**	1
Settlement?		1		1		1						
Habitation				1				**1**				
Burial activity		**1**										
Burial activity?	1	1										
Ritual		**11**										
Ritual?		1										
Defence site	2	**3**							1		**1**	
Unknown activity				1		1		1				
Total	12	**43**	5	18	3	8	2	**18**	6	**2**	**4**	1

Table 6.4.3 Chronological and function interpretations of 'Nowicki' project.

6.4.4 Minoan Roads (table 6.4.4)

This project explores primarily a specific form of human activity, namely roads and guard-posts, in order to describe and explain the socio-political framework of the palatial period. Infrastructure, communication routes and spatial relationships are indeed very important for the understanding of cultural development and social structure. The project's interpretative framework uses of course excavation data as well, but research was structured mainly upon landscape work. We also have quite a high number of settlement and other activities in the palatial period, which is the principal period of research, but we can not distinguish between Protopalatial and Neopalatial. A disadvantage in using interpretations of this project is that a large proportion of the sites reported do not have a specific interpretation, because publications do not include a site catalogue; the publication used and which provides the majority of sites (Chrysoulaki 1993), describes activity per area unit, but does not specify function of each site included. Settlement activity is in fact noted from the Neolithic (near the coast) till the very end of the Bronze Age. The sites described include also some Greek and GR settlement activity, the majority of which are a continuation of PH use into historical times.

Overall, as the aim of the project is to understand specific site-types of the palatial period and their interrelationships, the strength of the project is on the information it provides about the period with the highest degree of developmental level registered in the landscape, the time of the palaces; through the study of the palatial communication network and the Minoan guard-posts, we get interesting insights into the organisational structure of the Minoan society. The project sees roads, guard-posts, infrastructure sites, villas and PK's as the result of a much organised central authority.

	N/ FN/ EM I	Palatial	Post palatial	LM IIIC/ PG	PH	PG/ G	O/ A/ CL/ HL	Greek	HL/ R/ LR	GR
settlement	4	3	1	3	**11**	3	1	**7**	5	**5**
Settlement?										1
Habitation		5			**6**					
Burial activity		1			**1**					
Ritual		4			**4**					
Defence site		18			**18**					
installation		13			**13**					
Not specified		20			20					
Unknown activity		9			9					
Total	4	73	1	3	**82**	3	1	**7**	5	**6**

Table 6.4.4 Chronological and function interpretations of 'Minoan Roads' project.

6.4.5 Hagia Photia (table 6.4.5)

Hagia Photia is one of the very few systematic intensive surveys in the eparchy of Siteia, undertaken not to answer specific questions, but as complementary to excavation and as an experiment to assess survey results in a coastal area that encourages settlement over time and which is part of a wider area that had long attracted archaeological interest over the century. Still, all periods were recorded, and as the survey was very intensive it seems that the project gives us quite a representative picture of the diachronic human activity in its area (4 km²). The PH period is the best represented and on the whole, chronological precision and certainty are quite high. Function interpretations have a higher degree of certainty and precision in the PH times. A few sites seem

to have been used in multiple periods, but only one settlement is known to have kept its function from PH to GR times (tables 6.3.2 - 4).

Overall, the survey shows some activity from pre-palatial times (burial and defence), but the project informs us of habitation in the wider area already from the Neolithic. The well-known EM I-II site at Hagia Photia, which has demonstrated strong links with the Cyclades, is believed to represent a new community in the area. Later on, a fortified building in MM IA shows evidence of warfare in Prepalatial times. We don't really know what was going on in Protopalatial times, but activity, mostly identified as habitational, picks up during the Neopalatial, when we have the highest number of sites, and lessens again in Postpalatial. A gap is attested at the end of the Bronze and beginning of the Iron Age, but during Greek and GR times the plain is inhabited and cultivated once again even though sparsely. After the end of the ancient world we know only of one infrastructure site from the survey, but the village of Hagia Photia was actually established in Medieval times. Finally, a few sites are re-used from PH to Greek (3 sites), from PH to GR (4 sites), and from Greek to GR (2 sites), but usually, function changes. It is interesting to see that this coastal area, even though small, has been used throughout time in variable forms and intensity.

	Pre palatial	Proto palatial	Neo palatial	Palatial	Post palatial	LM IIIC sub-Min	PH	O/ A/ CL/ HL	Greek	HL/ R/ LR	GR	BVT
settlement			1	1	1		**1**			1	**1**	
Habitation			4	4	1		**5**	1	**1**			
Habitation?			1	1								
Burial activity	1											
defence	1						**1**					
Agropastoral activity								1	**1**			
installation										1		**1**
Installation?											1	
unknown activity		1	1	2			2	1	1	2	2	
presence		1			2	1	1					
Total	2	2	7	8	4	1	**10**	3	**3**	4	**4**	**1**

Table 6.4.5 Chronological and function interpretations of 'Hagia Photia' project.

6.4.6 Praisos (table 6.4.6)

This project aimed to study the historical context of the Greek city of Praisos, using systematic intensive survey and focusing on topographical mapping, but human activity is in fact recorded diachronically. As a result of research interests the best represented periods are from Archaic to Hellenistic (the distinction between CL and HL has often not been possible to make), but there is only a marginal difference between the number of PH and Greek sites, whereas the BVT landscape is also quite well represented, compared with the general - astonishing - lack of archaeological interest for the period. However, function precision is the highest for the Greek period, even though in general it is pretty low in the preliminary publication. Quite a large number of sites continue to be used from PH into Greek times (table 6.3.2), and there is also some evidence for continuity of site use into GR (tables 6.3.3 – 4).

Overall, habitation is noted from the Neolithic giving us hints of defensible locations being preferred. Some activity is observed throughout the PH periods, the highest being during palatial times, but low function precision prohibits us from being able to use site interpretations effectively. The project's historical narrative,

however, explains variations of site density in terms of nucleation (only a few Neopalatial sites), or retreat from the coast (increase of LM III sites in the hinterland of Praisos). Locational choice is linked with the need for protection in the Neolithic and the end of the Bronze Age, and with subsistence in the Protopalatial period, when a large amount of megalithic walls seem to reveal rural expansion. The area's peak is during CL and HL with Praisos rising to a very important Greek city, even though rural density does not seem to be higher than in MM times.

	N/ FN/ EM I	Pre palatial?	Proto palatial	Proto palatial?	Neo palatial	Neo palatial?	Palatial	Post palatial	Post palatial?	LM IIIC/ sub-Min	LM IIIC/ sub-Min?	LM IIIC / PG?	PH	PH?
Settlement										1			**1**	
Habitation	1													
Habitation?				1	1		1	1		1			2	
Burial activity								1	2	2			**2**	2
Burial activity?									2		1	2		2
Ritual														
Unknown activity	2	1	1	2	1	2	3		1	2			18	1
presence														
Total	3	1	1	3	2	2	4	2	5	6	1	2	**23**	5

	PG / G	PG / G?	O/ A/ CL/ HL	O/ A/ CL/ HL?	Greek	Greek?	HL/ R/ LR	HL/ R/ LR?	GR	GR?	BVT	BVT?	unknown
Settlement	1		1		**1**		1		**1**		**1**		
Habitation											**1**		
Habitation?			3		3								
Burial activity		2	1		**2**	1							
Burial activity?		1	1	1	1	1							4
Ritual	1		1		**1**						**3**	1	
Ritual?			1		1								
Agropastoral activity											**4**		
installation			2		**1**						**1**	1	5
Installation?					1								
Unknown activity	1	1	10	6	11	6	4	1	6	1	2		19
presence			2		2								
Total	3	4	22	7	**24**	8	5	1	**7**	1	**12**	2	

Table 6.4.6 Chronological and function interpretations of 'Praisos' project.

6.4.7 Ziros (Katelionas & Lamnoni) (tables 6.4.7a and 6.4.7b)

Ziros project consists of the survey of the two upland areas of Katelionas and Lamnoni (fig. 6.1), in order to study the historical evolution of the area until the Arab conquest and its relationship to various centres in the vicinity over time. It was a systematic intensive survey that sought to identify sites of variable size and hierarchical level through the study of pottery densities across the landscape. Even though the researcher's interests focus primarily on the Minoan period, the specific project was intended to study human evolution diachronically, and thus it informs us of a gap of human activity in EM and from the end of the Bronze Age to Hellenistic times. Function precision is pretty good and all major types of human activity are recognised, while chronological precision is also pretty good even though it does not always allow us to distinguish between the first and second palace periods (but one would expect pottery traditions to last longer in such remote areas anyway). Continuation of site use and indeed function, is noted only from PH to GR in 1 site in Katelionas and in 3 out of the 4 GR sites in Lamnoni.

Overall, we observe the presence of people already in Final Neolithic in both basins, explained as organised around a nucleated settlement and occasional farmsteads, with burial and religious ground in the vicinity. No Prepalatial material was found, but occupation picks up again from Protopalatial times and continues until LM III showing a peak of activity during the palatial period, which however, does not exceed that of the Neolithic. The situation doesn't seem to differ much during GR, when both areas are stated to be under Ierapetra's territory after Praisos's destruction in 195 B.C., and used by agricultural communities.

	N/ FN/ EM I	Proto palatial	Neo palatial	Palatial	Post palatial	PH	HL/ R/ LR	GR
settlement	2	2	2	2	1	**3**	2	**2**
Habitation				1		**1**	3	**3**
Burial activity	1	1	1	2	2	**2**	1	**1**
ritual				1		**1**		
Defence site				1		**1**		
unknown activity	2					2		
Total	5	3	3	7	3	**10**	6	**6**

Table 6.4.7a Chronological and function interpretations of 'Katelionas' project.

	N/ FN/ EM I	Proto palatial	Neo palatial	palatial	Post palatial	PH	HL/ R/ LR	GR	BVT
settlement		1	1	1		**1**	1	**1**	
Habitation	2					**2**		**1**	
Habitation?	1					1			
Burial activity	1			1	1	**1**	1	**1**	**1**
ritual	1			1		**2**			
Agro-pastoral activity?				1		1			1
Unknown activity	1			1		2		1	
presence	1								
total	7	1	1	5	1	**10**	2	**4**	**2**

Table 6.4.7b Chronological and function interpretations of 'Lamnoni' project.

6.5 Synthesis

The reconstructed patterns presented below for important chronological periods can not be taken as an accurate picture of human evolution over time since most projects were question specific and studied particular site types and periods. The apparent reduction of settlement in certain periods is certainly enhanced by pottery recognition problems and on-going pottery traditions. Very few projects studied human activity historically and in its variability. Intensive survey methods may potentially provide a better representation of human activity in a wide temporal, spatial and type level, but very few of the relevant projects are actually published. We note of course, that more recent projects show a greater interest in diachronic landscapes even if they are question –specific (Praisos, Itanos) and periods like the Neolithic and BVT have been more discernible in some recent researches. Overall, reconstructions are certainly subject to the available data, which are better for some periods and areas than others.

6.5.1 Neolithic / Final Neolithic / Early Minoan I

Human settlement in the area of Siteia starts from Neolithic times, and quite a few sites have been noted by almost all projects undertaken in the area. Most sites are interpreted as settlements or habitations, but we know also of several burials and 1 ritual site in Lamnoni and of course several sites whose function could not be established. It is interesting that people occupy sites on the coast (Wroncka, Pseira, Itanos, Nowicki, Minoan Roads) but also in the interior of the island (Praisos, Lamnoni, Katelionas). Typical sites of the period are coastal caves and rock-shelters that are not easily accessible and which are usually used as burial ground, but settlements may also be inaccessible as they usually occupy remote and well-protected hillocks and cliffs. Defensibility is actually observed both on the coast and inland (Praisos), fact that may represent conflict among communities on the island and maybe also fear for newcomers. In the upland areas of Lamnoni and Katelionas we are given a picture of communities nucleated around a settlement, but occupying the landscape with several farmsteads as well. It is actually supported that Lamnoni was occupied first and the same pastoral community moved to Katelionas. The idea of possible hilltop ritual is particularly interesting, even though it requires further attention. The fact that no EM was found could be because FN pottery was still in use in those upland areas at the same time as the coast was in contact with the Cyclades. Overall, it seems that eastern Crete was occupied by several communities during the Neolithic, throughout the diversity of the landscape, and the need for defensibility represents an intensity of movement and competition among communities.

6.5.2 Prepalatial (EM – MM IA)

The Prepalatial period is quite problematic as in some projects it is much better represented than the previous period (Wroncka, Nowicki, Hagia Photia), but in others hardly present (Praisos) or totally absent (Ziros). Most activity seems to take place near the coast and EM II in particular, shows signs of growth, overseas contacts and nucleation. The area exhibits very important sites for the period; the Hagia Photia cemetery that declares the presence of a prosperous community with strong connections with the Cyclades (Davaras and Betancourt 2004; Doumas 1976;1979); the settlement at Petras that will prosper into an important town during the Palatial period and continues to be used in Postpalatial times as well; Palaikastro which in EM IIb shows signs of nucleation with a building structure similar to those of Vasiliki, Phaistos and Tylisos. Another very important site is the MM IA fortified building on Kouphota hill at Hagia Photia, which indicates defensibility and industrial production, but whose function has not been established with certainty (Tsipopoulou 1988, see also discussion in the same publication, 1999; Doumas 1976, 1979). The end of the Prepalatial period and the beginning of the Protopalatial (EM III / MM I-II) is linked to social upheaval, with settlements being established in defensible locations, some of which may be related to early Peak Sanctuaries (Nowicki). Overall, we seem to have a greater number of sites compared to the Neolithic especially near the coast, and communities seem to grow and prosper through trade and contacts, but also develop rather competitive relationships.

6.5.3 Protopalatial (MM IB - II)

Most projects seem to identify a rather densely inhabited Protopalatial landscape, with an increase in sites of variable functions and across the landscape. The upland areas of Ziros are reoccupied for the first time after the Neolithic; in Lamnoni settlement is now more dispersed, even if not denser, and Neolithic burial ground is reused. Katelionas with two nucleated settlements shows slightly denser activity than Lamnoni, and the fact that most activity is concentrated at the borderline of the plains is linked to their agricultural exploitation. Similarly, in Praisos there seems to be an increase of sites and the pattern recognised shows rural expansion with activity developing near arable land, routes and sources. Intensive agriculture is in fact very well demonstrated on the island of Pseira, where the relevant study revealed techniques of manuring, terrace construction and land management. On the other hand, the countryside in Itanos is almost empty and only minor activity is reported in Hagia Photia, whereas Palaikastro develops to a town prospering with foreign contacts. Thus, the picture we have regarding settlement activity, is one of nucleation on the east (Palaikastro, Zakros) and north (Petras, Pseira) coast, but also a general expansion of settlement in the highlands (Nowicki, Ziros, Praisos).

This is undeniably a period of great interest and complexity characterised by the establishment of 'palatial' structures, Peak Sanctuaries and sites known as 'guard-posts', which are usually interpreted as controlling Minoan routes and the circulation of agricultural products on behalf of the palaces, serving a similar role to later Neopalatial villas (e.g. Chiromandres: Tzedakis *et al*. 1990). Nowicki has in fact identified similar structures in Lasithi as parts of defensive settlements, and in general he has observed a need for defensibility with many of his refuge settlements being used at the time. Indeed, guard-posts and defensive settlements hint towards a time of socio-political conflicts during this period. PK's can also be a significant interpretative tool for the study of the society at the time and they have been related to an ideological expansion of regional centres, but also to palatial economic expansion and control of large pasturelands[1]. Rural PK's are seen as local sacred places which seem to go out of use in Neopalatial times, whereas the ones linked to regional centres, continue and prosper (Peatfield 1983). In Siteia, many form a group around Petsofas which was the first and most important Peak Sanctuary above the flourishing town of Palaikastro. Nowicki discusses the gap between the group of PK's around Petsofas – Palaikastro in the eastern part of the eparchy of Siteia and the Knossos – Jouktas ones, whose sphere of influence spreads eastwards until the western Mountains of Lasithi; he proposes that the eastern Siteia PK's were under the influence of Knossos, whereas the palaces of Malia and Phaistos may have resisted such an influence since there doesn't seem to be a system of PK's around them. Whether there had been an independent east Siteia socio-political unit or not is certainly a problem that can not be resolved in the present study, however, it is important to note the concentration of such religious, ideological and maybe political and economic expression at the very eastern part of the eparchy. Overall, society in Protopalatial times developed to a form that exhibits central organisation, but communal social behaviour (tholos tombs, rituals), economic growth, nucleation / urbanisation on the coast, rural expansion inland and in general agricultural intensification, religious / ideological propagation but socio-political conflicts, cultural unity throughout the island, but also interesting local differentiations.

6.5.4 Neopalatial (MM III – LM IB)

This is the period of the greater expansion of settlement and general growth, demonstrated by most projects. In Praisos, however, we have little evidence of activity explained as a possible sign of nucleation similar to Kavousi (but where did people move to?). The dissimilar situation observed by Hagia Photia and Itanos

1 Peak Sanctuaries are a most important cultural expression of palatial Crete, reflecting ideology, but also political and economic territories. Many scholars have studied their relationship to centres and rural sites, their function in Minoan society and its possible changes between Protopalatial and Neopalatial Crete (from Paul Faure in the 69's and Bodgar Rutkowski in the 70's till current researchers, e.g. Peatfield 1983; 1987; 1990, Nowicki 1991, Watrous 1995, Soetens 2006)

projects shows a much greater settlement growth along the coast. Unfortunately we can not distinguish between first and second palace periods at Ziros, but one wonders if the situation was similar to that at Praisos.

This period sees the establishment of structures known as 'villas', which have been interpreted mainly as houses or the base of a powerful chief who exercised agricultural - economic control over a large area. Their function is a very controversial theme in Minoan archaeology (Hägg 1997), but overall they seem to have served different roles; some have a rather strong industrial character (Zou), others show connections with agropastoral economy (Aghios Georgios), while some structures are almost miniature versions of palatial architectural arrangement and demonstrate intensive religious elements (Makrygialos: also called 'cult villa' by Davaras 1997). Another important site type of the period is that of the so-called 'guard-post' studied extensively by the Minoan Roads project, where they are seen as military structures exercising palatial control over the routes and therefore circulation. Smaller sites of the 'vigla' type are seen as playing a subsidiary role to the guard-posts. The idea of centralised palatial control through such structures was already put forward by Evans. Megalithic structures of the 'guard-post' type start in the Protopalatial period and whether they are believed to exercise palatial control (Minoan Roads) or seen as parts of defensive settlements in other areas (Nowicki – Lasithi), most researchers read a defensive / military character (also Palaikastro) and may therefore be taken as indication of socio-political conflict and upheaval. We should note, however, Wroncka's proposal of them serving as rest-posts along routes, fact that demonstrates her different perception of Minoan society as of a peaceful one. In any case eastern Crete shows a high density of such independent buildings that most certainly had an important role in Minoan society.

In general, many new sites are established across the landscape, from settlements to 'guard-posts', roads and villas. The town of Palaikastro is rapidly reconstructed after its destruction at the end of the Protopalatial period, with a well-planned street system and the first public building. The towns of Zakros and Petras reach their peak also, showing evidence of greater nucleation. An extensive road network links Zakros and Palaikastro to sites of industrial, burial and religious activities. At Pseira there is evidence for intensification of landuse and rise of population, but also Hagia Photia sees the establishment of more 'country houses' and a more intensive exploitation of the plain. Eastern Crete is in general very rich in sites such as villas and guard-posts, PK's but also towns and settlements of variable sizes across the landscape and has an extensive road network linking towns, industrial sites such as quarries, and PK's. All these indicate a high level of energy spent for infrastructure towards the fulfilment of economic, social and religious needs of the respective society.

6.5.5 Palatial

Quite often chronological site interpretations do not distinguish between first and second palace periods and the time of palace architecture is treated as a unified period (Ziros and Minoan Roads, Lehmann, Wroncka). Overall, the distinguished patterns of nucleation (especially along the coast), central organisation, agricultural intensification, settlement expansion, economic growth etc are more intense in the 2nd palace period. Wroncka identifies proximity to coast and alluvial plains as the important factors for the growth of palatial settlements, and in fact the exploitation of fertile land is acknowledged by all researchers as a typical characteristic of the period leading to its affluence and socio-economic development. Lehmann sees coastal development as a sign of peace and stability and when agricultural potential does not justisfy such growth, this is seen as the result of overseas contacts. However, as discussed above, socio-political conflict is well-attested during the time of the 'palaces'.

6.5.6 Postpalatial

This period has not been of primary focus for any project and some only barely record some kind of activity due to research interests (Minoan Roads). Nowicki for example, has actually studied the bigger number of settlements of this period as he is interested in the end of the Bronze Age. However, even projects that have

studied human activity over time, report a reduction of sites in this period especially along the coast; In Hagia Photia activity is halved and consists mainly of 1 settlement and 1 habitation, while not much is known from Itanos either. At Praisos we have 1 possible habitation and 1-5 LM III tombs, while Ziros reports 1 settlement and 2-3 tombs. It is stated (Praisos) that there seems to be a retreat from the coast and occupation of inland areas, even though in Palaikastro there is a rebuilding programme during LM IIIA/B and the town is occupied until its abandonment at the end of LM IIIB.

Postpalatial times have traditionally been known through LM III tombs (Pendlebury, Wroncka), but more recently settlements have also been recognised and studied. LM II is one of the least recognisable periods over time and in our area we know only that in Palaikastro, there is sporadic reoccupation during this period. Overall, it seems that people have created larger communities as attested through settlement nucleation and burials.

6.5.7 LM IIIC – PG

The so-called period of the Dark Ages has not been sufficiently discussed by many researchers especially in earlier times. However, settlement and burial activity is attested by most. The widely accepted characteristic of the period is the abandonment of coastal areas and the movement inland, sign of social conflicts and competition, stated in Pendlebury, Lehmann, Pseira project and others. Indeed, the plain of Hagia Photia is deserted and not much is known for other areas on the coast, but in fact the upland area of Ziros seems to have been abandoned as well.

Our knowledge for this period, comes mainly from the extensive work of Nowicki who has focused in the study of the transition from the Bronze to Iron Ages (LM IIIC – PG), and the beginnings of the Greek poleis-krati. The pattern of refuge settlements in the Dark Ages identified in Siteia, falls within a general pattern at the time throughout the island, even though there may be some local differences. Here as well, people have settled summits that are particularly steep and relatively high when they overlook coastal plains and are thus near the sea. Habitation is greater inland, where settlements of quite a bigger size may be more accessible, but they belong to a defence system of several settlements, and are protected by watch towers and smaller settlements. Settlements which were central to such a system and could expand and control a greater area seem to have developed to the Geometric towns. The phenomenon is linked to a period of instability following the fall of a more centralised society and the rise of independent groups throughout the southeast Mediterranean. The choice of defensive locations for settlement, defence-walls and the poverty of material, indeed show times of social troubles and economic depression. Western Siteia Mountains[2] form the second most important refuge settlement system after Lasithi Mountains.

An interesting phenomenon of the habitation pattern at the time is also the existence of small, particularly inaccessible settlements, which seem to have been the last refuge, and perhaps not only for the nearest permanent settlement, but also for other nearby ones. An example of such dual settlements is Zakros Ellinika (permanent settlement) and Zakros Kastello (more inaccessible settlement) on the east coast. Moreover, some of the Dark Age sites that are not very defensible can have a very defensible area above or nearby, which they may use only temporarily and thus no buildings are erected (e.g. Mega Chalavro). Finally, a size hierarchy is identified, consisting of a) watch points, b) small hamlets, c) medium settlements, d) extensive settlements and e) cities.

2 Some of the sites studied by Nowicki and included in the present study relate to a wider defence system in the West Siteia Mountains, which incorporates sites that are outside the borders of the eparchy of Siteia.

6.5.8 Greek

As already observed, post-PH times have received much less attention, even though the Greek or Hellenic period, namely from Geometric to Hellenistic, has always been recorded by most researchers even if not consistently. The lack of archaeological interest has been the primary cause for pottery recognition problems, and thus chronological precision has not been satisfactory, often restricted to terms such as 'Greek', that does not allow us a sufficient understanding of the historical evolution at the time. Except for projects that focused almost exclusively on PH themes (Palaikastro, Minoan Roads), more recent landscape research has been diachronic (at least until the end of the ancient world) and two intensive surveys, namely Praisos and Itanos, have actually focused on this period, exploring the historical circumstances of the development of the homonymous ancient cities. Unfortunately, though, they have not been fully published yet.

The available data, however, give us an idea of human activity at the time, even if fragmentary: On the coastal plain of Hagia Photia habitation is sparse with a 7th century country house, but the plain is continuously cultivated. Coastal settlement is observed in the east as well (Minoan Roads, Palaikastro), whereas in the north-east the important city of Itanos rises at the time. Itanos was strong and open to the outside world, flourishing until Roman times. The homonym project gives us some interesting insights into social memory; it is revealed that new burial needs in CL times respected older public buildings, showing that the community had strong bonds with the past at least until CL times. During HL, however, the cemetery is totally reformed. The countryside doesn't show evidence of permanent habitation, fact that may be explained by nucleation at Itanos and exploitation of the countryside by the people living in the city, a pattern which is attested for CL times elsewhere (Mendoni 1994). In the interior of the island at Praisos, the city reaches its peak during CL and HL and rural expansion seems higher than in Itanos, even though not higher than in Minoan times and less than in the Mainland Greece at the time. On the other hand, the upland areas of Ziros show evidence of human activity only after the 3rd century B.C., and the island of Pseira has also very sparse evidence of only occasional activity. It seems that whether inland or on the coast, we have fewer but bigger settlements, which need and control large territories.

Finally, Nowicki, having studied the transition from the Bronze to Iron Ages, he has discerned settlements that developed into Greek 'πόλεις' during Geometric times and a few that continued to be occupied into later periods, but the number is constantly decreasing (sites surviving from PG to HL: Proto-Geometric, 17sites; Geometric, 11sites; Orientalizing, 7sites; Archaic, 4sites; Classical, 2sites; Hellenistic, 1site). This pattern agrees with a model of growing stability as settlements appear more nucleated and secure with the passing of time. People seem to have formed larger social groups and occupy less defensible areas (but fortify them), as conflict has moved scale from the small community to the city level.

6.5.9 GR

Most projects do not actually differentiate between Greek and GR periods, and overall give us very little evidence of the time. According to the fragmentary picture offered by the above projects, Hagia Photia plain continues to be cultivated and there is some evidence for a permanent farm habitation. The hinterland of Itanos shows higher activity than in Greek times, therefore a more dispersed pattern, and the city grows until the end of the period, when it is abandoned. At Ziros, Katelionas shows some evidence of permanent settlement in the form of farms and villages, whereas Lamnoni seems to have been used for agro-pastoralism but doesn't show traces of permanent activity loci. It is estimated that it supported about the same amount of people as in the Minoan period (50-100). After the fall of Praisos from Ierapetra in 195 BC Katelionas and Lamnoni are thought to have fallen within the latter's territory. It should be noted that the LR period at Ziros is taken to be the 6-8th centuries AD (including the first Byzantine period, 6th-7th century A.D.), while at the same time in Pseira, the early Byzantine period starts in the 5th century AD. In Praisos some minor activity is reported and in fact it is stated that very little can be inferred for post-Greek periods. Overall, we can probably discern some higher activity along the coast, and Lehmann discusses the development of coastal settlement at the

time as evidence for prosperity and social peace, but the information we have is in fact totally insufficient to reconstruct a satisfactory picture of the society at the time.

6.5.10 BVT

The study of societies after the end of the ancient world has in general been restricted to historical texts and religious art. The archaeological record has not been used as for previous periods, and in particular landscape archaeology has shown minimal interest for this period. Except for a few intensive surveys, which have studied human ecology diachronically, our information about BVT times consists of only sporadic and inconsistent evidence. Medieval pottery is in general acknowledged to be very difficult to recognise, but in fact, archaeological focus on PH times is largely responsible for our lack of experience with the archaeological record of this period. For our area, we know that several nowadays villages were founded in the medieval period, such as Hagia Photia, Nea Praisos, Kalamafki and Ayios Spyridon (the last three in Praisos area). The abandonment of strong cities (Itanos) declares a total reorganisation of the social landscape and indeed now we observe the establishment of several villages on the coast and inland, some of which are defensible and express social upheaval (Nowicki). At the same time, in Pseira we have 2 early Byzantine farms with permanent agricultural constructions in the fields. Moreover, the landscape expresses a strong religious ideology that continues to the present, as many churches and monasteries are founded in this period. In general, socio-economic life surviving to the present or until a few years ago seems to have had its roots in this period.

6.6 Conclusions

Overall, some projects give us primarily qualitative information (analysis of specific site types and explanatory suggestions regarding human activity) and others focus on quantitative information (numbers of sites that describe type and chronology of human activity over time). As seen in the above tables, most of the archaeological data / interpretations belong to the palatial period. As a result, we have a much clearer picture regarding this period than preceding and following ones.

The combination of project information gives us a picture of variable human activity and the changes in its intensity, across the landscape and in different periods. Explanatory suggestions comment on the function and role of human settlement over time or in specific periods, with insights into social circumstances (Lehmann, Wroncka, Nowicki). Aims and results may give a high priority to the identification of relationships among sites and between sites and topography (Nowicki, Praisos). The Minoan Roads project studies the communication network among Minoan sites and discusses its role in Minoan society and in relation to specific sites, in particular the so-called ‘guard posts’. Palaikastro survey sheds light into the extents, structure and function of a Minoan settlement, while Pseira illuminates the intensity of Minoan agricultural landuse. Other projects are interested in building a diachronic picture of human activity in their area (Ziros, Hagia Photia). Only Praisos and Itanos surveys are explicitly interested in post-Minoan periods, namely the GR. The latter is combined with excavations and gives us a clearer picture of the history of the ancient city.

Most sites are habitation sites, whether at a larger / settlement level or at a smaller level (single house, farmstead etc). The size of habitation sites, however, is rarely known, even though it is used as crucial evidence in the models proposed. Usually it is taken to imply political and economic hierarchy, but also population densities, an assumption which is not really well-founded since sites do not need to be contemporary, and also it is a well-attested phenomenon that a settlement population may use a number of nearby sites temporarily (also in modern Crete). Size, however, is crucial evidence and may indeed reveal relationships of economic dependency or independency, as well as a number of other issues regarding subsistence, socio-political circumstances and ideology, and since it is used as an important interpretative tool, it should be recorded consistently. Moreover, definitions and relationships between size and function should be clear in order to guarantee homogenous meaning in the terminology used.

The archaeological knowledge acquired through landscape research in association with excavation data can indeed illuminate past societies, especially of the Minoan period. An in-depth study of the human evolution in an area where different projects have taken place, would however require a reclassification of site interpretations in the highest function and chronological resolution possible, using classes that not only describe, but also analyse human behavioural patterns, taking into account also knowledge from the excavated record. Moreover, these would have to be studied in relation to topographical and environmental maps, which are the second most important element for archaeological interpretation.

Survey data has been used primarily for reconstructions of settlement activity over time, but also to detect and occasionally explain the history of hierarchies and possible relationships among sites, political relationships between regions, and even questions such as the rise of state, palatial society and polis-kratos. Indeed, survey data have revealed a multitude of human activity across space and allow us to follow different trajectories among regions in definable chronological periods (Driessen 2001). The main technique we use to describe and understand ancient societies is to analyse relationships between site numbers and their spread across space in specific time windows and we use spatial analysis to study sites in terms of location and how they relate to environment and topography. Thus, we conclude on subsistence potential, contacts, socio-political and economic circumstances.

Site numbers alone, however, are not enough for a social archaeology and abstraction does not really help to understand past societies. Settlement patterns over large slices of time and arbitrary regions are not an adequate means to reconstruct past historical circumstances. Instead, we have to pursue specificity of concepts, questions, and data. Furthermore, we need studies on the dynamics of regions, how these are constructed and what they are for the people involved (Relaki 2003). Ancient societies are lived by people, who somehow seem absent from our reconstructions. It is important though, to involve agency and study societies at the community level (Knapp 2003), seeking their interactions with the landscape in different scales and levels. Social beings do not consciously formulate historical circumstances such as systems of political hierarchies and economic dependencies; they interact with the landscape in order to ameliorate their living conditions and satisfy their socio-cultural needs and in order to approach some understanding of what life was like, we need to acknowledge that people operate in multiple levels of time and space. Particularly in Crete with its unique fragmentary and insular landscape, communities are perhaps the most viable unit to analyse societies.

In reality, whether we seek to answer questions of large-scale phenomena such as patterns of economic and political hierarchies, or questions regarding social behaviour at a finer level, we need to map sites of different function and size over time in relation to topographical and environmental attributes, but first, we need to exemplify the relationship between data observed and interpretations on site chronology and function and we need to define a terminology of significant classes of human activity that can be used by all researchers. Maps are strong interpretative tools, but they are meaningful only if they represent human activity and spatial relationships as they are discussed in texts. We also need to define and clarify our concepts, for example what does the term ‘hierarchy’ mean, is it political, economic, ritual, social, and how does it relate to the actual living of the people? How is the term ‘farmstead’ conceived, does it imply permanent or temporary habitation and is it run by family units or does it form part of wider economic and political structures?

As a result, to understand better an area based on landscape research (but of course incorporating also all available archaeological and historical knowledge), I believe it is important to act towards two directions: a) to turn our interest towards people and how they interact with the landscape as agents and communities as well as actors of larger socio-political and economic systems and b) to pursue an as fine and clear definition as possible of the variable human activity over time and its associations with material remains. The latter point is linked to the need of knowing what kinds of human activities we study and relate to the physical landscape, what these may mean in social terms and what spatial and time characteristics and relationships they might reveal for the relevant societies. It is believed that only in this way can we actually profit from the potential of a wide body of theoretical concepts and archaeological data and promote discussion and communication among researchers in our search for explanations regarding social human behaviour in the past.