

SOME ELEMENTS OF CONTINUITY IN THE SOCIAL LIFE OF ANCIENT CRETE

I

In my *Aristocratic Society in Ancient Crete*¹ I suggested the possibility that the Dorians of the historical period entered as masters into a "caste-system" first established, according to a tradition reported by Aristotle, in Minoan times; and further, that the original Dorian land settlement was the product of the amalgamation of two systems: the native system of land tenure was adapted to the tribal institutions of the conquerors. The present article is an attempt to clarify these two propositions by presenting some of the relevant arguments. For the propositions themselves seem fundamental to a proper understanding of the conservative character of the economic and social structure of the Cretan aristocratic cities in the historical period, as compared with the radical transformation of the democratic states, and, in particular, of Athens.

The development of the Athenian state, first under the tyranny, and then under the democracy, from the middle of the 6th to the middle of the 5th Century B.C., had allowed Athenian society to sunder its connexions with gentile society and to enter upon a career of private property. The majority of the free population were enlisted to this course. The citizen labourer was allowed to become the private owner of his own means of labour set in action by himself, the peasant of the land which he cultivated, the artisan of his tools. Free ownership of the self-employing farmer was the most adequate form of landed property for small-scale production. Individual ownership of land was necessary for the development of this type of production, just as the individual ownership of the instruments of production was necessary for the unfettered development of handicrafts.²

There is no evidence to suggest that the agriculture and the peasantry of Crete approached such a transformation. From the beginnings of

¹ 251-2. See for footnotes also the Bibliography at the end.

² See further *ib.* 174-91.

the historical period until the Roman conquest in the 1st Century B.C., the Cretan economy continued to represent a more backward form of landed proprietorship over small-scale production. It remained a predominantly agrarian economy, deriving its major sustenance from the land, with no advanced forms of industry or commerce such as had developed in democratic Athens. The land continued to be owned by a relatively few families, who preserved their old clan organization in modified ways suited to their interests: small-scale ownership never had the chance to develop.¹ The whole environment favoured a protracted survival, in various ways, of gentile institutions, of which the Dorian forms were naturally paramount, but to which the earlier inhabitants had also contributed.

II

The earliest known inhabitants of Crete were neolithic folk. No traces have been found of palaeolithic food-gatherers. It may be supposed that immigrant neolithic farmers arrived in Crete, partly from Anatolia, partly from the Delta, during the fourth millenium B.C. In general, "Neolithic Crete may be regarded as an insular offshoot of an extensive Anatolian province".² Even if it were possible to suppose that the neolithic peoples were indigenous, we should be justified in examining better attested conditions elsewhere in order to supplement by analogy the scanty direct evidence of the structure of Cretan neolithic economy and social life. But the advanced stage of the earliest strata of excavation seems to rule out the possibility of a purely indigenous neolithic culture.³ On the other hand, the probability of neolithic immigration from Asia Minor and the Delta helps in the search for valid comparative data, even when we allow that neolithic cultures are by no means uniform. For the climatic changes following upon the close of the last Ice Age produced conditions appropriate for the economic and social transition from palaeolithic food-gathering to neolithic food-production, which had its origins in the Middle East. Animals were domesticated, plants cultivated. The new economy was also responsible for the techniques of pottery, spinning and weaving, and for new tools such as the axe-head.

Within the neolithic village there was division of labour between the sexes. Women continued to cultivate the village plots, to grind and

¹ *Ib.* 177. Cf. Jardé 1.109. Also Rostovtzeff SEHHW 2.1185: "In continental Greece serf economy, though very little known, certainly existed in some places. It lost its importance in Sparta after the time of Nabis, but it may have retained comparative vitality in Thessaly and in Crete."

² Evans 1.14. Cf. Childe DEC 17.

³ Pendlebury 37.

cook the grain, to spin and weave cloth, to make clothes and pottery. Such tasks as the manufacture of tools and weapons, hunting, building, care of livestock and clearing of land for cultivation, were all probably the social tasks of men. This type of village economy became more widespread as land was increasingly brought under cultivation. It was because Crete was readily accessible to the sea-farer that it became, in effect, an extension of the whole Anatolian area.¹

The characteristic unit of the palaeolithic period was the clan, based on the principles of kinship and common ownership. Membership of the clan was associated with descent from an assumed common ancestor, a totem – either an edible species of animal and plant or natural object. The clan formed a firm circle of blood relations, intermarriage between them being prohibited. The clan was also exogamous and a number of intermarrying clans formed a tribal grouping. The close ties thus formed between clans led to the development of classificatory systems of relationship, much more complex and comprehensive systems than those based on the family as the social unit.² Membership of the clan, though based on kinship, also involved systematic forms of initiatory training, according to ritual custom, in childhood, which reached their culmination in the initiation ceremonies of puberty. Participation in the same rites could ensure the adoption into the clan of non-clansmen.

The clan form of social organization developed in the palaeolithic period and continued in the neolithic period.³ It may be assumed that the first neolithic settlers transplanted their social institutions to Crete, including communal land tenure – a normal feature among modern barbarians. It can be further assumed that the foundations of Cretan economy at this stage included both the cultivation of unidentified cereals together with olives and other fruits, and also the breeding of cattle, goats and pigs.⁴ None but the most speculative attempt to assess the balance between cultivation and stock-raising is possible. But it may be significant that sheep are not osteologically attested until the Late Minoan period.⁵

Perhaps more significant for the assumption of a possible early and continuing bias in favour of cultivation, at least in the fertile lowlands, is the marked survival of matrilineal traditions well into the historical

¹ Hawkes 77. Cf. Childe *ib.* 16-17; Pendlebury 41-2.

² For detailed analysis of the linguistic data relating to the kinship terminology of the classificatory systems see Thomson AA 6,25-30, 132, 387-417 and SAGS 1.58-78, 145-6. Cf. also Benveniste in: BSLP 46.20-22; Isachenko in: *Slavia* 22. 1.43-80.

³ Cf. Childe WHH 59.

⁴ Childe, DEC 22.

⁵ Hazzidakis 77.

period, especially at Gortyna.¹ Modern ethnography reveals many examples of transition from matrilineal to patrilineal descent, but none of the reverse process² – which creates a presumption that the former is the earlier.³ Each successive mode of production in primitive society is marked by different division of labour among the sexes. Among pure cultivators, owing to the predominant role of women in the economy, descent is matrilineal. Among stock-breeders, since economic and social influence rests with the males, descent is patrilineal. Granted the temporal priority of matrilineal systems, it is possible to recognize a gradual transition from matrilineal to patrilineal systems.⁴ This process, markedly accelerated with the introduction of stock-raising, receives a setback with the early phases of agricultural work, before garden-tillage has been replaced by field-tillage, and when the hoe has not yet given place to the cattle-drawn plough. It may be that Cretan matrilineal institutions survived, especially among the descendants of the older inhabitants, who continued to do the work of agriculture, because cultivation was initially more important than stock-breeding, while the accompanying social institutions, once firmly established, were enabled to persist partly because garden-tillage continued to play an important economic role.

III

In the course of the Early Minoan period (c. 2800? - 1800 B.C.) the original settlers were joined by more immigrants from Asia and also perhaps by a small wave of settlers from Libya. Metal-working was introduced, foreign relations maintained with Asia, Egypt and Libya, overseas trade was chiefly carried on with Egypt and the Cyclades. Population rapidly increased, important coast towns were founded at Palaikastro, Pseira, Mikhlos and Gournia. The eastern area now perhaps began to play a major part because of its veins of native copper, from which flat axes would be made.⁵

The basic features of neolithic economy no doubt survived. For, as late as the early part of the Middle Minoan period, the rural population lived in isolated house-complexes more comparable to large farms than even villages. But there were significant new developments. From the surplus produce of the peasantry such specialists as jewellers, copper-smiths and lapidaries must have been supported. Burial practices and

¹ Willetts 24, 36, 71, 73, 76, 80, 93, 95.

² Hartland I.256.

³ Thomson AA 15.

⁴ Westermarck I.634,2.273; Landtman 15; Hobhouse 22; Heichelheim I.14; Lowie 71, 174, 184; Childe MMH 138; Thomson AA 16.

⁵ Hawkes 88.

ceramic traditions differed, but there was no similar difference in kinds of metal tools, stone vases, jewellery and seals. Thus, although there were heterogeneous cultural groups, the economic system appears to have been fairly uniform.¹

IV

The development of bronze-working within the Middle Minoan period (c. 1800-1550 B.C.) was the most conspicuous basic feature determining the character of what now clearly emerges as the so-called Minoan "civilization". The term has been freely applied to the Cretan society of the Bronze Age, as to other Bronze Age communities of the Near East, because the archaeological evidence, from its nature, has drawn most attention to the analysis of their urban centres. The evidence for these centres, though still deficient in many respects, is relatively abundant as compared with the evidence for the conditions of social life and social production which prevailed within their tributary or dependent communities. Crete is not exceptional in this respect. We are not yet in a position to explain at all precisely when, why and how the basic features of neolithic economy, assumed to have survived into the Early Minoan period, became transformed into what can be described as typical Bronze Age features, except in the case of a few urban centres. So far as the major part of the population is concerned, the tillers of the soil and the artisans, we can only speculate upon the degree to which primitive communal relations of production became converted to tributary relations at this time.

The earlier Bronze Age societies of the Near East had depended upon the technical processes of pottery, spinning and weaving, the smelting and casting of copper, the manufacture of bronze from copper and tin, the plough, the wheeled cart, the harness and the sailing ship, followed, early in the third millenium B.C. by the bellows, the tongs and the *cire-perdue* process of bronze-casting.² In the case of Egypt and Mesopotamia, aside from bronze-working, the other major development of productive forces which determined the growth of the typical Bronze Age economy was irrigation. Irrigation depended on the tools of Bronze Age economy, and the large-scale agriculture which produced the vast surplus appropriated by the ruling classes equally depended upon irrigation. The cities of the Mesopotamian region were obliged to secure their sources of raw materials by a process of expansion which led to the development of trading relations with Anatolia and Egypt, and with the coasts of Syria and Palestine. Conse-

¹ Childe DEC 22-3, 25.

² Lilley 1-8; 12-13.

quently the old Bronze Age culture and economy of the Afro-Asiatic hinterland was given access to the Mediterranean region with the rise of another group of cities on the Syrian coastline. They had the natural advantages of good harbours, access to fertile valleys, and to mountains rich in such resources as timber, stone and tin. Less dependent on centralized irrigation, they were less able to produce an agricultural surplus. But industrial production was correspondingly more intense. Luxury goods such as jewellery and cosmetics were manufactured, there were dyeworks, copper foundries, workshops producing bronze tools, and shipyards, where a variety of vessels were built, including transports able to carry ninety men.¹

The specialist craftsmen of such cities were early organized in fraternities and "guilds". For example, a tablet from Ugarit of the 14th Century B.C. gives a list of "guilds" in the city. They include potters, fowlers, fullers, silversmiths, and stone-cutters (or sculptors).² The ancient Ugarit was a busy port where the goods of Syria and of the Hittite kingdom were exchanged with those of Egypt, Cyprus, Knossos, and later, Mycenae. The city of Alalakh, on the north Syrian coast near Alexandretta, played a similar, if less important role. In general, such cities must have been central points in the carrying system between Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean regions. Their prosperity was, to a very considerable extent, based on the accumulation of merchant capital.

The rise of the Cretan Bronze Age cities to their eminence in the Middle Minoan period was significantly contemporaneous with the Syrian, which they resembled in their economic and political organization. The close ties existing between the Syrian and Cretan cities at this period and their consequent bearing upon the character of Minoan society and the ultimate origins of Hellenic civilisation have been increasingly emphasized by archaeologists and scholars.³

In advising that the most useful approach to ancient ivory-working is to consider it as the product of a long-lived craft, Barnett makes some remarks concerning the organization of artisans which supplement the Ugaritic evidence cited above, and which have a bearing on an important feature of Minoan economy. "As the ancient economies developed surplus wealth, they found the means to support specialist artisans. Craftsmen were early organized into fraternities and guilds, and came to form a recognized part of ancient city and temple life.

¹ Schaeffer 38-9.

² Virolleaud in Syria 21.138.

³ Pendlebury 94-179; Childe DEC 26-7, WHH 146-8; Schaeffer 3; Woolley 77, cf. JHS 56.125; Thomson SAGS 1.28, 376, 2.107.

Sometimes the organized guild faded into a social group of kindred, or a caste with special rites and privileges.”¹

Again, what Woolley describes as Level VII at Atchana (ancient Alalakh) is dated 1780-50 B.C., and here was found the evidence for the transference of the technique of fresco painting to Crete. “It is here, in our Level VII, that for the first time we can trace connexions with Crete, but now they are unmistakable.... There can be no doubt but that Crete owes the best of its architecture, and its frescoes, to the Asiatic mainland. And we can say more than this. The exchange of goods by international trade is one thing, and a most important thing, but it has its limits; one cannot export a palace on board ship, nor is the ‘art and mystery’ of fresco-working a form of merchandise. These professional techniques require direct contacts, and we are bound to believe that trained experts, members of the Architects’ and Painters’ Guilds, were invited to travel overseas from Asia (possibly from Alalakh itself, seeing that it had its Mediterranean harbour) to build and decorate the palaces of the Cretan rulers.”²

It seems then that such well-organized “guilds” of craftsmen, with their inherited skills passed from generation to generation, but with powers of mobility and initiative denied to their fellows in the already severely stratified older Bronze Age centres, took advantage of the opportunities offered to them in a rapidly expanding Cretan economy which was vigorously adopting Asiatic techniques.³ The relative

¹ In Singer HT 1.664.

² Woolley 76-7; cf. 15, 109, 156-9.

³ The oldest surviving portion of a potter’s wheel, found at Ur, has been dated 3250 ± 250 B.C. A complete clay disk was buried with its owner at Erech, in Sumer, about 2000 B.C. The pivoted disk and the foot-wheel may have been used in Crete from 1800 B.C. The potter’s wheel was used in Sumer or Iran, or both, earlier than in China, Egypt, Syria or Crete. The further we move westward from the Persian Gulf and the Tigris, the later the appearance of wheel-made vases. (Childe in HT 1.199-200, 202-3). The application of the wheel revolutionized not only the ceramic industry, but also transport. Solid-wheeled vehicles were used in Sumer soon after 3500 B.C.; in Elam and possibly Assyria about 3000 B.C.; on the upper Euphrates round about 2250 B.C.; in south Russia and also in Crete about 2000 B.C. (Childe *ib.* 211). Spoked wheels are first represented about 2000 B.C. in northern Mesopotamia and in Cappadocia. They were used in Egypt soon after 1600 B.C. and they feature on clay tablets from Knossos about 1500 B.C. Four-spoked wheels were common to the Cappadocian vehicles depicted on seals, to Egyptian chariots before 1400 B.C., and to all Minoan and Mycenaean chariots in the Aegean area. (Childe *ib.* 211-13). Saffron, the orange-yellow dye from *Crocus sativus*, made from the dried stigmas of the flowers, was common in Crete, but was also produced in Syria, Egypt and Cilicia. Crete shared with Ugarit early knowledge of Tyrian purple. (Forbes *ib.* 247; cf. Pendlebury 281). The technique of Cretan ivory-workers is outstanding. The craft is assumed to have originated in the Near East where a ready supply of elephant ivory was available. But Syria formed another source of supply. Hence the art of carving in the round was early developed by Syrian, Phoenician and Palestinian craftsmen (Barnett *ib.* 663-6, 672; cf. Pendlebury 217-18). The ivory used by the Mycenaeans was presumably imported from Syria (Wace ABSA 50.250 n. 2). Cretan metallurgy was in general based upon Asiatic traditions which had matured over a considerable period.

prosperity skilled workers enjoyed even in provincial centres not dominated by palaces; the respect which would be shown to their technical mastery; the enjoyment of an atmosphere of social freedom – all must be considered as having contributed to the quality of Minoan life and to that vitality of its maturing culture, which can still be apprehended from its surviving monuments.

Cretan urbanization had an early history. Yet the typical Minoan town is a planless structure, indicative of flexible social relations. This flexibility allowed greater possibilities of persistence for tribal structures and traditions than had been allowed by the social changes which had accompanied urbanization in Mesopotamia or Egypt.¹ Nor could Cretan agrarian economy be directed from a single centre with control of irrigation. Cretan agricultural resources had long before begun to be exploited by skilful specialists who can be assumed to have maintained an independence of social tradition. The consequent dependence of the Minoan towns on commercial wealth must have ensured that immigrant craftsmen and others who acquired their skills were encouraged to preserve and foster their “guild” traditions in a society where the ties of kinship were still of paramount importance.² The basis of such traditions among newcomers, as Barnett’s remarks may be taken to infer, was similar.

For why was it that “the organized guild faded into a social group of kindred, or a caste with special rites and privileges”, in the older Bronze Age societies? The medieval guild was a modified form of the craft or occupational clans which developed within the higher grades of tribal society as a natural means of transmitting hereditary occupations.³ This established pedigree only partly justifies the application

¹ Thomson SAGS I.28.

² Cf. two interesting examples of cult cited by Barnett (in HT 1.665 n. 1): “...in Egypt, Horus was patron of the smiths of Edfu; at Lagash in Sumer, Nintukamma was god of metal-workers.”

³ Grönbech 1.35. (Cf. on modern craft-clans Hollis 8-11, Landtman 83). In ancient Greece these “guilds” were closer to their tribal origin (Thomson SAGS I.332-4). The Asklepiadai (physicians) traced their ancestry to the patron of medicine. They admitted new members under a form of adoption – a rite of re-birth normal to the primitive clan. Such a new member swore “to show the same regard for his teacher as for his parents, to make him his partner in his livelihood, to share his earnings with him in time of need, and to treat his kinsfolk as his own brothers.” (Hp. Jusj. 1.298-300 Jones. “It is not expressly stated that this was the oath of the Asklepiadai, but I do not see what other organisation it can be referred to” Thomson ib. 333 n. 6. Cf. Roscher LGRM s.v. Asklepios). The cult of Asklepios was prominent in Crete in historical times, especially at Lebena (IC.I p. 151 et passim). Even Aristotle claimed descent from Asklepios (D.L. 5.1.). The Homeridai (minstrels) claimed descent from Homer. (Pi. N. 2.1 sch.; Harp. Ὁμηρίδαι; Thomson ib. 332-3, 492, 508, 541-82). The Iamidai (prophets), who were represented in Elis, Sparta,

of the term “guild” to the Bronze Age groupings which, at least in the Greek tradition, continued to have closer associations with the ties of kinship fostered by the enduring institutions of the clan. The antiquity of these associations is conspicuously exemplified in the Greek myths of Daidalos (“the cunning worker”, “the artist”), traditional name of the first sculptor¹, which were a folk-memorial of the lasting achievements of the bronze-workers and other craftsmen of Minoan Crete. The Daidalidai of Attica claimed their descent from him, and Athens tried to claim him as an original Athenian. But his origin, like his work, was Cretan.

The terminology used elsewhere in Greek tradition about the origin of “castes” in Crete has a special relevance in this connexion. The tradition is reported by Aristotle, who informs us that the “caste-system” still existing in Egypt and Crete in his own day was first established, in Egypt by the legislation of Sesostris, in Crete by that of Minos.² This proposition occurs in a context where Aristotle is at pains to demonstrate that it was no original or recent discovery of political philosophy that the state should be divided into “castes” (or “classes”); that the fighting men should be distinct from the farmers; and also that a system which had continued up to his time in Egypt and in Crete had a considerable antiquity. But there is reason, as we shall see, to suppose that the tradition, in its Aristotelian form, may be more characteristic of social conditions in the Late rather than the Middle Minoan period.

Messenia and Kroton, went back to a son of Apollo, god of prophecy. (Hdt. 9.33, 5.44.2; Paus. 3.12.8, 4.16.1, 6.2.5, 8.10.5; Pl. O 6.). The Branchidai and Krontidai were also prophets. (Roscher *ib. s.v. Branches*; Hsch. Κροντίδαι). The Kerykes, Theokerykes, and Talthybiadai were heralds, the former going back to a son of Hermes, god of heraldry, the others to the herald Talthybios. (Hsch. Θεοκήρυκες; Thomson *ib. 127-8, 332*; Toepffer 80-92). At Sparta, all heralds were Talthybiadai, heraldry being their clan-prerogative (Hdt. 7.134). Other craft-clans with vocational names are: Poimenidai (herdsmen), Bouzygai (ox-spanners), Phreorychoi (well-diggers), Daidalidai (sculptors) Hephaisiadaidai, Eupyridai, Pelekes (armourers and smiths): Toepffer 136-46, 166, 310-15. The mythical division of labour among the gods reflects this system of occupational clans, “a system in which a man’s vocation – his portion in life, his birthright – had been determined for him by the clan into which he was born”. (Thomson *ib. 334*). Zeus became king in reward for military service against Kronos and the Titans. (Hes. Th. 73-4, 112-13, 383-403, 881-5; cf. A. Pr. 218, 244-7; Alc. 45). He then distributed prerogatives to other deities. The prerogative of Hephaistos was fire (A. Pr. 38); of Atlas the support of the sky (Hes. Th. 520); of the nymphs the care of mortals in their youth (Hes. Th. 348); of Apollo, music and dancing, of Hades lamentation and darkness (Stes. 22, Il. 15.187-93); of Aphrodite, love-making, and of Athene the loom (Hes. Th. 204-5, Nonn. D. 24.274-81); of Poseidon, the sea, and of Zeus himself, the sky (Il. 15.187-93).

¹ Il. 18.592; Pl. Men. 97d.

² Pol. 1329a 40-1329b5. On the terminology see p. 437 f.

The centre from which the developing Minoan economy was fostered directly or indirectly, was the palace. The palaces that arose in Central Crete at such places as Knossos, Phaistos, Mallia, Tylisos and Haghi Triada, testify to an increase in wealth such as is usually accompanied by an increase in population; and increase in the native population would have been augmented by immigration.¹ This fact has, however, been more readily appreciated than the no less important pre-requisite of a corresponding increase in the food supply. We must suppose that there was such an increase on an appreciable scale. We must also suppose that increased urbanization provided further stimulus to already established methods of specialist farming. It would be reasonable to conjecture further that there were important changes in methods of cultivating arable land, designed to increase corn-production; and also of stock-raising. Such a conjecture has little basis in fact, because our knowledge of agricultural techniques at this time is so deficient. For example, we may know that the plough was very like the Egyptian plough, but we do not even know what were the draught-animals.² Pending the discovery of factual information, we have no alternative but to proceed with conjecture, inferred from data of other kinds.

As other techniques had arrived from Asia, so advances in agricultural techniques may have been due, at least in part, to Asiatic influences borne along the trade routes and to the arrival of other Asiatic immigrants.³ We have seen that there may well have been factors operating against tendencies for agricultural work to be transferred to men and for consequent transition from matrilineal to patrilineal descent. The geographical conditions of the island, part mountain, part forest, part plain, would tend to operate in favour of uneven development, in any case. We should expect more advanced techniques in the plains. But even there a further complicating factor may have been supplied by a continuing marked importance of techniques of specialist farming developed as modified forms of garden tillage.

Some kind of radical change, however, can be inferred from myth and from archaeology. For Demeter is said to have reached Greece from Crete⁴, where she was an emanation of the Minoan Goddess. She it was who supplied Triptolemos with seed-corn and a plough and sent him over the world to teach mankind the art of agriculture.⁵ The appearance of Triptolemos in myth would reflect the more active part played by men in agriculture, following upon the introduction of the

¹ Cf. Childe DEC 27.

² Pendlebury 270.

³ I shall examine these possibilities elsewhere.

⁴ Hom. *h. Cer.* 123.

⁵ Harrison 273; cf. Paus. 8.4.1

cattle-drawn plough.¹ The familiar ritual of the sacred marriage is associated with the fertility of the crops. As it happens, most of the evidence for the sacred marriage in Crete is post-Minoan, and, as we should expect, often involves Zeus. But there is one older version of the Cretan sacred marriage which clearly connects it with that stage in agriculture when the introduction of the cattle-drawn plough implies a fresh division of labour. According to this myth, Iasion embraced Demeter in a thrice-ploughed field, that is, in a field prepared for sowing.²

The standard Minoan burial custom at all periods was collective interment in natural caves, stone chambers, or tholos tombs.³ At Mochlos and in the Messara the grouping of the graves implies the association of several kindreds in a single village settlement.⁴ But individual interment in stone cists, jars and clay coffins began before the end of Early Minoan and this custom steadily increased in later times.⁵ Such a practice indicates a process of disintegration of the clan.⁶ But the intensity of the process should not be overestimated. For, in the first place, the jar burials may be exceptional cases, many being designed for infants.⁷ Secondly, individual interment did not become standard. Thirdly, the *oikos* ("household"), perpetuating, on a restricted basis, the collective customs of the clan, tenaciously survived in Crete well into the historical period.⁸

The influence of the "household" as a unit of social organization can be seen both in the architecture and in the functioning of the palace. It has been observed that the Minoan palace is a symbol of a great household like the divine households of Sumer, where the various kinds of work done collectively by the members of a neolithic household became differentiated and consequently divided among specialists, maintained by the surplus food supply concentrated within the temple granaries and dependent upon the household store for raw materials. Such a dependency resulted in a loss of social prestige and freedom which the craftsmen had earned under barbarism.⁹ It has been suggested

¹ Thomson SAGS 1.256.

² Od. 5.125-8. Cf. D.S. 5.49, Hes. Th. 969 ff.

³ Childe DEC 22-3; Evans 1.70-72; Hall 44.

⁴ Childe ib. 24; Pendlebury 63-5.

⁵ Childe ib. 25; Evans 1.149-50.

⁶ Thomson ib. 250.

⁷ Thomson ib. 249.

⁸ Willetts 29,59-63, 65, 252-3, 255. The Indo-European correlatives of the Greek word *οἶκος* (*woikos*) show its original connexion with (a) the clan and (b) the village. Its collective associations long endured in Greek. See further Boisacq s.v.; LSJ s.v. *οἶκος* cf. *οἶκτα*.

⁹ Childe WHH 146; cf. 53 and 85.

above, however, that the development of specialist production under the patronage of the Minoan palaces resulted, not in a loss, but rather in a fresh acquisition of such prestige and freedom. The unplanned and unfortified Cretan towns grew out of village communities centred around a market-place where the settlement began, at once the hub of its social and religious life and also the centre for the exchange of commodities.

The Cretan palaces, like the Oriental temples, were also factories and warehouses. The palaces have shrines, but the towns have no temples. The temple as centre is replaced by the market-place as centre. Theocratic domination is replaced by commercial enterprise. Thus, at Knossos and Phaistos, magazines and workshops are, in proportion, more conspicuous and occupy a relatively larger area than those in the temples of Erech or Lagash.¹ Hence the inference that a smaller proportion of their contents and products was absorbed in supplying the needs of the household, the balance being used for trade. This means that the economic power centred in the palaces must, to a very great extent, have been dependent upon secondary industry and commerce as compared with agricultural production.² Agricultural production could be controlled only indirectly in the main, not centrally controlled. Hence the village communities could, at this time, we must assume, retain their ancient autonomy and their ancient social traditions relatively unimpaired.

The development of this kind of economy resulted not only in the building of such commercial requirements as harbours, bridges and roads, but in Crete, as in other Bronze Age societies, involved also three other considerable consequences. A rudimentary form of money was required, to be weighed out against other commodities, of the kind exemplified by the copper ingots occurring at Haghia Triada, Tylosos, Mokhlos and Knossos³; exchange transactions further required measurement by weights⁴; and a written script became necessary as a means of recording such transactions, of preserving the inventory of exchange.⁵

¹ Childe *ib.* 146.

² Childe *ib.* 147.

³ Pendlebury 212.

⁴ All weights until c. 1450 B.C. are of stone. Skinner in HT 1.779. Cf., for Crete, Pendlebury 213.

⁵ The various types of Cretan script which appeared in the course of archaeological investigation were divided by Evans into pictographic and linear scripts. The earliest pictographic signs are engraved on seals and it is still doubtful whether they represent actual writing. Pictographs of a more developed kind date from about 2000 B.C., on seals and also on tablets and bars, their signs resembling the Hittite signary and Egyptian hieroglyphs. The linear script A appears about the middle of the 17th Century B.C., the linear script B in the course of the 15th Century B.C. Both are pre-alphabetic cursive scripts; but pictorial signs continued to be used until the end of Minoan times.

It is then clear that commodity production, if mainly of luxury goods, developed to a considerable extent in the Middle Minoan period. Production of commodities for the market, for exchange and for export, stimulated the absorption and development of techniques and the expansion of specialist craftsmen, dependent on the economy fostered by the palace, but enjoying a large measure of social freedom and power of initiative. There was a parallel expansion and an increasing social influence of a class of merchants, occupying themselves with the exchange of commodities, concerned to increase wealth by their control of such exchange. A steady growth of trade, a no less steady accumulation of merchant capital, combined with the peculiar features of a Bronze Age economy owing much to geographical environment, would all appear to have checked any tendency for the traditional system of land tenure, associated with primitive communal relations of production, to be drastically modified. We are not yet in a position to assess, to what extent, if any, these primitive communal relations among food producers had begun to be modified by tributary relations, as had been the case elsewhere. But the possibility of the onset of such a process, at least in the central areas, should not be excluded. There was also, no doubt, a tendency for patriarchal slavery to increase, especially in the palace households. But the apparent social freedom and prestige of the artisans would indicate that slavery played only a minor part in the economy and was, at most, only indirectly linked with the production of commodities. Such tentative inferences concerning tributary relations and slavery have to be retrospectively derived from conditions in the Late Minoan period. They are, with the present state of our evidence, quite speculative.

The essence of the problem can be stated by raising some specific questions. Were the peasantry called upon to contribute, in the form of labour services, to the building of the palaces, roads, aqueducts, bridges and harbours? To what extent was such work carried out by household slaves from the palaces? Did the exportable surplus of wine and olive-oil find its way into the hands of merchants as a form of tribute assessed from the palace, or did the specialist cultivators exchange their products in the market-place against wares supplied by merchants? The hope is that decipherment of the linear script A may help us to provide answers to questions of this kind.

V

Bronze Age economy in the second millenium B.C., at a certain stage of its development among Hittites, Egyptians and Achaeans, exhibits,

in varying degrees, certain common characteristics. These are: (a) militarization; (b) social inequalities, now firmly based on rigid divisions of labour; (c) forms of service to a central authority; (d) the maintenance of royal, military, administrative and priestly hierarchies through the systematic appropriation of surplus from the major internal economic resource of the land, and the consequent development of a major class of tribute-paying cultivators; (e) the extension of this general system to other territories through conquest, coercion or dynastic alliances. In general these characteristics owed their origin to the monopoly control by the ruling groups of bronze, as expensive as it was essential for the manufacture of products by craftsmen which chiefly benefited the wealthy. An intensified search for further wealth by these ruling groups was the outcome of a one-sided economic relationship whereby an agrarian surplus had provided for craftsmen, and craftsmen had then produced mainly luxuries and weapons for merchants, soldiers, priests and administrators. The communal relations still maintained among the peasantry, in various forms, markedly contrasted with the unequal distribution of wealth. Such varying forms measured the extent to which the cultivators had failed to benefit from the products of the craftsmen, the extent to which communal labour was necessary to compensate deficiencies in technique. The organizers of production, rulers and administrators, who, like the craftsmen, owed their origin to the granting of a surplus from the collective labour of the cultivators of the soil, further expanded their social surplus in all its developing forms and their social status became expanded in corresponding degree. What was formerly bestowed now became what was due. Tribute and services were obligatory; and the area from which they were exacted became forcibly expanded.

There are indications that Cretan society was independently developing analogous characteristics in the Late Minoan period (c. 1550-1100 B.C.) before there was any considerable fusion with Mycenaean culture. For the period in general is marked by three main features: (a) the continuity and development of indigenous Minoan culture; (b) the interpenetration of this culture with the culture of mainland Mycenae; (c) the violent destruction of the main centres of Minoan society about 1400 B.C.

Before this thorough-going destruction occurred, the process of unification, under the hegemony of Knossos, was completed. A network of good roads, protected by forts at intervals, linked the Minoan towns together. "Though it is clear", commented Pendlebury¹, "that the period must have been peaceful in the extreme the main roads

¹ Pendlebury 184.

were carefully guarded, as can be seen from the number of small sites which must have been forts or police stations along their course. This is particularly noticeable along the great road from Komo to the harbour town of Knossos, and I would attribute to the same period the forts along the road from Zakros to Ampelos..." Against whom did these main roads have to be guarded in a period of extreme peace, and why did the maintenance of peace require forts or police stations?

The well-known fresco from Knossos called the "Captain of the Blacks" probably belongs to LM II.¹ It shows "a smart Minoan officer in a yellow kilt and a horned cap of skin, carrying two spears and leading a file of black troops at the double".² This revealing fragment is to some extent paralleled by the scene on the handleless cup ("The Chieftain Vase") from Haghia Triada, early in the period. A young prince gives orders to a subordinate officer and a file of men. "The contrast between the proud bearing of the Prince and the deferential attitude of the officer is admirably brought out."³

Such knowledge as we have of the development of Cretan arms and armour indicate an increased attention to the practices of warfare. In discussing the figure-of-eight shield, Evans emphasized both its antiquity and its religious character.⁴ But the importance which this shield seems suddenly to have acquired in LM I (a) was explained by Evans as due to the rise of a new militaristic dynasty, which destroyed Gournia and other towns of East Crete.⁵ Scenes of fighting which involve this shield have not yet been found in Crete, but two seals from Knossos show lines of marching warriors with figure-of-eight shields covering their right sides.⁶ They date from the early part of the period (LM I(a)). Both the sword and the spear underwent a marked development in Crete at this time and influenced the types discovered on the mainland.⁷

But the most revolutionary change in the field of armament was undoubtedly effected by the introduction of the chariot. "Considering the relatively small total resources available to early urban societies, the war chariot is fairly comparable to the tank of today; it was an engine which only a rich civilized state could produce and maintain, and against which no barbarian tribe or rebellious peasantry could com-

¹ Evans 2.755.

² Pendlebury (200-201) who comments: "The evidence of the Sudanis is the knee of one figure on a blue background and the back of the head of another on a white background."

³ Pendlebury 214 and Plate XXXVI, 2.

⁴ Evans 3.314 ff; cf. 2.50 ff; Lorimer 137.

⁵ *Ib.* 308, cf. Lorimer 137.

⁶ Evans 3.313, figs. 204-5; cf. Lorimer 138.

⁷ Lorimer 254 ff; *ib.* 261 ff.

pete.”¹ Just as the chariot probably helped Mycenae to acquire supremacy in the Peloponnese, both as a means of communication with the centre and as an instrument of war², so it may have helped Knossos in its acquisition of similar supremacy in Crete. Such is the inference that may plausibly be drawn from the inventories of the Knossian accounts, among which muster rolls of chariots and lists of weapons conspicuously feature.³ And the Knossian inventories of men and women, flocks and herds, vases and their contents, olive-trees and saffron, indicate a meticulous care in the recording of property and the management of commerce, such as would be natural at the centre of a tributary system.

The development of a highly organized bureaucratic system, with its centre at Knossos, was matched by a corresponding expansion of external influence so marked that it has all the signs of a considerable imperial hegemony in the Aegean, including the Cyclades, Argolis and Attica, and perhaps extending as far as Sicily. This expansion, perhaps facilitated by actual Minoan colonization⁴, was dependent upon the maintenance of close commercial relations with Egypt and with Syria.⁵ The scanty mainland evidence of direct contact with Egypt has been taken to indicate a deliberate policy of exclusion by the Minoans.⁶ Such a monopoly of trade, which would have denied to the developing mainland economy a natural outlet to the most flourishing markets, and implying the corollary that some portion of its benefits accrued to the Minoans in the form of tribute, would not only have caused increasing tension between Crete and the mainland: it could only have been sustained by force. Hence the Minos of Greek tradition became a tyrant and imperial overlord; and this tradition of Minoan “thalassocracy” is not only too firm to be rejected, but derives, in all probability, not from a “Mycenaean Minos”, but from the period of the priest-kings of Knossos, before its destruction.⁷

The Minos referred to by Homer was not the great king of Knossos, but the grandfather of Idomeneus. This king could have been an Achaean ruler, who, if he called himself Minos, would have assumed

¹ Childe in HT 1.209-10.

² Lorimer 322.

³ Evans 4.785 ff; Pendlebury 219; Childe WHH 147.

⁴ Evans 2.626.

⁵ Pendlebury 230; cf. Schaeffer 12.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Hall 265-6; Pendlebury 229-31; Thomson SAGS 1.371 and n. 5. Changes in the architecture of the period indicate a shortage of timber. Was this shortage partly due to intensive naval construction? Cf. Evans 2.518, 565; Pendlebury 188.

the name and honours of his Cretan predecessors.¹ Herodotos and Thucydides agree that Minos was a powerful ruler, possessing a navy and overseas dominions. But their accounts are contradictory in other respects. According to a Cretan tradition reported by Herodotos², the Carians were, in ancient times, subjects of Minos. They were called Leleges, occupied the islands, and they paid no tribute. But they manned the ships of Minos whenever he required them to do so. Since Minos subdued an extensive territory and prospered in war, the Carians were by far the most famous of the peoples of that time. Herodotos expressly states that he had checked, to the best of his ability, the tradition that they paid no tribute. The implication is that other peoples were subjected to tribute and that the Carians were exempt because of their services to Minos.

According to Thucydides³, Minos was the first person known by tradition to have established a navy. He made himself the master of what was known in the time of Thucydides as the Hellenic sea, ruled over the Cyclades, into most of which he sent the first colonies, expelled the Carians, appointed his own sons governors and thus did his best to suppress piracy as a means of securing the revenues for his own use.

It appears that Herodotos and Thucydides are attributing the events of different times to one person. The Parian chronicler seems to have reconciled these conflicting traditions by assuming that there were two kings of the name Minos.⁴ However, Cretan command of the sea must have lasted from c. 1600 B.C. until the fall of Knossos, c. 1400 B.C. It cannot be restricted to the lifespan of a single ruler. This power may have reached its culminating point at the time (c. 1500 B.C.) of the first Minoan embassies to Egypt in the reigns of Hatshepsut and Thotmes III.⁵ The grandfather of Idomeneus, on the dating of Eratosthenes, must have lived c. 1250 B.C.; it may have been he who drove the Carians out of the islands.⁶

At this point we must return to Aristotle's proposition that the "caste-system" was established, according to tradition, in Egypt by the

¹ Forsdyke 17; cf. Hall 265-6; Thomson SAGS 1.370-1.

² 1.171.

³ 1.4.

⁴ Marmor Parium 11, 19. Cf. Plu. Thes. 20; D.S. 4.60.

⁵ Forsdyke 18.

⁶ Forsdyke *ibid*; cf. Thomson SAGS 1.170, 370. Forsdyke adds (citing Hom. Od. 14. 256-72) "...if he got as far as Egypt it was only to be driven off by the seamen of Rameses or Merneptah. It was in the fifth year of Merneptah, about 1230, that the great attack on Egypt of the Libyans and the Peoples of the Sea, among whom the Achaeans are specified, was defeated at Piari in the Western Delta."

legislation of Sesostris and in Crete by that of Minos. It is reasonable to suppose that the dynastic title Minos is used by Aristotle to recall, in the general sense, Late Minoan conditions. In the same way, there is no agreement as to the precise identity of Sesostris. But there is no doubt that to the Greeks he was a conqueror, a pharaoh of the kind most likely to be associated with the militarized New Kingdom (1580-c. 1100 B.C.), roughly contemporary with the Late Minoan period.¹

The word *genos* which is rendered as “caste” or something similar means, basically, “kin”, and is the regular word for “clan”. The usage is not unique. Other Greek writers than Aristotle who described the social system in Egypt used the same or similar terminology. Herodotos² enumerates the seven distinct “castes” (*genea*) into which he says the Egyptians were divided – priests, warriors, cowherds, swineherds, tradesmen, interpreters, boatmen. The warriors, who came from certain specified districts, were forbidden to practise a trade, and enjoyed special privileges denied to all other Egyptians except the priests. Each warrior had twelve *arourai* of land (altogether about nine acres) allotted to him free of tax. In addition to these privileges, he also received, during his year of special service in the king’s bodyguard, a daily ration of meat and drink. Herodotos, it is true, makes no mention of cultivators as forming a special “caste”, but the omission is perhaps due to his pains to emphasize the prohibition of trades to Egyptian warriors.³

But Diodoros⁴, who is as careful as Aristotle to stress the antiquity of the Egyptian system, is more specific than Herodotos about land-tenure. He states that the entire country was divided into three parts, the first allotment going to the priestly hierarchy, who, with the income derived from their holdings, performed all the sacrifices throughout Egypt, maintained their staffs and supported their own needs. The second allotment went to the kings to bring in the revenues to pay for their wars, the splendour of their entourage, and the rewards bestowed for distinguished service. The third allotment went to the warriors, whose profession, like that of the priests, was hereditary. There are three other “orders” (*syntagmata*) in the state, continues Diodoros, namely, herdsmen, cultivators, and artisans. The cultivators rent on moderate terms the arable land held by the king, priests and warriors, and they devote all their time to the work of tilling the soil. Craftsmen too are forbidden to follow any but their own craft.

Now Isokrates attributes the separation of the warriors from those

¹ Cf. Pendlebury XXV.

² 2.164-8.

³ Cf. Isoc. Busir. 18; Plu. Lyc. 4.

⁴ 1.73-4.

who pursue other professions not to Sesostris but to Busiris.¹ But Diodoros states that it was Sesoösis (Sesostriis) who not only performed the most outstanding military exploits of the Egyptians kings but also systematized the legislation respecting the warrior caste (*ethnos*).²

VI

Sudden as was the final destruction of the main centres of Minoan supremacy, there must have been a prior period of fusion between Minoan and Mycenaean cultures in Crete itself. For the linear B script, which occurs also on the mainland at such places as Mycenae and Pylos, appears to have been the palace style of recording at Knossos from c. 1450 to c. 1400 B.C.³ The details of this process of fusion and the reasons for the final destruction of the Minoan centres are conjectural. But the results which followed are not in doubt. The focus of imperial power shifted to Mycenae, as the seat of a militarist dynasty, which, adapting its control of inherited Bronze Age techniques to warfare, enjoyed that brief supremacy which is immortalized by Homer. Wealth was amassed at one pole of society, but no means was found of using it to promote major advances in technique to offset the characteristic one-sidedness of late Bronze Age economy.

Although the various ethnic groupings of which Mycenaean society was composed have still to be strictly defined⁴, the "Heroic Age" of mainland Greece, symbolized by the Achaeans of the Homeric poems, share general characteristics with other "Heroic Ages" elsewhere.⁵ Barbarian newcomers, with a militarized tribal organization, assimilate the superior culture and techniques of the social system which they disrupt. In the process this tribal system undergoes further drastic changes; and the appropriation of new resources of wealth, in land and in movable goods, brings about marked social inequalities. It is clear from the Homeric evidence that older forms of communal property existed side by side with newer forms of private property⁶; and this early process of development of forms of private ownership,

¹ Busir. 15.

² 1.94.4. For ἔθνος in the sense of "class", "caste", "tribe" cf. Pl. Lg. 776d, Plt. 290b; X. Smp. 3.6; Pl. Grg. 455 b cf. Arist. Ath. Fr. 3; D.S. 17.102; of "orders" of priests OGI 90.17; of "trade-associations" or "guilds", PPetr. 3. p. 67; of "rank" or "station", Pl. R. 420b, cf. 421c, D. 21.131.

³ The view that the language of the linear B texts is an early form of Greek, now widely known as a result of the proposed Ventris-Chadwick decipherment, is, of course, not novel. As a principal critic of this decipherment has frankly acknowledged, the view is quite feasible on historical and archaeological grounds: Beattie in JHS 76.1.

⁴ Thomson SAGS 1.369-432.

⁵ Analysed by Chadwick HA, GL.

⁶ Nilsson 212-47; cf. Thomson SAGS 1.369-432.

especially in land tenure, has been demonstrated from the study of comparative institutions.¹ The process of disruption of tribal traditions, based on the growth of social inequalities, promoted faction and favoured decentralization.

An Odyssean traveller's tale with a Cretan background is a recurrent theme of the second half of the *Odyssey*.² The changes in detail in these accounts of the wandering Cretan are of less concern than the unchanging substance. The disguised Odysseus represents himself as a prominent Cretan chief, in some kind of relationship with, and subordinate to Idomeneus, the Achaean with the conventional short pedigree of three generations before the Trojan War.³ Raiding and piracy are natural means of adding to the wealth acquired from landed estates. For unsettled conditions apply not only in a Crete prone to rivalry and vendetta, but also overseas, where the freebooter may be kidnapped and sold into servitude, or, in different circumstances, and with luck and determination, acquire fortune. The hero of this fiction has had much practice in raiding before the Trojan War. He is in fact the kind of person who is likely to have been a common enough type in the age of the Aegean sea-raiders who actually harassed Egypt and other centres in the decades of the 12th Century B.C. which preceded the Trojan War.⁴

In one version of the tale the significant detail emerges that the levying of tribute has become traditional practice. Odysseus is supposed to have put in at Amnisos, the harbour of Knossos, some nine or ten days after Idomeneus left for Troy. But the followers of Odysseus had been well provided for by a levy of corn, wine and cattle from among the people.⁵

The collapse of the Minoan imperial bureaucracy is a special case of the decay of the Mediterranean Bronze Age cultures which was to become general by about 1200 B.C. We have seen some reason to suggest that the economic basis of the one-sided expansion which prompted the

¹ Thomson *ib.* 295-365.

² 14.199-359, 16.60-67, 17.512-27, 19.164-348.

³ As we have seen, the Parian Marble preserves the record of two distinct bearers of the royal title of Minos, one belonging to the 15th, the other to the 13th Century B.C. – respectively to the period of the supremacy and to the period of the subordination of Knossos. Idomeneus boasts of his descent from Zeus, who made his son Minos the ἐπίκουρος (“guardian”, “watcher”) over Crete. Deucalion was the son of Minos and Idomeneus himself the son of Deucalion whom he succeeded as lord over many men in spacious Crete. (*Il.* 13.449-52). See further Myres 308; Murray 221; Nilsson 264; Lorimer 47.

⁴ Myres 123, 131.

⁵ *Od.* 19.197-8. For a parallel see *ib.* 13.14-15.

rise of the Minoan "thalassocracy" was firmly laid at the beginning of the Late Minoan period, if not earlier. It seems, however, that the ruling groups who promoted the expansion and controlled those special features of the economy which made expansion possible were those who suffered most from its collapse; as also the urban centres from which they exercised their control. The Cretans were in the end able to benefit from the inability of their rulers to use the wealth derived from their control of tribute and of the products of the craftsmen in such a way as to change radically the economic system outside the main urban centres. All the indications are that Minoan culture continued without violent interruption, but at a lower level. Now that they could no longer be employed on elaborate work in the palaces, it is likely that a large number of specialist craftsmen found employment either on the mainland or in Egypt. The chief stimulus to the concentration of wealth within Crete had been removed with the loss of dynastic autonomy. With overseas trade out of Cretan control, there developed a tendency for the population to disperse, especially over the hitherto sparsely inhabited Western districts.¹

The further exploitation of natural resources which the dispersal implies, coupled, no doubt, with Mycenaean commercial influences, helped to maintain society in traditional, though subdued, Bronze Age forms, until the end of that Age and the collapse of the Mycenaean Empire, with which Crete was now linked, under the impact of fresh invaders to the mainland, the Dorians.

VII

Of the details of the social and economic changes which occurred in Crete from c. 1100 to c. 800 B.C., that is to say from the end of the Bronze Age until the island was becoming thoroughly Dorian, concrete evidence remains regrettably deficient. The existing evidence, such as it is, appears to support the following general conclusions. With the collapse of the Mycenaean Empire, there was a drastic fall in Cretan population. Most of the coastal sites and inland towns were abandoned; and the palace site at Knossos was also finally deserted. Elaborate styles of architecture were no longer feasible. But building techniques did survive, though the now common built tombs are our chief source of knowledge in this field. So too did the craft of the potter, and there were Cretan innovations in styles of pottery, even in the so-called Sub-Minoan, Protogeometric and Geometric periods. By the beginning of the 8th Century B.C. more settled conditions prevailed and a few of the old Minoan sites such as Haghia Triada,

¹ Pendlebury 237-9. Cf. Hdt. 7.169-71 and How-Wells ad loc.

Phaistos and Mallia were again inhabited. In the next two centuries there was a considerable increase both in wealth and in population. New cities were founded and existing ones expanded.

There are three general factors which can be isolated as having played the most important part in establishing the social and economic system as it can begin to be seen in outline by the 8th Century B.C. They are: (1) the replacement of bronze by iron; (2) the development of Dorian supremacy; (3) the remarkably tenacious survival of Minoan traditions throughout the troubled and confused period from the Bronze Age into the times when a Hellenic social system could become properly based on Iron Age techniques.

There had been rapid growth of native iron-working in Iran, Transcaucasia, Syria and Palestine, between 1200 and 1000 B.C. Cyprus, Caucasia and Crete were not slow to follow.¹ Iron gradually replaced bronze as the chief metal.² Cheaper and more abundant than bronze, its widespread availability must have helped considerably in the establishment of the separatist communities which so markedly differentiate the Crete of the historical period from the centralized Late Minoan system. In contrast with the characteristic trends of Bronze Age economy, the spread of iron-working would lead, as elsewhere, to the attachment of domestic industry to agriculture. Their combination would help to bring about a self-sufficiency of village producers independent of markets.

The Dorians moved into southern Greece towards the end of the second millennium B.C., and then extended overseas to the southern Cyclades, Crete, Rhodes and the Carian coast. They arrived as a league of three tribes: the Hylleis, descended from Hyllos, son of Herakles; the Dymanes, who worshipped Apollo; the Pamphyloi ("those of all tribes") who worshipped Demeter. The Dorians held to their traditional form of tribal organization and their tribal customs, institutions and nomenclature endured in Crete, though in continuously modified ways, throughout the period of the supremacy of the aristocratic systems which have become closely associated with their name.³

The details of the Dorian dispersal over Crete remain obscure. But the epigraphic record confirms that Cretan Doric became in general

¹ "The new processes which made steel a material equal, and even superior, to bronze found their way prepared in all these countries by earlier attempts at iron-smelting. This explains why the smelting of iron spread so much more quickly than that of bronze." Forbes in H.T. 1.595.

² Though fine work continued to be done in bronze, including a number of important works of art. Pendlebury 336.

³ See further Willetts 230 et passim.

the language of the rulers of the city-states of the Iron Age. The danger and the conflicts which are likely to have accompanied this settlement perhaps encouraged the conscious fostering of tribal traditions, including a confederate organization, with the bonds of kinship as its basis, expressed through the medium of a common language.¹ But since the tribal organization was superimposed upon an already existing social and economic order, it became steadily transformed from an association of kinsmen into a rudimentary apparatus of state in the different areas, at first apparently under royal leadership.² The earliest inscriptions show that the political forms of aristocratic government had taken firm shape. Such powers as had formerly been exercised by kings or chieftains had been taken over by boards of chief magistrates known as *kosmoi*, selected from privileged hereditary groups, with Councils of elders made up of former magistrates, and Assemblies of citizens functioning beside them.

The process of dispersal cannot have been uniform. For there are indications that the Dorians were ready to adapt themselves to existing conditions so as to bring about, in some areas, an amalgamation with indigenous ruling groups.³ But whether independently by Dorians or in conjunction with other rulers, in general the land and the tillers of the land were appropriated as instruments of production by aristocratic minorities.

This land settlement must have been the product of the amalgamation of the earlier Minoan-Mycenaean form of tenure with later Doric tribalism. To what extent the tributary system (which had, as we have seen, already modified the communal village system in the later Bronze Age) had then been further modified in the period before the Dorian supremacy, is a matter of speculation. But it does seem likely that the Dorians became, through a process of conquest and oppression, masters of the "caste-system" inherited from the Bronze Age. Certainly their supremacy was founded upon a system of vassalage. The tillers of the soil were serfs, subject to systematic tribute, at first in the form of rent in kind and then developing also into money-rent.⁴ The Dorian rulers of Sparta imposed a tribute of fifty per cent upon their serfs.⁵ But, in Crete, it seems that the tribute was not so highly assessed. The serfs belonged inalienably to the *klaroi*, the estates from which the ruling class drew tribute. But so did the houses in which they lived, which could be furnished by the serfs from their own means.

¹ *Ib.* 225-34.

² *Ib.* 103. Cf. Arist. Pol. 1272a 9-11; Hdt. 4.154; IC 2.XVI.1; Van Effenterre 100 n. 2.

³ *Ib.* 254 and n. 1.

⁴ *Ib.* 16, 20-1, 49, 139-40, 193, 252; Arist. Pol. 1272a; Dosiad. ap. Ath. 4.143a-b.

⁵ Heraclid. Pont. RP 2.7; Arist. Pol. 1270a; Tyrt. 5.

The serfs could also possess cattle in their own right; could marry and divorce; and they could even, at least at Gortyna as late as the 5th Century B.C., inherit the *klaros* which they worked, in the (presumably) rare event of there being no citizen heirs available.¹ These conditions, which allowed the numerous class of cultivators, on which the whole economy so long depended, to preserve their own ancient traditions, even though subordinated, largely contributed to the stability of the aristocratic system.

Nevertheless, the primary features of this system were economic, social and political inequality, with three main classes of the population distinguished, in addition to the serfs. The minority of free citizens, out of which was formed the ruling classes of landlords and officials, had their dwellings, their *sysitia* ("common meals") and gymnasia in the city, the centre of the political, social and religious life of each separate state. The phratry (originally a group of clans), in its Cretan form of the *betaireia*, became an exclusive association of male citizens, preventing women and all non-citizens from exercising political rights.² The chief motive for the distribution of the land and the cultivators themselves among the ruling minorities in accordance with their tribal custom was to ensure a continuous food supply for themselves and their dependents, so that they were free to concentrate upon administrative and military pursuits. It appears that contributions derived from tribute were made individually, and in kind, in the first instance, by members of the *betaireia* to a common fund. This system later became centrally organized through the state apparatus, and it was no doubt in this stage that rent in kind began to be supplemented by money-rent. The organization and education of the citizen youth, centred upon the *agelai*, retained many characteristic tribal features.³

The *apetairoi* were a class of free men, free, that is to say, in the sense that they were neither bonded nor enslaved. But, as their name implies, they were excluded from the *betaireiai* and they lacked the political rights enjoyed by the citizens. It is possible that they included the members of various communities subject to one or another city-state.⁴ There was also a distinct class of chattel-slaves.⁵

Though they cannot be included among the *apetairoi*, it appears that

¹ Willetts 46-51.

² *Ib.* 22-7 et passim.

³ Our chief source for the organization of the Cretan youth is Str. 10.482; cf. Ath. 4.143; Nic. Dam. fr. 115; Heraclid. Pont. 3.4. But other sources add much to our knowledge: Willetts s.v. *agela*, passim.

⁴ Larsen in CP 31.11 ff; *id.* in RE s.v. *Perioikoi*; Jeanmaire 424 n. 3; Willetts 37-45. Cf. Guarducci in RF 14.356 ff.

⁵ Willetts 52-6.

freedmen formed another distinct category of some importance. From a Gortynian inscription of the earlier 5th Century B.C.¹ we can infer that freedmen were classed with metics. From this and perhaps another inscription (beginning of the 5th Century B.C.)² it seems that metics and freedmen were domiciled in a special (and old) quarter of the city, Latosion. In trying to assess the status of these Latosioi, it is useful to recall Aristotle's statement that craftsmen, meaning free artisans, are in a condition of limited slavery.³ Two other Gortynian inscriptions of the same century bear upon this topic. The earlier ⁴ is the end of some sort of decree which defines relations between the state and some craftsmen, or hired workmen, metics or freedmen. Rations of barley, figs, wine and other things are mentioned, perhaps forming the annual rations of each man. Refusal to work incurred a fine payable to the state. The later inscription is similar.⁵ Provisions are allotted by annual amount, there is the same basis for pay, and the same penalty for infringement.

An inscription from Axos (6th-5th Centuries B.C.)⁶ makes it reasonably certain that conditions are laid down between the state and some workers who may have come in or been brought in from outside. It seems that they are to be fed at public expense and given immunity from certain tributes. Another, from Eleutherna (6th?-5th Centuries B.C.)⁷ mentions *sisyropoioi* (presumably makers of goats'-hair cloaks) and may have contained regulations for their pay.

It is possible that the free artisans of these inscriptions were freedmen, at least in the case of Gortyna, possibly too in the case of Axos and Eleutherna. There is reason to suspect that the work was done as some kind of forced labour.⁸ It is possible that the workers whose rations were computed on an annual basis were freedmen bound for service over a lengthy period, the service forming part of their terms of manumission.⁹

If Latosion may be regarded as an early manifestation of the tendency, fully developed under the Roman Empire, for the state to bind the *collegiae*, the craftsmen groups, to fixed localities, it also reminds us that the "guild" has Bronze Age origins. Similarly, when we learn that

¹ Ib. 40; IC 4.78.

² IC 4.58.

³ Pol. 1260a 37. Cf. ib. 1267b 15; 1277b 1; 1278a 17; 1291a 1; 1319a 26; 1326a 22; 1328b 39; 1329a 19; 1331a 33.

⁴ IC 4.79.

⁵ IC 4.144.

⁶ IC 2.V.1.

⁷ IC 2.XII.9.

⁸ Willetts 42.

⁹ See further ib. 43-44.

the Stalitai were obliged to serve the city of Praisos by undertaking sea voyages¹, we are reminded of Minos and the Carians. But now freedmen are being classed with metics, and the growth of chattel slavery is having an adverse effect on the status of the artisan.²

The process of adaptation of Dorian tribal institutions to new conditions would have been facilitated by fusion with those native tribal institutions which are likely to have persisted from Bronze Age times, especially among the cultivators. Another consequence of the impetus derived from contact with the traditions of the older culture was the rapidity with which the new Cretan society became centred upon cities.³ Among others can be included the active and relatively early practice of alphabetic writing⁴, and the “Daedalic” renaissance of c. 750-650 B.C.⁵

The distribution of land and cultivators brought about successive modifications in the system of inheritance among the ruling clans. We have seen how the Minoan “household” exercised its influence in the one-sided development of Bronze Age economy. Now, in new conditions, the tendency developed for smaller units of relationship to grow within the wider circle of the clan system of the rulers. This was marked especially by the importance of the institution of the *oikos* (“household”), which was closely related to the possession of the *klaros*, the “lot” or family estate.⁶ Changes in the system of inheritance were accompanied by corresponding changes in the system of marriage, as tribal kinship and inheritance gave place to a family system based on individual ownership. In the cities where commerce once more began to develop to a significant degree, and with the introduction of a system of coinage in the early 5th Century B.C., the break-up of the older tribal system (represented at this stage by the transitional form of the *oikos*) was accelerated. Coined money made possible the alienation of estates, which became general by the Hellenistic period.⁷ Even so, forms of common ownership (especially perhaps where rights of pasturage, as opposed to cultivation, were concerned) appear to have survived.⁸

¹ IC 3.VI. 7A,B (3rd C.B.C.). It seems that the *kosmoi* of Praisos supervised these services; and also that commutation of such services was allowed.

² Willetts 41-42.

³ In marked contrast with the relatively slow development of towns by the Dorian kinsfolk of the mainland. Pendlebury 327; cf. Adcock in CAH 3.691.

⁴ Demargne 149.

⁵ *Ib. passim*.

⁶ Willetts 59-62.

⁷ Plb. 6.45.1-47.6.

⁸ Willetts 44 on IC 4.231-6; *ib.* 135 on IC 3.IV.1 B; Rostovtzeff SEHRE 274 cf. Tac. Ann. 14.18; Hyg. De cond. agr. 122 and Rostovtzeff *ib.* 579 n. 51.

Alienation and the freedom to acquire unlimited amounts of land increased the proportion of free, but landless, persons. There were, in fact, demands for a re-division of the land in Hellenistic times, but this never came about owing to the operation of a variety of opposing factors. The successful maintenance of the tribute system which kept the *syssitia* in being; the incessant warfare which ravaged the cities from the middle of the 4th Century B.C. until the Roman occupation; the subjection of weaker by stronger states; the absorption of surplus manpower in large-scale piracy and mercenary service within the same period – all helped to stave off the application of drastic reform. But the most important single obstacle standing in the way of change was the continued dependence of the whole agrarian economy on serf labour. No major internal economic advance, of the kind which occurred especially in democratic states, was possible without liberation of the serf-class as small-scale, independent producers.

With the development of the *oikos* as an economic and social unit within the clan, restricted kinship groups acquired political dominance. Ruling clans were succeeded by the system of close oligarchy of the 5th and 4th Centuries B.C. The Hellenistic period was one of economic and political instability, as Crete was drawn into contact with conflicting overseas powers in Europe, Asia and Africa. Close oligarchy was then modified to some extent. But the aristocracies maintained their political power and successfully resisted fundamental change.

The economic and social history of Crete, over a period of some 1500 years before the Roman occupation, was such that it could never emancipate itself from the abiding influence of tradition. This may seem to be a large generalization in comparison with the necessarily restricted amount of evidence offered here. But it is consistent with a significant remark of Aristotle. It seems quite natural for him to state that the laws of Minos are still in force among the subject-population of Crete.¹

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¹ Pol. 1271 b 20-33.

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- BSLP Bulletin de la société de linguistique de Paris.
- CAH Cambridge Ancient History.
- CP Classical Philology.
- JHS Journal of Hellenic Studies.
- LSJ A Greek-English Lexicon, Liddell-Scott-Jones, 9 ed.
- RE Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft.
- RF Rivista di filologia e di istruzione classica.
- JWCI Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes.