This volume comprises an important and useful collection of papers reflecting the state of household archaeology and domestic studies on ancient Crete.

— Bradley A. Ault, Associate Professor of Classics
University at Buffalo

Cretan material is distinguishably different from material from elsewhere in the Greek world. This volume could therefore be influential in stimulating debate about regionalism in the domestic sphere in different periods.

— Lisa Nevett, Professor of Classical Archaeology
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

This volume presents the papers of an international colloquium on the archaeology of houses and households in ancient Crete held in Ierapetra in May 2005. The 38 papers, which range from a study of household activities at Neolithic Phaistos to a discussion of the domestic correlates of "globalization" during the Early Roman Empire, demonstrate a variety of methodological approaches to the understanding of the built environment in all of its manifestations. Key themes include the variability of domestic organization and household composition; the role of houses and households in mediating social (and perhaps even ethnic) identity; and household activities of all types, from basic subsistence to production and consumption at a supra-household level.

Kevin T. Glowacki is Assistant Professor of Art and Architectural History at Texas A&M University.

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Back cover: Small-scale recreation of the Early Minoan settlement at Phournou Koryphi, Myrtos, as viewed from the west. Photo J. Atkinson

Front cover: Building A of Cluster B2 at the Hellenistic settlement of Trypitos, Siteia, from the east. Photo N. Vogeikoff-Brogan.
ΣΤΕΓΑ: THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF HOUSES AND HOUSEHOLDS IN ANCIENT CRETE
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ΣΤΕΓΑ: THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF HOUSES AND HOUSEHOLDS IN ANCIENT CRETE

EDITED BY KEVIN T. GLOWACKI AND NATALIA VOGEIKOFF-BROGAN

The American School of Classical Studies at Athens
2011
Excavations have been conducted annually at the site of Azoria in northeastern Crete since 2002, with the purpose of exploring the form of a small-scale Archaic (7th–early 5th century B.C.) city, as well as changes in socioeconomic systems in the transition from the Early Iron Age (EIA) to the 6th century B.C. Concentrating excavation on the southernmost of two distinct acropoleis, we have recovered evidence for an Archaic urban center (7th–5th centuries B.C.), that is, facilities that were used for large-scale (suprahousehold) and centralized food storage and processing, and public sacrifices and banqueting (Fig. 31.1). Our arguments for the construction of civic space have been presented elsewhere, and they include the radical rebuilding of the site to accommodate new architectural forms that indicate an emerging organizational structure; from this evidence we infer the existence of formal institutions controlling and allocating resources in distinctly public venues of consumption and display. An evidently important aspect of urbanization at Azoria was the allocation of space, in the late 7th century, to include new types of buildings and access routes converging in an open space—the putative agora—on the south side of the South Acropolis.

One indication of this change is the construction of what Fagerström and Hayden have called “spine walls”—massive retaining and dividing walls that are generally oriented to the contours of the hill (Fig. 31.1). These walls served to structure the urban topography, organize and delineate the

1. The authors would like to thank Carla Antonaccio, Monika Trümper, Natalia Vogeikoff-Brogan, and Kevin Glowacki for their insightful comments and useful input on drafts of this paper. The architecture and architectural phasing of the site are being studied by Rodney Fitzsimons (Trent University). The Azoria Project excavations have been supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities (RZ-50334, RZ-20812); the National Science Foundation (BCS-0438073); the National Geographic Society (7193-02, 7614-04); the Institute for Aegean Prehistory (INSTAP); the Loeb Classical Library Foundation; the College of Arts and Sciences, the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research, and the Department of Classics of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Iowa State University; the INSTAP Study Center for East Crete; and the Azoria Project Fund (0-65305-42).
use of both domestic and civic space, and control patterns of access and communication. Our hypothesis is that in the latter part of the 7th century, a new social order took material form in an increased expenditure on public buildings, the formalization of what can be called “civic architecture,” and the organization and monumentalization of the city center. The restructuring of the settlement also evidently included the rebuilding of domestic areas, integrating new house designs into the urban landscape.

Public places include: (1) the Communal Dining Building, consisting of three storerooms and three kitchens connected via a porch and vestibule to dining halls and a room for burn offerings; (2) the Monumental Civic Building, which was evidently an early ceremonial banquet hall with stepped seats that had an adjoining shrine with bench altar and hearth on the north, and to the south, a Service Building equipped for storage and food preparation; and finally (3) a community temple (the Cult Building) on the northeast side of a flat open area that we think was the city’s agora (Fig. 31.1). The Communal Dining Building and Monumental Civic Building, whatever their formal civic functions might have been, were clearly communal places, accommodating substantial public stores and banquet space—as is indicated by pithos storage and the full range of food-processing and serving equipment, as well as the substantial remains of food debris from within the complexes and adjacent service buildings. Sympotic equipment such as cups, jugs, table amphoras, and elaborate terracotta krater stands dominate the assemblages. These buildings served public needs, but each was also potentially exclusionary, ordering the various modes of social interaction and perhaps the status of households and clans and their integration in the broader community.

The rebuilding of the site at the end of the 7th century involved a significant investment in public architecture, which we see as a process of both physical and symbolic transformation—a material expression of urban identity at the expense of the EIA and Early Orientalizing (EO) structures that had occupied the hilltop for some 600 years. The buildings form new contexts for elite consumption, the negotiation of political power, and the assertion of claims to social identity in the early city.

Like the public buildings, the houses at Azoria are part of the late-7th century rebuilding of the site. They are located in close proximity to the public buildings, as well as at the edges of the civic center. The distinction between public and private space, the definition of households, and the archaeological ordering of social contexts, which remain significant problems in EIA Crete, are perhaps more clear in the Archaic period when public and private places (civic, cultic, mortuary, and residential space) were more sharply delineated.

Houses have been recovered so far in five areas of the site (Fig. 31.1): (1) on the south slope of the South Acropolis at the northern edge of what we think should be the city’s agora (South Slope houses [the East and West Corridor Houses]); (2) on the northeast side of the peak of the South Acropolis (Northeast Building); (3) on the north and northwest (Northwest Building and North Buildings); (4) on the lower Southwest Terrace (Southwest Buildings); (5) on the North Acropolis (North Acropolis Building). While the South Slope Buildings, Northwest Building, and Northeast

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4. For formal and structural changes in the urban topography in the Archaic period, see Lang 1996; 2005, pp. 18–19.

5. Lang (2005, p. 19) has commented on a similar restructuring of space and new house designs, drawing on examples from both Zagora and Vroulia; while she emphasizes formal changes involving a new paratactic arrangement of rooms at Vroulia, which take the form of the “row house” structure, we have argued that based on the scale of the site itself, the repetition of forms may be less important than the element of planning and integrated structure evident in the use of spine-wall construction (Haggis et al. 2004, p. 351; Haggis et al. 2007, pp. 263–265).

6. The building fits Prent’s (2005, pp. 476–502, 636) category of “suburban” sanctuary, which she links to the emergence of sociopolitical institutions associated with the Cretan poleis.

Building were clearly incorporated into the design and architectural fabric of the civic center, the Southwest Buildings and North Acropolis Building are decidedly peripheral to the main public buildings. An important goal of excavation is to examine differential material patterns that might help us understand varying social roles within the community as reflected in architecture, artifact and ecofact assemblages, and physical proximity to the center of civic life. One focus of such work is to discern modes of mobilization, production, storage, and consumption of different kinds of resources—especially food—that might elucidate differences among domestic contexts and between habitation and civic space. This brief paper, however, presents only the first step in this analysis, surveying the basic syntax of Archaic house forms recovered so far on the site.

THE SOUTH SLOPE BUILDINGS (EAST AND WEST CORRIDOR HOUSES)

The South Slope Buildings (Figs. 31.1, 31.2), constructed originally at the end of the 7th century, represent a number of phases of use that span the 6th and early 5th centuries B.C. The architectural phase that we discuss here represents abandonment in the early 5th century, a Late Archaic destruction phase that we correlate to a horizon of burning across the site in the first quarter of the 5th century. The study of the ceramic phases is still in the preliminary stages, and so the chronology of the architectural phases remains tentative, pending complete analysis of the assemblages.

The South Slope Buildings are separated from each other by an open space or alley (B500) and utilize the spine wall as a central element of their construction (Figs. 31.1, 31.2). The East Corridor House was entered from a street in the southeast, through a doorway into a corridor (C/S) that runs the full width of the building (Fig. 31.2:B300), providing access to a kitchen (K) with a built hearth, and a hall (H). A large part of the main hall of the building was unfortunately destroyed by modern plow-zone disturbance along its southern edge. The corridor had two handstones and two pithoi evidently containing wheat and grapes. The kitchen or hearth room had grapes and grains scattered around the room, a small fragmentary pithos, and a lekane (containing olives), which was decorated in relief with sphinxes and cranes.

The second building, the West Corridor House (Fig. 31.2:B100), is more complex architecturally. A corridor or vestibule (C/V) gave access from the courtyard to the main hall (H). The room’s contents consisted of a considerable amount of lustrous black-gloss tableware, including an Attic kantharos and a variety of matte-coated high-necked and low-necked cups. Several mortar, lekane, and cooking vessel fragments were also found. The flotation samples produced a wheat grain, a fragment of a cereal grain, and a number of grape pips. North of the spine wall, and accessible by means of a stairway from the courtyard (CY), were two service rooms—a storeroom (S) in B400 and a small kitchen or food-processing area (FP) with a pantry in B200. A number of vases were recovered in the storeroom: two high-
the archaic houses at azoria 371

necked cups, a large skyphos, three amphoras, two hydrias, a cookpot, and two pithoi. One pithos is a short globular jar decorated very simply with a horizontal row of stamped shield bosses and an impressed guilloche band. Other objects include a spindle whorl, two querns, and a bronze rivet. The flotation samples examined thus far have produced sparse remains of grains, pulses, and grapes.

What is clear is that in both houses space was organized in similar ways, with a corridor or vestibule mediating access to different functional areas. In the case of the West Corridor House, access to the interior of the house was from an external courtyard (CY) that contained a small hearth and bin, indicating exterior food-processing activities. From the north end of this courtyard, a stepped passage led across the spine wall into the service areas, while a doorway directly across the corridor from the entrance led to the main hall. A similar hall is reconstructed for the East Corridor House, where the corridor acted to control access from the street and evidently served multiple storage and food-processing functions (Fig. 31.2). These two South Slope houses are thus roughly similar in plan: one large square room with one or more internal pillars forms the main hall of the house, while a doorway connects the hall to a rectangular room that is narrower in dimensions. According to the evidence from the East Corridor House, this narrower room, or “corridor” as we have called it, would have served combined storage and work functions while providing the main access to the interior rooms of the house.

Similar complex house plans, consisting of a corridor giving access to one or more rooms, appear in roughly contemporary contexts at Aigina.
(Houses 2 and 3), and also at Corinth (Archaic House 1). The “corridor house” should be a definable type in the Aegean, and perhaps it is a conceptual, if not formal, link to the Greek pastas and courtyard houses of the 5th and 4th centuries.

On Crete, interesting examples are derived from Hayden’s survey of Archaic sites in the Meseleroi Valley, the hinterland of ancient Oleros (Fig. 31.3). Here, the corridor mediates between two wings of the houses, if not between separate house units. For example, in KPh3, the corridor (Fig. 31.3, room 9) evidently functioned as a kind of courtyard linking rooms on either side. A similar arrangement is apparent in Sk2, where room 2 is identified as a possible corridor. If more complex than the Azoria examples, the design principle of the Meseleroi houses is essentially the

8. See Krause 1977 and Lang 1996, esp. pp. 95–100, for detailed discussion of the typological category and other published examples; see also the summary in Morris 1998, pp. 20–64. It is important to mention that Lang (1996, pp. 99–100) categorizes examples from Aigina, Corinth, and Onythe as pastas houses rather than corridor types, diverging from Krause’s less strictly formal analysis (1977, p. 169).


same. A similar arrangement of rooms may be apparent on the Kastro in Late Geometric (LG)—EO Building A, where room 43 is a functional corridor or vestibule, mediating communication with rooms or even separate houses to the north and south.\footnote{Coulson et al. 1997, pp. 317–333.} We wonder if there is not some formal connection between these very large and apparently elaborate houses—possibly rural estates—evident in the Meseleroi region and the urban houses at Azoria. Could the city dwellers be imitating, on a smaller scale, primary elite residences in the countryside? Onythe Goulediana (Fig. 31.4, rooms A, B, E, H), excavated by Platon in the 1950s, is the best-known excavated example of the type on Crete. The corridor, accessible directly from a courtyard, fronts a row of three rooms connected at the back by a spine wall. It is essentially an enclosed *pasta*, mediating or transitional to the internal spaces of the house.\footnote{Lang 1996, p. 100.} In some examples it seems to have functioned as a kind of court or vestibule, emphasizing its liminality and multiple work and storage functions, while controlling access to the house’s interior.

The South Slope houses at Azoria are an intrinsic part of the restructuring and redesign of the South Acropolis at the end of the 7th century B.C. They are integrated into the site’s overall plan and are bound to the southern extension of the spine wall. From this we assume an element of planning and perhaps borrowed design principles, marking a significant departure from the material pattern of the EIA, which seems to have emphasized topographical conformity and continuity, modular growth with expansion of kinship groups, and (typically) multiple-room linear plans.\footnote{Haggis 1993; Coulson et al. 1997; Mook 1998; Glowacki 2002, 2004.} By way of contrast, the construction of the spine walls, probably at the end of the 7th century, represents a new conceptualization of space for the city center.
Houses are constructed anew, and they are linked to the overall reorganization of space with little evidence for modular or incremental expansion or development of house units. A good example of this predetermined and controlled use of space is in the Northwest Building, where the adjoining hall and storeroom (Fig. 31.1) are constructed between two parallel spine walls that are integral to their plan.\textsuperscript{14}

**NORTHEAST BUILDING AND NORTH ACROPOLIS BUILDING**

Two other houses at Azoria represent interesting variations in form and a marked contrast to the corridor houses on the South Slope. These houses are larger in size and more architecturally complex. In each, the storage room directly adjoins the main hall, while the kitchen is a separate but juxtaposed room of irregular shape, accessible to the main building via a courtyard.

The best-preserved example is the Northeast Building, located inside the uppermost spine wall, on the peak of the South Acropolis (Figs. 31.1, 31.5). The main entrance to the house is from a courtyard (A700) at the northwest through a spacious vestibule (A300) that leads into the main hall (A400). The house’s storeroom (A1700)—indicated by a substantial pithos deposit and pithos stands—adjoins the hall on the east. Room A400 contained an assemblage typical of halls at Azoria: a black-gloss cup skyphos, a number of high-necked cups, kraters, a table amphora, hydria, lekane, and cookpot. The storeroom had a small krater, a table amphora, and a hydria, in addition to a number of cups, but the assemblage was dominated by pithoi (at least seven different jars), a coarse jar, and a transport amphora. It is perhaps formally significant that the vestibule and hall are on a central axis with the main entrance from the courtyard, while the storeroom’s access is off-center on the south side of the east wall. The placement of this doorway may be related either to patterns of storage (locations of pithoi) in A1700 or the arrangement of furniture and functions of the main hall. A rear entrance to the storeroom, found in the southeast corner of the room, communicates directly with a corridor and ramp (A2300) that leads upslope to a passage and courtyard (A1800). The latter links the main rooms of the house to a separate kitchen (A2100), whose doorway is on the long north side, interacting directly with the courtyard.

On a smaller scale, the North Acropolis Building (Fig. 31.5) has a similar design, but with a less complex arrangement of rooms. The hall and storeroom are again directly connected, while the kitchen is accessible to the main hall through an exterior courtyard. The main hall (E200) contained at least seven different cups, two skyphoi, a Lakonian krater, an olpe, a flask, a hydria, and four chytrai. Even though the assemblage is dominated

\textsuperscript{14.} The absolute chronology of building phases has not yet been firmly established, as the ceramic deposits are still under study; while stratigraphic soundings at the site indicate a late-7th-century B.C. date for the construction of the spine walls and the first major rebuilding of the site, there are indications of architectural changes throughout the 6th century.
Figure 31.5. Azoria: plans of Northeast Building, Southwest Building, and North Acropolis Building. R. D. Fitzsimons
by pouring and drinking vessels, there is also some storage equipment: a small relief pithos, a jar, and a transport amphora. The storeroom (E300) held an array of drinking and pouring vessels, as well as chytrai, but like A1700 in the Northeast Building, the assemblage consisted largely of pithoi (some five examples) and transport amphoras (two examples). The kitchens in both houses are of a similar size and design, and each contained a full complement of food preparation equipment. Each kitchen readily incorporates the natural terrain, utilizing the bedrock for high socles; and the rooms are perhaps situated to be sheltered from north winds, especially the prevailing northwesterlies.

THE SOUTHWEST BUILDINGS

The Southwest Buildings, recovered in 2005, on the lower Southwest Terrace, have not yet been completely excavated, so the discussion here must remain somewhat tentative (Figs. 31.1, 31.5). It has an identifiable main hall (B3400) with direct access to storage facilities on the north in B3200 and B3600. On the south, it communicated with what might have been a kitchen (B3500) that was largely destroyed during a Hellenistic reuse of the space. The main hall (B3400) had the usual assemblage of drinking and serving vessels, including a variety of cups, a skyphos, a hydria, an oinochoe, a fine bowl, and a mortar, while the storerooms (B3200, B3600) were characteristically crowded with pithoi—at least five separate jars from B3600. The storerooms in the house, not unlike the examples from the Northeast Building and North Acropolis Building, also could have functioned as pantries for storing drinking and serving equipment. Fragments of cups, skyphoi, chytrai, jugs, hydriai, lekanai, and mortars were found across B3200 and B3600. In B3600, a black-figure lekythos and two large krater stands were recovered as well.

The phasing in this building is complex, and based on the evidence to date, direct access from the kitchen to the hall in the southwest corner is unlikely—the unexcavated and severely eroded west scarp obscures our understanding of the transition between B3400 and B3500. The main entrance to the house is likely to have been from a corridor, courtyard, or street located along the west side of the building. What can be said is that kitchen and storage areas are distinctly separate units, and, perhaps more important, they are not directly adjoining compartments of the house. As in the North Acropolis Building, the main hall separates areas of food processing and storage. The position of the main hall is thus important. As a mediating component, the hall must have served to separate and organize storage and service functions within the household. Access to and public visibility of storage facilities was controlled by the space of the hall, whose activities must have ranged from both public and private dining to the administration of the household’s storage and consumption.  

15. See Lang 2005, p. 30, on the multiple functions of halls in Archaic houses. Although we have only begun to study the assemblages from the Azoria examples, the ceramic assemblages strongly suggest drinking and dining activities rather than the full array of domestic industries.
DISCUSSION

The five examples of Archaic houses at Azoria demonstrate a considerable diversity of forms within two basic typological categories—one hand, roughly linear, axially-aligned buildings, conforming perhaps to some extent to the exigencies of the steep terraced terrain, and on the other, roughly square houses following an identifiable form of early “corridor” types in the Archaic Aegean.

Onythe Goulediana provides a useful contemporary parallel for the houses at Azoria. The excavated area (Fig. 31.4) represents two separate houses linked by a spine wall on the west and divided neatly by a long east–west wall that also limits the northern edge of the courtyard space of the southern building. The houses at Onythe (ca. 158 m²) are similar in size to the largest at Azoria, with the Northeast Building measuring about 164 m² and the Southwest Buildings, 109 m². The rooms of the houses at Onythe are arranged paratactically to be directly accessible either from a corridor or courtyard. Even if kitchens have not been identified with certainty at Onythe, the differentiation of hall and storeroom assemblages and space reflects the overall pattern at Azoria. Halls at Onythe (Fig. 31.4, rooms A and I)—the largest rooms in the houses—have a preponderance of fine tablewares as well as small storage and serving equipment, while the storerooms (Fig. 31.4, rooms B and K) had an abundance of pithoi and stone-slab pithos stands.16

If the examples of houses at Azoria tend toward a linear arrangement of rooms, they also have discernible radial aspects. In the East and West Corridor Houses, as at Onythe, the corridor or vestibule is the formal entrance that also mediates communication with the storeroom, hall, and food-processing areas. On the one hand, the sequential arrangement of rooms, especially in the Northeast Building, the Southwest Buildings, and the North Acropolis Building, indicates a linear communication pattern such as that identified by Westgate’s analysis of Classical and Hellenistic examples at Lato and Trypitos.17 The use of external courtyards and detached kitchens in the Northeast Building and the North Acropolis Building (Fig. 31.5), on the other hand, emphasizes a radial arrangement, with the courtyard mediating and separating food-processing and general living areas of the house. The corridors and courtyards in the South Slope Buildings (Fig. 31.2) also reflect aspects of this radial communication.

That said, Westgate’s analysis is pertinent to the discussion of room function at Azoria. The hall is an identifiable and central component of the house design; its accessibility, directly from an exterior courtyard, street, vestibule, or corridor, looks very much like the location of Westgate’s “hearth rooms” at Lato and Trypitos, which, she argues, have more direct public access and a less strict hierarchy of privacy in the use of space.18 The same pattern is observable at Azoria, although in our examples, the distribution of finds and features points to greater segregation and designation of room functions—kitchens, storerooms, and halls are easily definable, and while halls could have included private and public domestic activities, including some household industries, they lack the central hearth and combined

functions of Westgate’s Hellenistic examples.\textsuperscript{19} Even if the Azoria houses tend toward a more open plan (and the functional characteristics of the linear communication pattern), the organization of space is also segregated and segmented; rooms are placed side-by-side along or between spine walls, and communication is often dictated by the placement of courtyards, corridors, or vestibules. Whether primarily linear or radial in structure, the houses are very much an integral part of the redesign and rebuilding of the settlement at the end of the 7th century B.C. What we can say is that the houses were designed to communicate easily with public space and access routes (Fig. 31.1): the Northeast Building with the structures on the peak; the South Slope Buildings with the putative agora and Cult Building; and the Northwest Building with the Monumental Civic Building and Archaic Shrine.

Even though the phasing and preservation of the halls make the parsing of functional areas difficult, the organization of space is exemplified by the controlled movement between the hall and food-processing and storage areas. It is interesting that the corridor houses are formally similar in design yet show flexibility and considerable variation in the utilization of space. The principal storage area of the East Corridor House may well have been the north end of the corridor itself, very visible and accessible to occupants and visitors alike; in the West Corridor House, on the other hand, the main storeroom is essentially hidden, relegated to the opposite side of the spine wall, and accessible only from the exterior courtyard that also served food-processing functions. By way of contrast, direct access to the storeroom from the hall is a salient characteristic of the other houses on the site, which also have considerably more floor space devoted to staple storage. These two variables (storage area size and placement) might suggest social or economic differences between households.

The direct connection between hall and storeroom is particularly intriguing. Whatever the cultural or economic reasons for this, the design element is repeated across the site, even at the expense of convenient access between staple-storage and food-processing areas. Even in the Northwest Building, which has been only partially excavated (Fig. 31.1), the hall and storeroom are contiguous and connected units. What might this tell us then about the function of the hall and the proximity to agricultural storage? A number of possibilities present themselves. First, the use of the hall for daily dining, as well as more public and formal receptions, would have benefited from ready access to a pantry storing drinking, serving, and dining equipment as well as staples not requiring intensive final-stage processing (such as fruits, nuts, olives, cheese, wine, oil). Such items are indeed attested in the storerooms at Azoria. Second, the hall, as the physical and economic center of the household, could well have been used to control and mediate access to, account for, and organize the use of produce and other commodities.\textsuperscript{20} The kitchen, on the other hand, is a separate room, usually disconnected from the hall and storeroom—in the Northeast Building and the North Acropolis Building (Fig. 31.5) it is accessible only through an exterior courtyard. The separation of the kitchen from the hall and storeroom emphasizes the segregation of activities in the Archaic household and the mediating aspect of the hall in controlling

\textsuperscript{19} Westgate 2007, pp. 440–441. Multifunctional “hearth rooms” are also a characteristic of complex LG and EO house plans from the Kavousi Kastro; see Coulson et al. 1997, pp. 325–328, 353–388; Mook 1998.

\textsuperscript{20} See Ebbinghaus 2005, p. 57, on the procurement and protection of staples within the household.
The archaic houses at Azoria 379

The communication between storage and kitchen areas, as well as the practical interest in keeping the messy affairs of daily food processing, such as meat preparation, apart from regular living and dining rooms.

As social space, the hall-storeroom proximity should have been planned to enhance the accessibility and perhaps even the visibility of the material and agricultural wealth of the household. Pithoi and pithos stands are customarily found in the corners and along the walls of storerooms. In the case of the East Corridor House, pithoi, including a rare Late Minoan IIIC heirloom, were found at the north end of the corridor (Fig. 31.2:C/S). In the Northeast Building, a cluster of pithoi found smashed in the southwest corner of the storeroom (A1700) suggests that their original placement would have been visible from A400 through the doorway (Fig. 31.5). As we have observed elsewhere, large relief pithoi on the site are commonly decorated with elaborate and ornate impressed and plastic ornamentation (Fig. 31.6); on occasion such decoration is placed on one side of the vessel only, presumably the visible side that faced out and away from the wall. In addition to Orientalizing iconographic elements, many of the vessels have features clearly imitating metalwork (such as shield bosses, plastic appliqué, and protomes), obvious skeuomorphic details reflecting objects or materials of elite consumption.

Thus, the pithoi, probably expensive objects in their own right, could well have had a prestige value, expressed in size, elaboration of decoration, and perhaps in the commodities they boasted to contain. Alongside an array of sympotic equipment such as fine imported cups and kraters and decorated krater stands, pithoi are likely to have been important social symbols relating to agricultural production and consumption—expressed

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21. On the value of pithoi in classical contexts see Ault 2000, p. 491; Cahill 2000, p. 507; 2002, p. 228. For the placement of pithoi in houses at Zagora and their social value, see Hoepfner 1999, pp. 166–168; see also Ebbinghaus 2005, esp. pp. 54–58, on the social significance and placement of relief pithoi: “pithoi could act as a direct measure of a person’s wealth and standing in the community. Lined up in the back or along the sides of the main . . . room of the house, they were protected from intruders but on display for guests and retainers enjoying the wine or feeding on the food contained within them.” (Ebbinghaus 2005, p. 58). It is interesting that while pithos storage appears to be connected to courtyards in Ault’s examples from Halieis, at Olynthus storerooms are frequently found directly off of the pastas, easily accessible, if not juxtaposed to the andron.
though the size and design of the objects themselves, as well as through the implicit reference to resources accrued through landed wealth.22 As elements of status display, they would have been readily accessible from the main reception area of the house, and, more important, they would have been immanently visible to guests drinking or dining in the hall.

We are only beginning to understand the organization of urban space at Azoria, and the topography, chronology, distribution, and design of houses and their relationship to civic areas. The houses presented here suggest considerable variation and interesting formal patterns that are related to practical functions, topographical position, as well as the sociopolitical roles of the household in the Archaic community.

22. The indications of large-scale pithos storage at Azoria is perhaps important in light of Lang’s survey of Archaic houses (Lang 2005, p. 27), which suggests the diminishing importance of pithoi (common in the EIA) in favor of built installations.


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