

Aims: To develop a better understanding of Minoan society through an in-depth study of two key sites in the Mirabello Bay region of Crete: Gournia and Mochlos. To either agree or disagree with current scholars' views and opinions on Minoan society through these two sites. **Methodology:** Through the use of archaeological reports and articles, tables containing different categories of artefacts and their location have been produced. These have then been mapped out on to site plans to make it easier to see the distribution of finds and to help build socioeconomic models; alongside the help of multiple academic articles and books.

Conclusion: The Mirabello Bay was host to multiple different towns and villages, all with different socioeconomic structures. Gournia was by far the largest and most significant of these, and was a hierarchical town. The townspeople were primarily farmers, as were most in this period, but they also had multiple craft specialities. Mochlos' settlement on the other hand relied on its Artisans' Quarter for goods and the other houses were not as involved in industry as Gournia. Both sites also demonstrate widespread religious/social activities, but at various levels.

Economic Structure



Figure 1 (left): Distribution map of economic activities at Gournia. (Watrous, 2011: 210)

Gournia Findings:

- The town of Gournia was centred around its grand palace at the top of the hill, with the surrounding houses, especially in Block F to the North, the pattern is consistent with household industries that produced an array of goods.
- The main function of the houses at Gournia was farming and these craft specialisations were just a part-time activity.
- The town was also organised hierarchically. At the bottom of the hierarchy sat houses with no industry or evidence of agricultural storage, and would have relied on redistribution of food and goods from the palace. Next was a group of houses that had industrial activity but no evidence of agricultural storage either, meaning they would have struggled to be self-sufficient. After this was the



Figure 2: Road at Gournia archaeological site. (www.minoancrete.com)

economic centre to the North of the palace, Block F. These houses had a lot of industry and agricultural storage, making them self-sufficient and heavily involved in trade too. Right at the top of the hierarchy with the palace, organizing the town's economic activities, as well as administration and trade. (Watrous, 2011: 211)



Figure 3 (above): Distribution map for Mochlos.

Mochlos Findings:

- Mochlos on the other hand has a different economic structure to Gournia, but this is primarily due to its rare and intriguing 'Artisans' Quarter'.
- The Artisans' Quarter housed a group of full-time, independent craft specialists. (Soles, 2003: 95)
- As can be seen by Figure 2, the settlement relied on the Artisans' Quarter for craft production. The only exception was textile

- production, which was a common household practice.
- This contrasts with Gournia where most houses had their own household industry.
- Gournia's Block F craftsmen and those of the Artisans' Quarter differ in the amount of agricultural storage, which indicates the former were both farmers and craftsmen while the latter were specialising in craft.
- Due to the amount of administrative seals found at the settlement, it suggests the settlement was more involved in the exchange of goods than the Artisans' Quarter.
- There are also numerous foreign goods at Mochlos, indicating long-distance trade links. (See figure 4)
- Even though Mochlos is a lot smaller than Gournia, there is equivalent evidence for trade and administration.

Figure 4 (right): Ivory Pyxis at Mochlos House C.3. A pyxis is a type of jewellery box from this period, and the ivory suggests a Near Eastern origin. (chronique.efa.gr ID: 1909)



Select Bibliography:

Boyd-Hawes, H. (1908) *Gournia, Vasiliki and Other Prehistoric Sites*. American Exploration Society: Philadelphia.
 Seager, R. (1909) 'Excavations on the Island of Mochlos, Crete'. *American Journal of Archaeology* 13:3. (273-303).
 Soles, J. (2003) *Mochlos IA: Period III. Neopalatial Settlement on the Coast: The Sites*. INSTAP: Philadelphia.
 Watrous, V. (2011) 'Household Industries of Late Minoan IB Gournia and the Socioeconomic Status of the Town'. *Hesperia* 44 (199-212).
 Soles, J. (2010) 'Evidence of Ancestor Worship in Minoan Crete: new finds from Mochlos'. *British School at Athens Studies* 18. (331-338).

Social and Religious Activity

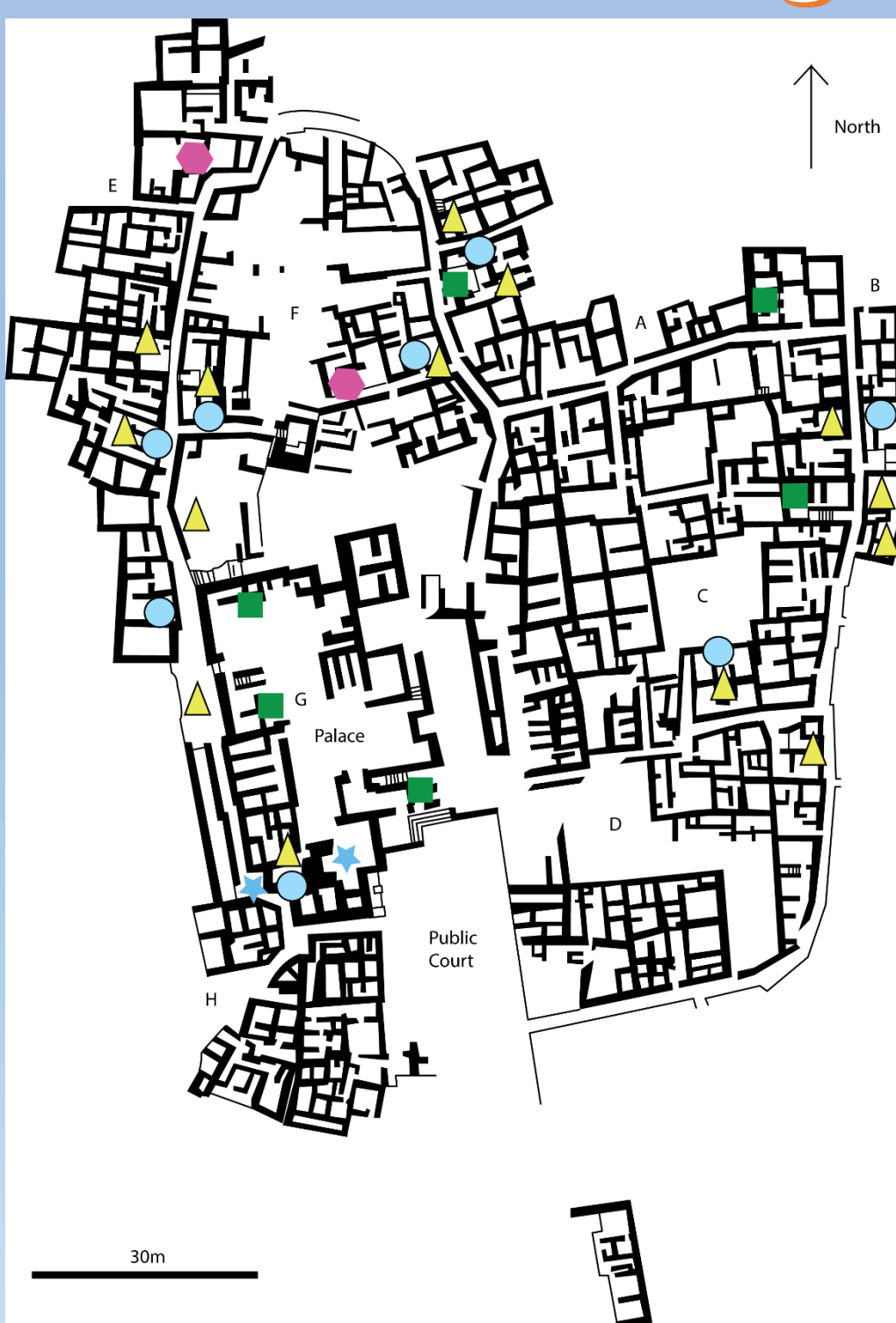


Figure 5 (left): Distribution map of social and religious objects at Gournia.

Gournia Findings:

- Even distribution of religious items around the site, with no link to elite or prestigious houses in particular.
- The palace was a hub for religion and social activity.
- Some houses in the North seem to have been producing religious goods as well as using them.
- Both poor and rich houses, including the palace, had the ability to host large groups of people for feasting, meaning social and religious activities were traversing the social hierarchy at Gournia.

Mochlos Findings: (see figure 5)

- House B.2 at Mochlos is arguably the most significant. This is due to it containing a shrine, and even a small outdoor space where it would appear people could gather and meet.
- This suggests House B.2 was a small communal temple of some sort. It even had the solitary skull of a young woman in one of the lower floors, suggesting the possibility of ancestor worship here. (Soles, 2010)
- Certain houses appear to have more social and religious activity than others. (See figure 5) This could be due to preservation however.
- The Artisans' Quarter also appears to have a shrine. Suggesting they were also involved in religious activity.

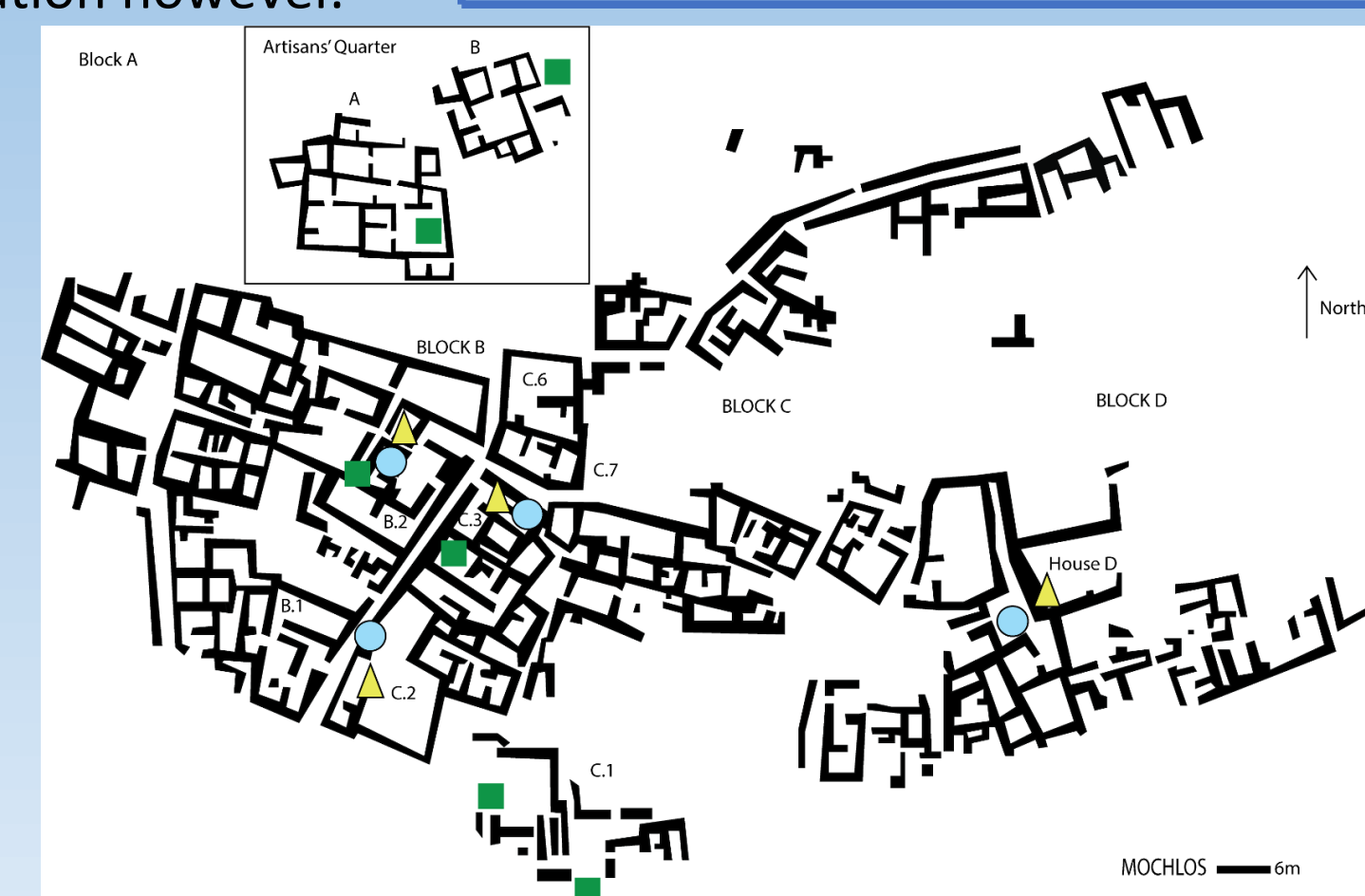


Figure 6 (right): Distribution map of social and religious objects at Mochlos.

