

The Economy of Wine Production on Ancient Crete: Consideration of Space, Storage, and Distribution

Recent scholarship has made great advances in the study of ancient wine production. Previous studies include surveys of the historical development of wine production (Hamilakis 1999; McGovern 2003; Refrew 1995), residue analyses elucidating the production process (Beck at al. 1989, Foley et al. 2011, McGovern 2003), wine production technology (Immerwhar 1992; Humphrey et al. 2003; McGovern 2003; Margaritas and Jones 2005), and studies of wine economy that focus on locating wider production regions (Kraay 1976; Hanson 1992; Hein et al. 2008). The combination of such comprehensive and encompassing studies has created a strong framework to allow for a more detailed and nuanced study of ancient wine economy through a survey of primary production contexts. Varying activities, politics, and circumstances at different settlements, even those within the same time period and area, result in economic values, goals, and situations that are unique to each site.

This paper aims to address three issues connected with wine production: a) to accurately identify wine production sites in the archaeological record, b) to understand its scale of production over time, and c) to further employ the economies of particular wine production sites as an index to understanding the character of the ancient economy. Four case-studies of wine production sites (Myrtos, Vathypetro, Mochlos, and Knossos) ranging in date from the Early Bronze Age to the Late Hellenistic period are examined.

I will combine the theory behind current models and methodologies from spatial studies in ceramic production to create a model for identifying and interpreting the use of space in wine production. The model will highlight specific archaeological indicators that pertain specifically

or more generally to the process of wine production to determine the probability that wine producing activity took place at a specific location.

Determining the location of wine-producing units and the relationships between different activities within such spaces, permits analysis of the size and permanence of the production site, whether production was commercial or domestic, and even the amount of wine that could have been produced relative to population size.

If a location or presence of wine production at the site can be determined, then evidence may exist for wine storage which in turn provides information on the amount of wine produced and the relationship of local production to imported product. Additionally, storage information can point to either intramural storage of wine (suggesting domestic consumption or local sale) or to extramural storage (which may indicate trade, larger commercial industry, or obligatory production for a higher authority).

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