

# MYRTOS AND MALIA: MIDDLE MINOAN *ENTENTE CORDIALE*? OR UNITARY STATE?

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## ABSTRACT

In the light of close cultural links in pottery and other crafts, and probably in administrative practices, this paper re-examines the nature of the relationship between Malia and Myrtos-Pyrgos at the end of the Protopalatial period in MM IIB, and the possibility of an unitary state in east-central Crete under the control of Malia. While it is clear that Pyrgos is a second order site, occupying perhaps 2 per cent of the estimated size of Malia at the time, there are striking similarities in the culture at the elite level. These should be considered in the wider context of what has been seen as a Malia-Lasithi cultural zone, or even a state.

In the region, which may perhaps be better called the Lasithi-Mirabello zone, MM IIB was a time of flux, with plentiful evidence for defence measures; it came to an end with destructions with fire and/or abandonments at many sites. As there is no evidence for a close administrative relationship, or economic control, or indeed religious influence, between Malia and Pyrgos (or Gournia), the most likely explanation is an *entente cordiale* between (the elite of) Pyrgos and Malia (or parts of Malia, where there seem to have been disparate clusters of authority at the time).