The Use of Space Syntax Analysis for the Study of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age Domestic Architecture on Crete

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Following the collapse of the Minoan Palatial system and the abandonment of most coastal settlements on Crete in the late 13th century BC, new self- sufficient villages were established at a number of upland sites in the Late Minoan IIIC period (c. 1200-1100 BC), many of which were occupied throughout the subsequent Early Iron Age (c. 1100-600 BC). Even though the built environment of this period is generally characterized by small settlements, simple building types, and the use of local, non-monumental materials and techniques, close analysis of the architectural and archaeological remains can still provide important insights into the sociopolitical and economic organization of these communities and the changing conceptions of public and private space. This paper focuses on the analysis of domestic architecture of the Late Bronze Age to Early Iron transition on Crete at sites such as Kavousi Vronda, Chalasmenos, and Karphi, highlighting similarities and differences in the spatial configuration of select houses. In particular, this study explores the utility of space syntax analysis for the architecture of this period. Although many of the quantitative techniques and theoretical assumptions of space syntax analysis have been used recently to discuss ancient architecture, the results are not always very instructive when based upon the incomplete evidence found at incompletely preserved sites. Despite these limitations, some qualitative aspects of space syntax analysis, particularly access analysis and visual graph analysis, can be used to visualize and discuss the internal configuration of buildings and to suggest patterns of movement, visibility, and even notions of privacy at both the household and suprahousehold level. When informed by detailed contextual information about the distribution of artifacts and features, these insights provide complementary perspectives on how people organized their built environment and allow us to compare and contrast architectural forms more formally and effectively.