The Cretan Labyrinth has fascinated scholars and the wider public since antiquity. Traditionally, it has been regarded as a monument that did once exist, and it has been widely identified with the Minoan palace of Knossos. I argue that this approach has underestimated the variety and complexity of references to the Cretan Labyrinth and its capacity for metamorphosis from abstract memory to tangible monument and for relocation from one Cretan site to another. Drawing from literature on memory and monuments, and especially from the work of Maurice Halbwachs, I explore the poetics and politics, the materialities and temporalities that shaped different regimes of truth regarding the location and the form of the Cretan Labyrinth across several millennia. This diachronic analysis reveals the shifting and competing, indeed labyrinthine, narratives about this monument and produces a cultural history of it extending from prehistory to the present.¹

¹ I am grateful to Jack Davis, Nikos Litinas, Androniki Oikinomaki, Dimitris Plantzos, John Papadopoulos, Valeria Sergueenkova, and Todd Whitelaw, and to the AJA Editor-in-Chief Jane Carter and the reviewers for their feedback. Several other scholars advised on specific issues and provided illustrations, as explained below. I acknowledge the support of the Semple Classics Fund of the Department of Classics of the University of Cincinnati, and I am thankful to Carol Hershenson for proofreading my text. This article is in memory of Kostas Votas. Translations are
A LABYRINTH OF MEMORY

Labyrinths of different forms proliferate in world history, and academic and popular fascination with these monuments has led to the establishment of a specialized journal (*Caerdroia*), an international society, and even an online labyrinth locator. The Cretan Labyrinth, the maze that was created by Daedalus to conceal the Minotaur, where the Athenian hero Theseus killed the beast with the help of Ariadne, daughter of King Minos, thus freeing Athens from paying blood tribute to the Cretan king, is probably the most famous of these monuments. However, it remains enigmatic, especially with reference to its location and form. It is perhaps indicative that the quest for its discovery has repeatedly appeared in international headlines in the last century or my own unless otherwise noted.


3 The last two, respectively, Whiple 1998–2017; Saward 2004–2017. According to *AJA* style, unless a specific text is being quoted, the term Cretan Labyrinth is capitalized, whereas the term labyrinth is not.

This paper makes no contribution to the quest for the true labyrinth. Indeed, I argue that no single monument was denoted by that name across time. Instead, my aim is to trace the shifting and competing, indeed labyrinthine, narratives about the location and the memory of this monument and to produce a cultural history of it extending from prehistory to the present.

The cross-disciplinary explosion of interest in the study of memory—what critics call the “memory industry” or the “hypertrophy of memory”6—is a relatively recent development originating in the 1980s.7 Classicists and prehistorians began engaging systematically with social


or collective or cultural memory only after the turn of the present millennium, and they typically focus on monuments that are spatially anchored. Locational approaches to memory have a long history that has been traced back to the poet Simonides of Keos (late sixth to early fifth century B.C.E.) and can be explained by the significance of permanence and solidity for the forging of memory. However, material properties and fixed location are not necessary conditions of memorization, and memory can be distributed through associations (as in performances and rituals). The erection of monuments can even lead to forgetting, as new patterns of memories emerge and displace preexisting ones. The novelist Robert Musil has famously observed that “there is nothing in this world as invisible as a monument. They are no doubt erected to be seen—indeed to attract attention. But at the same time they are impregnated with something that repels attention.” Conversely, inaccessible and intangible monuments can prove particularly

8 See, e.g., Bradley and Williams 1998; Alcock 2002; Boardman 2002; Van Dyke and Alcock 2003; Flower 2006; Jones 2007; Yoffee 2008; Borić 2010; Lilios and Tsamis 2010; Whitmarsh 2010; Assmann 2011, pt. 2; Chadwick and Gibson 2013; Gangloff 2013; Rojas and Sergueenko 2014; Diaz-Guardamino et al. 2015; Galinsky and Lapatin 2016; Popkin 2016. For Crete specifically, see Alcock 2002, 99–131; Prent 2003; Legarra Herrero 2015. For criticism of this approach, see Osborne 2003; Herzfeld 2004.


10 Nora 1989, 22; Carruthers 1998, 54; Price 2012, 17.


appealing.\textsuperscript{13}

These observations are essential for the present study, which also draws from the pioneering work of Maurice Halbwachs on social memory. Halbwachs argued that social memory is primarily aimed not at preserving the affairs of the past, but on serving the agendas of the present, and he demonstrated this through a study of the legendary topography of the Holy Land from shortly after Jesus to the Crusades.\textsuperscript{14} His study surveyed landmarks that were linked to the origin of Christianity and were not anchored to a single location, and he attributed the topographical shifts they present over time to major doctrinal and political developments. The work of Halbwachs has had an enduring impact on memory studies, but his ideas on the intersection of real and imagined space were appreciated by Hellenists only recently.\textsuperscript{15} My study builds on this work in exploring the exceptional capacity of the Cretan Labyrinth for metamorphosis from abstract memory to physical monument, in investigating how the labyrinth was relocated from one Cretan site to another (\textbf{fig. 1}),\textsuperscript{16} and in demonstrating how it was eventually turned into a Cretan \textit{lieu de mémoire} (\textit{sensu} Pierre Nora),\textsuperscript{17} a realm of national memory for the island’s inhabitants.

\textsuperscript{13} della Dora 2011, 4.

\textsuperscript{14} Halbwachs 1941; 1992, pt. 2.

\textsuperscript{15} E.g., della Dora 2011; Berman 2015.

\textsuperscript{16} Cf. Rigney 2010, 346.

\textsuperscript{17} Cf. Nora 1984, 1989.
Analyses of ancient evidence for the Cretan Labyrinth, studies of relevant references by travelers from the Renaissance to the modern era, and diachronic reviews of the topic abound, but all these are selective in covering the “maze of evidence,” especially from the Medieval period. Bridging traditional temporal and disciplinary divisions, the present study collects and evaluates the range of literary and material evidence on the cultural history of the Cretan Labyrinth.

An original aspect of this cultural history is its balance between the dominant, non-Cretan understandings of the Cretan Labyrinth (from classical Attic to Renaissance or modern western ones) and local approaches to this monument by anonymous informants and passionate antiquarians. These local approaches have largely been ignored by established narratives on the Cretan Labyrinth and have occasionally been suppressed by western scholars when they run counter to official histories. My analysis of this hidden engagement with the past, which Michel


21 Litinas 2011, 455.
Foucault would call “counter-memory,”22 comes in response to current emphasis on localized memory and alternative interpretations of ancient monuments.23 The analysis demonstrates that counter-memory is indispensable to any cultural history of the poetics and politics, the materialities and temporalities that shaped different regimes of truth concerning the location, the form, and the significance of a monument such as the Cretan Labyrinth.

+A> MONUMENT OR MEMORY? THE ANTIQUITY OF THE CRETAN LABYRINTH

The Cretan Labyrinth has long been considered a monument that once actually existed. Its identification with the Minoan palace of Knossos (fig. 2) in particular has become a standard reference for school and university textbooks to the extent that eight-year-old third-graders in Greece are requested to demonstrate how the mythical structure matches the monument.24 The identification also pervades popular culture, as exemplified by the campaign that the Coca-Cola Company launched on Crete in the summer of 2017 (online fig. 1).25 The possibility that the connection between the palace of Knossos and the labyrinth is flawed has rarely been raised before, despite the problems posed by a range of textual and archaeological evidence discussed below.

22 Foucault 1977, 139–64.
23 Tilley 1994; Whitmarsh 2010; Hamilakis 2011; Rojas and Sergueenkova 2014; Anderson 2015.
24 E.g., Morris and Powell 2006, 52; Maistrellis et al. 2007, 40–1, 92.
25 See AJA Online for all online-only figures accompanying this article.
The etymology of the word *labyrinth* and its Aegean (pre-Greek) or eastern Mediterranean origins remain unclear despite numerous ingenious interpretations. Arthur Evans popularized the idea that the term is etymologically related to the Carian word for double axe, *labrys* (*λαβρύς*), but this was quickly challenged and has long been considered unconvincing.

The term *labyrinth* is commonly associated with the terms *da-pu2–ri-to-jo* (KN Gg[1] 702.02, KN Oa 745.02) and *da-pu-ri-to* (KN Xd 140.01), which appear in three Linear B tablets from Knossos and designate a cult site at which a female deity (*po-ti-ni-ja*) received offerings. However, there are considerable linguistic uncertainties about this association, and no


27 On the Carian term, see Plut. *Quaest. Graec.* 45. The etymological relation was proposed by Mayer (1892, 191) and was adopted by Evans (Evans 1901, 108–11; 1901–1902, 103; 1921, 6; 1930, 283; Brown and Bennett 2001, 26–7, 195); it was first challenged in Rouse 1901 and more recently in Beekes 2010, 819.

satisfactory explanation has been offered for the assumed relation of the cult site of the tablets with the lair of the man-eating beast. Problems also arise from the later history of the term “labyrinth.” Indeed, its first secure attestation in Greek literature dates from almost a millennium after the tablets and is not set in a Cretan context. Herodotus (2.148–49), in the mid-fifth century B.C.E., used this term for an impressive Egyptian building complex that he described at length.29 No direct reference to the Cretan Labyrinth is provided by pre-Herodotean accounts of the Cretan adventure of Theseus, which go back to Homer (Od. 11.321–23).30 This suggests that, in early versions of the myth, the Cretan monument was not called by this name,31 and it could explain why Herodotus made no reference to the Cretan Labyrinth when discussing the Egyptian one and why Pherecydes, who first described structural components of the Minotaur’s lair around 500 B.C.E., did not call it by any name.32 In any case, from Plato (Euthyd. 291b7) onward, the term is treated as a terminus technicus referring to structures and metaphorically to


situations that are hard to escape from.\textsuperscript{33}

Several lost works of literature of the Classical period are known to have treated the mythology of Crete and could thus have mentioned the labyrinth. Obsomer and Litinas, who have discussed the different possibilities, favor the \textit{Kamikoi} of Sophocles, and the \textit{Theseus} or the \textit{Cretans} of Euripides, respectively.\textsuperscript{34} However, as Litinas notes, the earliest surviving source that explicitly associates the Minotaur with the labyrinth is Callimachus (\textit{Hymn to Delos} 311) in the early third century B.C.E.\textsuperscript{35} As an erudite resident of Alexandria, Callimachus would have known of the Egyptian labyrinth and could have spread the use of this term in Cretan mythology, in which he had a strong interest.\textsuperscript{36} Two later Hellenistic references to the Cretan Labyrinth also come from scholars based in Ptolemaic Egypt.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{33} Cordano 1980, 7–8; Obsomer 2003, 157; Litinas 2011, 455–59; Montecchi 2016, 166. The term is used metaphorically by the Cretan third-century B.C.E. poet Rhianos (Vertoudakis 2006, 260).

\textsuperscript{34} Obsomer 2003, 148–57 (Sophocles); Litinas 2011, 462–65 (Euripides).

\textsuperscript{35} Litinas 2011, 462. See also Beekes 2010, 819; Stephens 2015, 230.


\textsuperscript{37} Eratosth. 5; Heraclides Lembus frg. 74, in Dilts 1971, 39.
The Cretan Labyrinth attracted wide-ranging attention in Roman literature,\textsuperscript{38} probably in response to the island’s annexation by Rome and its more effective integration into the Mediterranean world.\textsuperscript{39} Also, it is only in this period that the labyrinth is treated as an existing or a lost monument (see below) and is explicitly placed at Knossos,\textsuperscript{40} even if this localization is implicit in earlier associations of the structure with the mythology of Minos. Roman literature also mentions labyrinths other than the Cretan and Egyptian ones. Pliny the Elder (36.19.90–3) and Strabo (8.6.2, 8.6.11) refer to the labyrinth of Lemnos or Samos, which was probably the monumental temple of the Samian Heraion; the labyrinth of Chiusi in Italy, often identified with the burial mound at Poggio Gaiella; and the cavernous labyrinths of Nauplia, which remain unidentified.\textsuperscript{41}

The late introduction of the Cretan Labyrinth in classical literature and the apparent dearth of written sources on its existence and location prior to the Roman period call into question the assumption that there was a Cretan prehistoric monument called the labyrinth, the memory of

\textsuperscript{38} Apollod. \textit{Bibl.} 3.11, 3.213; Dio Chrys. \textit{Or.} 71.6; Diod. Sic. 4.61.4, 4.77.3–4; Hyg. \textit{Fab.} 40, 42; Lucian \textit{Hermot.} 47; Lucian \textit{Salt.} 49; Ov. \textit{Met.} 8.152–61; Paus. 2.31.1; Philostr. \textit{VA} 4.34; Plin. \textit{HN} 36.19.85, 36.19.90; Plut. \textit{Thes.} 15–16, 19, 21; Strabo 10.4.8; Verg. \textit{Aen.} 5.588; Vett. Val. 7.5. See also Platakis 1973, 179–93; Litinas 2011, 466–67 n. 46. I thank Vyron Antoniadis for advice on the sources.

\textsuperscript{39} See, e.g. Alcock 2002, 99–106.

\textsuperscript{40} Dio Chrysostom, \textit{Discourse} 80.8; Paus. 1.27.10; Philostr. \textit{VA} 4.34; Plut. \textit{Thes.} 19.6.

which survived to classical antiquity. Comparable challenges are raised by archaeological and art historical evidence.

<<B> A Labyrinthine Prehistory

The identification of the Cretan Labyrinth with the prehistoric palace of Knossos was first proposed by the American journalist William James Stillman, then U.S. consul in Crete, after his visit to the site, which had been partly excavated by the Cretan antiquarian Minos Kalokairinos in 1878.42 As an antiquarian, Stillman had been contacted by the Archaeological Institute of America about leading an excavation in Crete, and he was seriously considering Knossos.43 Stillman first proposed the identification of the palace of Knossos with the labyrinth in an unpublished letter addressed to the first president of the institute, Charles Eliot Norton, which is dated to 17 January 1881.44 A few months later, he presented to the institute plans of the complex structure excavated by Kalokairinos (fig. 3), which he compared to the maze depicted on Knossian coins (on which see below) and to the mythical labyrinth.45

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42 Stillman 1881, 48. On Stillman, see Dyson 2014 and also below; on Kalokairinos, see Kopaka 1989–1990, 1995; Kotsonas 2016.


44 AIA Archives, Box 5.4, letter from Stillman to Norton, 1/17/1881, 13–14. I thank Kevin Mullen (AIA) for his help with accessing the archival material.

45 Stillman 1881, 48; cf. 1901, 637: “a ruin on the acropolis of Gnossus [sic], already partially exposed by the searches of local diggers for antiques. It has a curiously labyrinthine appearance.”
Looking at the character of the fragments so far uncovered, the extreme narrowness of the passages . . . , the indication of a labyrinthine plan shown in the walls still remaining . . . , the extreme antiquity of the walls . . . , I am at a loss to attribute this work to any other period or any other use than that which would belong to the Daedalian Labyrinth.

This identification of the palace with the labyrinth was popularized by Evans, who first came to excavate at Knossos in 1900. Interestingly, in the notebook entry of his first visit to the site (19 March 1894), Evans noted with reference to the architectural remains, “They are very complex as far as one can judge from what is visible to the eye, but were hardly as Stillman supposes the ‘labyrinth’ itself.” At some indeterminate later point, however, he added, “No, on further examination I think it must be so.” A few months later, on 29 August 1894, Evans published a long article in *The Times*, in which he called the building uncovered by Kalokairinos “perhaps a Palace, perhaps the actual ‘Labyrinth.’”

In his early academic writings, Evans suggested that the Minoans identified the labyrinth with the palace because of the latter’s complex architectural plan and rich bull iconography and

46 See Evans 1943; MacGillivray 2000; Brown and Bennett 2001.


especially because of the assumed linguistic association between the *labrys* and the labyrinth, which appeared to be supported by “[t]he overwhelming evidence now forthcoming of the importance in the Palace cult of the Double Axe.”\(^{50}\) However, the philologist William Henry Denham Rouse leveled fierce criticism at this interpretation on linguistic and other grounds,\(^ {51}\) leading Evans to revise his views and suggest that it was not the Minoans but the later Greeks who identified the palace with the labyrinth.

Still, the linkage of the palace of Knossos and the labyrinth was “generally admitted” by 1905,\(^ {52}\) and resurfaced in the second half of the 20th century C.E. based largely on the reading of the term *labyrinth* in the Linear B tablets from Knossos mentioned above. Some scholars have tentatively identified the labyrinth of the tablets with the palace of Knossos or part of it.\(^ {53}\) They also rely on the depiction of a maze on a Linear B tablet from Pylos (PY Cn 1287) to propose that the Mycenaeans considered the labyrinth to be a “building with complicated design” and perhaps a symbol of their palaces.\(^ {54}\) However, these suggestions do not sufficiently appreciate the long history of maze depictions in earlier Aegean and Mediterranean art. Also problematic is the notion that an architectural design was turned into an abstract symbol, which would be

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\(^{50}\) Evans 1901–1902, 103; see also Evans 1901, 108–11; 1901–1902, 103–4.


\(^{52}\) Hall 1905, 323.


\(^{54}\) On the tablet, which records goats given by different individuals perhaps as religious offerings, see Heller 1961; Kern 2000, 73, nos. 103–4; Montecchi 2013, 42–4; 2016, 170.
unique for Aegean prehistory and would fail to explain why the maze or labyrinth was later associated with a single palatial site (Knossos).\textsuperscript{55}

Those arguing that the Minoans (and/or the Mycenaeans) considered the palace of Knossos to be the Cretan Labyrinth hardly acknowledge that in \textit{The Palace of Minos} Evans credited the later Greeks with the identification of the ruined palace with the Labyrinth.\textsuperscript{56} He wrote of the “[e]rroneous popular impression of [the] Palace as a Maze” and added that “[t]here is nothing in all this to suggest a labyrinthine plan.”\textsuperscript{57} Evans’ revised interpretation proposed that the story of the maze was imported to Crete from Egypt in the Bronze Age but the name labyrinth was then applied specifically to the Central Palace Sanctuary at Knossos.\textsuperscript{58} The classical myth, he argued, developed later, when “Early Greek settlers” encountered Late Minoan II–III seals showing mazes and bull-men (\textbf{fig. 4}) and perhaps saw the Labyrinth Fresco, a Middle Minoan III plaster floor with a maze pattern in the eastern part of the palace of Knossos (see fig. 2).\textsuperscript{59}

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\textsuperscript{55} Kern 2000, 35–6, 71, 73; Montecchi 2016, 169–70.
\textsuperscript{56} Evans 1921, 359; 1930, 282–84. Kern (2000, 318 n. 23) lists supporters of this idea.
\textsuperscript{57} Evans 1930, 282, 284, respectively.
\textsuperscript{58} Evans 1921, 6, 359; 1930, 283. Cook (1914, 479) preferred the theatrical area on the northwest fringe of the palace (on the location of which see fig. 2).
\textsuperscript{59} Evans 1921, 359 (cf. 1930, 282). For the seals as inspiration for the myth, see Evans 1935, 505; Boardman 2002, 148–50; Obsomer 2003, 163–64. On seals with bull-men (of the Spectacle-Eyes Group, on which see Younger 2000), see \textit{CMS} 2(3), no. 67; 3(2), no. 363; 6(2), no. 302; 9, no. 127; 10, no. 145; 11, no. 251; 13, nos 61 and 84; 5 suppl. 3.2, no. 323. On seals with a maze,
Evans’ revised interpretation of the Labyrinth and the palace can be appreciated in light of broader presuppositions of Victorian antiquarianism. For example, Victorian (and later) scholars assumed that the mythological Dragon’s Mound, where Beowulf fought a dragon in the medieval epic, was identified by Anglo-Saxon settlers with megalithic monuments of the British Neolithic. Howard Williams has recently criticized this assumption as “simplistic, misleading, anachronistic and theoretically stifling,” arguing that it stems from the Victorian fixation on establishing the historicity of the epic and on proving the appropriation of British prehistoric monuments by Anglo-Saxon settlers. Particularly relevant to the case of the Cretan Labyrinth is the criticism of Williams that the Victorian identification of the Dragon’s Mound with the megaliths relies on the post-excavation reconstruction of these monuments and overlooks their poor visibility and accessibility in the Medieval period. This criticism extends both to Evans’ revised interpretation and to the related suggestion of D’Agata that the Knossians identified the

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see CMS 2(1), nos. 16, 38, 60 and 314; 2(7), no. 223; 3(1), no. 15; cf. Schlager 1989; Montecchi 2016, 168, 170. On the Labyrinth Fresco and its parallels from Tell el Dab’a in Egypt, see Shaw 2012. Evans (1930, 79–80, 233) located the Minoan bull games and the “dancing floors of Ariadne” (Il. 18.590–92) in the area of the fresco but noted that flooding had destroyed the dancing floors.

60 On Evans’ Victorian agendas, see MacGillivray 2000; Papadopoulos 2005, 90, 106, 126.

61 Williams 2015, 94.

62 Williams 2015, 77–8, 82–3.
palace with the labyrinth in the fifth century B.C.E.\textsuperscript{63} The Bronze Age palace must have been largely covered by the fifth century B.C.E., hence Knossians of the mid-first millennium B.C.E. could not have known of its complex plan. Even if part of its layout was visible on the surface, the large open space of the central court must have obstructed the recognition of the surrounding ruins as part of a single complex.\textsuperscript{64} Also, if the classical Greeks considered the palace to be the maze of the Minotaur, one would expect to find there material traces of associated commemorative ceremonies and bodily practices, which are instrumental to the formation of social memory.\textsuperscript{65} Yet, the post–Bronze Age material from the palace (esp. from the overlying Geometric to Hellenistic sanctuary “of Rhea”) yielded no iconographic or other evidence alluding to the story of the maze, the Minotaur, or Theseus.\textsuperscript{66}

According to Williams, the story of the Dragon’s Mound could have been inspired by other medieval (rather than Neolithic) monuments or caves,\textsuperscript{67} and I think it is worth entertaining the possibility that sites other than the palace of Knossos inspired the myth of the Cretan Labyrinth, especially since some major Minoan structures at Knossos and elsewhere remained visible until

\textsuperscript{63} D’Agata (2009, 366; 2010, 59) argues that the identification relied on the palace’s ruined plan and was henceforth alluded to by the maze pattern on local coins, as discussed below.

\textsuperscript{64} Cf. Sippel 1986, 70–1.


\textsuperscript{66} Evans 1928, 5–7, 346; Coldstream 2000, 284–88; Prent 2003, 82–3.

\textsuperscript{67} Williams 2015, 82–5, 88–93.
the Classical period. The possibility that this myth was inspired by a Cretan cave (esp. that of Skotino) has been raised repeatedly, but remains unconvincing. I think the story of the dark underground lair of a man-eating beast can be associated more effectively with large Minoan tombs containing scattered bones from multiple burials and the characteristic seals showing a bull-man or a maze (see fig. 4). Notably, the only seal with a bull-man that derives from a known Cretan context comes from a large Knossian tomb with numerous burials. Accordingly, it is tempting to speculate that the discovery of Minoan tombs and the creative reclaiming of Minoan objects, especially seals—which is both characteristic of but also largely exclusive to Knossos during the late ninth to seventh century B.C.E.—provides the historical context for the emergence of the myth of the Cretan Labyrinth.

On this basis, I question the old but enduring idea that the palace of Knossos was identified with the Cretan Labyrinth in either the Bronze Age or the historical period. I think Evans was correct to down-date the myth of the labyrinth to the Early Iron Age and to acknowledge the formative role of distorted and newly constructed memories based on the discovery of Bronze Age objects.

68 Prent 2003; Legarra Herrero 2015.
70 For comparable hypotheses for the Dragon’s Mound, see Williams 2015, 88–93.
71 This is CMS 2(3), no. 67 from Sellopoulo tomb 1 (Hood and Smyth 1981, 36, KS28).
Regardless, however, of which objects or monuments may have stimulated the myth, this was apparently not anchored to a specific location or physical monument at the time.

**A Greek or Roman Monument?**

The idea that the myth of the Cretan Labyrinth emerged in the Early Iron Age finds some support in textual evidence. The Minotaur is first mentioned in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* (Merkelbach and West frg. 145) and may have been a fairly new mythological character at the time.73 His late introduction in Greek mythology can be deduced from his unsettled name in the earliest sixth-century B.C.E. vase inscriptions, which call him ΤΑΥΡΟΣ (Bull) or ΤΑΥΡΟΣ ΜΙΝΩΟΣ (Bull of Minos),74 as well as by the varied iconography in his earliest depictions from the early to mid seventh century B.C.E. and in later archaic art.75 In any case, the seventh century B.C.E. has yielded the earliest depictions of the struggle of Theseus and the Minotaur, including

73 Morris (1995, 183) has observed that the mythology of Minos is more compatible with the culture of the Early Iron Age than with that of the Bronze Age.

74 *ABV*, 104, no. 126; Rumpf 1927, 13, no. 12; cf. Young 1972, 9.

75 *LIMC* 6(1):579–80, s.v. “Minotauros”; Young 1972, 7–11. Earlier images of bull-headed men from the Aegean are not identified with the mythical figure, but a pair of late eighth-century B.C.E. bronze statuettes of a man and a bull-man may represent Theseus and the Minotaur (Young 1972, 63–86; Morris 1995, 184–86; Simantoni-Bournia 2013, 385–89). Montecchi (2016, 167–69, 173) assembles ambiguous evidence favoring a Late Bronze Age date but considers the eighth century B.C.E. to have been formative for the story.
the thread of Ariadne, which is suggestive of the maze, and, by the end of the sixth century B.C.E., Theseus is dominant in Attic art and literature as the particular hero of Athens.  

Despite the wealth of this iconographic tradition, the architectural setting of the struggle of Theseus and the Minotaur is generally not shown before the fifth century B.C.E. The sole exception is a recently published late eighth-century B.C.E. pendant from the Delion on Paros that shows a seven-circuit maze on one side and two dancers of the geranos, the crane dance associated with Theseus, on the other (fig. 5). This interpretation of the pendant’s decoration is as conclusive as the artistic style of the period allows it to be, and, if accepted, which I do, it sets a terminus ante quem for the story of the Cretan Labyrinth. The pendant implies that the maze (probably not yet called the labyrinth) had a role in the story of Theseus more than two centuries before Pherecydes’ description and the first attestations of this monument in other Greek art.


These attestations are on several Attic vases of the fifth century B.C.E. that illustrate the struggle between Theseus and the Minotaur in the context of a built structure, which is shown in front or side elevation. The earlier vases (500–480 B.C.E.), two black-figure lekythoi and possibly two skyphoi, show a simple rectangular structure with flat roof, adorned with horizontally arranged geometric motifs (online fig. 2). It is unclear, however, whether the lekythoi show the lair of the monster or perhaps an altar or a stele, and the identification of the mythical battle on the skyphoi is uncertain. The later vases are red-figure pieces of varied shape dating from 470 to 410 B.C.E.; they show Theseus and the Minotaur by an edifice with Doric or Ionic columns, occasionally adorned with mazelike meanders and checkers (e.g., fig. 6). Interestingly, a papyrus which may contain fragments from Euripides’ *Theseus*, sets the fight of the hero with


80 Obsomer 2003, 136–42, 179. See also Elderkin 1910, 186; Cook 1914, 474–75; Sourvinou-Inwood 1994–1995, 230 n. 15. Lekythoi: Utrecht, University Museum, no catalogue number (ABL, no. 268.53; ABV, 586, no. 53); Athens, National Museum, 1061 (CC 878; ABL, no. 268.54; BAPD, no. 217213). Skyphoi: Athens, National Museum, Acropolis Collection, cat. nos. 1.1280, 1.1314 (BAPD, nos. 4329, 32157).

the Minotaur (or, less likely, with the bull of Marathon) by the columns of a building.\(^82\) There is, however, no reason to believe that these visual attestations were inspired by an existing Cretan structure, let alone by the palace of Knossos,\(^83\) particularly since the structures on the Attic vases present considerable variations in form. Further, Sourvinou-Inwood has observed that the rocks held by the Minotaur on some vase paintings are suggestive of a savage natural space inside the edifice of the labyrinth, which she sees as a metaphor for the corruption inside the house of Minos.\(^84\) However, stone throwing characterizes the fight of Theseus and the Minotaur already on seventh-century B.C.E Cycladic pithoi,\(^85\) and this iconography could explain why, by the fourth century B.C.E., the lair of the Minotaur was depicted as a cave on Etruscan ash urns.\(^86\)

The Classical period also provides the earliest post–Bronze Age depictions of the maze in Cretan art. A long series of Knossian coin issues of the Classical to the Early Roman period show different kinds of mazes on the reverse.\(^87\) The earliest, late fifth- to fourth-century B.C.E., pieces

\(^{82}\) *POxy*. L 3530 (Parsons 1983); see also Litinas 2011, 460–62 nn. 21, 29, 32.

\(^{83}\) As assumed in Evans 1921, 533.


\(^{85}\) Simantoni-Bournia 2013, 383–84.


\(^{87}\) Sidiropoulos 2004, 636–47. See also Jackson 1971; Sippel 1986, 73–4; 1987; Traeger 1996, 23–33. The maze disappears from Knossian coinage before the general demise of Cretan
show a meander or a swastika (fig. 7a), which must represent the mythical maze, as the Minotaur adorns the obverse. Later issues, from ca. 300 B.C.E. to the early first century C.E., depict a rectangular maze on one side and the head of Hera or Ariadne on the other (see fig. 7b). A circular maze is attested briefly in the late second century B.C.E (see fig. 7c). The rectangular version of the maze also appears on the clay impression of a seal inscribed ΚΝΩΣΙΩΝ (“of the Knossians”) that was found in the archive dating to the late third to early second century B.C.E. at Callipolis in Aetolia.  

Several scholars have interpreted the maze on the Knossian coins as a plan of the ruins of the palace of Knossos and even as a simplified visual key for visitors to an actual labyrinth. These mythological themes from Cretan coins, which occurred during the reign of Trajan (Romeo 2010, 76). I am grateful to Kleanthis Sidiropoulos for his advice.

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88 Evans (1921, 359) thought that this meander or swastika was inspired by Minoan art.

89 Pantos 1985, 112–13, no. 88; cf. Kern 2000, 55, fig. 59. Another seal impression with a maze from Callipolis preserves -ΤΑΝΙΩΝ and has been ascribed to the city of Itanos (Pantos 1985, 172–74, no. 144; cf. Kern 2000, 55, fig. 60) or, possibly, to a private individual from Knossos (Sidiropoulos 2004, 663 n. 16). The area of Itanos has yielded a rock engraving of a square maze next to a fifth-century B.C.E. inscription: ICr 3 7 21 (see also p. 163).

scholars not only fail to show that extensive ruins of the palace were visible in the fifth century B.C.E. and were identifiable as parts of a single mazelike complex, as noted above, but they also do not explain how the variation in the form of the maze on the coins is reconciled with the notion of a single physical monument. The identification of the maze of the coins with an existing (rather than a legendary) monument is also undermined by a Knossian coin type of 280–270 B.C.E. that shows a maze of rectangular plan as the seat of a mythological figure, Minos or Zeus (see fig. 7d). The images on these coins suggest to me that the Cretan Labyrinth had no material properties or fixed location in the Classical to Early Roman period. They do establish, however, the appropriation of the intangible monument by the city-state of Knossos and suggest its enduring importance in the social memory of the Knossians.

Following the Roman conquest of Crete in 69 B.C.E., classical literature shows a marked rise of interest in the mythology of Minos and the associated cast of characters, events, and locales, including the labyrinth. This development is consistent with the wider antiquarian interest in the materiality of the past that is manifested in Roman times and relates to the popularity of the maze as a motif in Roman art, especially in (non-Cretan) mosaics. Two early Roman sources explicitly report that the Cretan Labyrinth had not survived and give no indication of its location.

92 Sidiropoulos 2004, 639, no. 36.
93 Alcock 2002, 123–30; Romeo 2010. For Roman sources on the labyrinth, see supra n. 38.
95 Kern 2000, 85–103.
Diodorus Siculus notes, “However, the Labyrinth in Crete has entirely disappeared, whether it be that some ruler razed it to the ground or that time effaced the work.”

Likewise, Pliny the Elder comments that “no traces of the Cretan or Italian [Labyrinth] now survive.”

Although the two authors imply that the Cretan Labyrinth once existed, they do not mention its location, which suggests that they rely on the broader mythological tradition, rather than on specific memories or discoveries. If such information had been available, one would expect to find it in Diodorus Siculus, who consulted the work of four earlier (but otherwise largely unknown) Cretan historians (5.80.4) and is knowledgeable about Cretan mythology and history (5.64–6, 5.69–80) and about Knossian topography and cults (5.66.1, 5.72.4); indeed, his expertise in the latter subject is unmatched in ancient literature.

Nonetheless, D’Agata reads Diodorus’ text to mean that the Cretan Labyrinth no longer existed in its original form and treats the words of Pliny as evidence that the palace or labyrinth “must have been out of use” before the end of the Hellenistic period and that it was gradually forgotten.

This reading of Pliny’s text is


98 On the credibility of Diodorus, see FGrHist 3B:307, 341–64; Romeo 2010, 70–1; Fowler 2013, 387–90.

99 D’Agata 2009, 367; 2010, 60. D’Agata (2010, 60) seems to contradict herself in assuming that the “use” of the palace of Knossos as the labyrinth was abandoned in Hellenistic times but that it was this site that was visited by the companions of Apollonius of Tyana in the first century C.E., on which see below.
unconvincing, however, and it is hard to see why the gradual deterioration of the ruined palace would have led to its disassociation from the myth.

In light of these considerations, it is perhaps surprising to find a later Roman text referring to the Cretan Labyrinth as an existing monument. Writing in the first half of the third century C.E., Philostratus mentions that ca. 66 C.E. the companions of the philosopher Apollonius of Tyana intended to visit the Knossian labyrinth.¹⁰⁰

<EXT>After putting in at Cydonia and sailing on to Cnossus, his companions [i.e., of Apollonius] wanted to see the labyrinth that is one of the sights there (I believe it once contained the Minotaur). But Apollonius said that he would not be a witness of Minos’s injustice, and went on to Gortyn, eager to visit Ida.</EXT>

Scholars have largely taken this brief reference literally and propose that Philostratus’ labyrinth should be identified with the palace of Knossos, a hypothetical newly constructed building, or

the cave of Agia Irene, south of Knossos. However, no such monument was known to Pliny the Elder, who was writing at the time of the assumed Cretan travel of Apollonius. An alternative possibility is that the labyrinth was identified with a Knossian monument after the time of Apollonius, but its earlier existence was postulated by Philostratus. This is not impossible, given the strong interest in the mythology of Minos that emerged after the Roman conquest of Crete and the foundation of the *colonia* Julia Nobilis Cnossus (probably ca. 27 B.C.E.). Comparable inventions of the materiality of mythical monuments and landscapes are known from elsewhere in Roman Greece, and in the case of Troy they were successful enough to attract imperial visitors. No such references are available for the Cretan Labyrinth, but the process of inventing the past at Roman Knossos may be manifested in a possible heroon for Theseus on top of the Lower Gypsadhes. Nonetheless, Philostratus’ colorful biography of Apollonius raises issues of credibility in blending historical reality with fiction. It is indicative that the intended visit to the Cretan Labyrinth is set between a miraculous dream and the emergence of an island, the latter prophesized by Apollonius. Accordingly, the stories of the travels of Apollonius to sacred sites in Crete and across the known world are thought to have been inspired by travels of


103 Rose 2015, 145–49.

104 Kotsonas 2016, 312–14. However, the heroon may have referenced instead the revival of cultural relations between Crete and Athens in the second century C.E. (cf. Romeo 2010, 77–8).

105 For the biography, see Jones 2005, 3–17 (with references); cf. Francis 1998.
other holy men like Pythagoras and were designed by Philostratus to propagate the spiritual
superiority of Apollonius.106 Also, the characterization of the labyrinth as a memorial of
“Minos’s injustice” conforms to a topos of the Second Sophistic that emphasizes the despotic
aspects of the Cretan king.107 We can probably conclude that the reference of Philostratus to the
Labyrinth as an existing monument is unreliable.

The negative coloring of Minos by authors of the Second Sophistic could have caused the
Knossians to suppress the memory of the labyrinth that was in embarrassing conflict with the
local society’s image of its own virtues.108 The spread of Christianity at Knossos is likely to have
accelerated the process, since, as Halbwachs and others have shown, memory distortion and
oblivion often go hand in hand with religious and political change.109 Nevertheless, antiquity
bequeathed a memorable range of ideas on the location and form of the Cretan Labyrinth.

FROM MEMORY TO MONUMENT: LATE ANTIQUITY TO THE RENAISSANCE

Medieval authors retained the memory of—and generated original approaches to—the Cretan
Labyrinth, and one medieval text provides the first visitor’s report about it. Scholarship has,
however, disregarded Byzantine antiquarianism in general,110 and Byzantine references to the

107 Romeo 2010, 78.
110 See, e.g., the paucity of references in Schnapp 1993, 80–118; 2013.
labyrinth in particular. This disregard has fostered the inaccurate notion that the Cretan Labyrinth was forgotten after antiquity and only revived with Renaissance travelers.\textsuperscript{111}

It is true that references to the labyrinth of Knossos drop markedly after the third century C.E. and remain very rare until the 19th century C.E. Its memory survives, however, in brief references in the works of Eustathius, archbishop of Thessaloniki in the 12th century C.E., and of his pupil Michael Choniates, archbishop of Athens in the late 12th to early 13th century C.E.\textsuperscript{112}

Other sources from the 12th century C.E. do not give a specific location for the Cretan Labyrinth,\textsuperscript{113} while some roughly contemporary works place it at Gortyn, the Roman capital of Crete. The authors favoring Gortyn are the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos in the 10th century C.E., and the historian Georgios Kedrenos in the mid 11th to early 12th century C.E.\textsuperscript{115} Porphyrogenitos reproduces the work of the sixth-century C.E. Byzantine scholar Ioannes Malalas, who seems to be the first author to associate the Cretan Labyrinth with Gortyn and the first to identify it as a mountain cave. Malalas thus ascribes a different materiality to it, one that

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\textsuperscript{111} As noted in van der Vin 1980, 229, 232.
\textsuperscript{112} Eust. II. 1166 and Od. 1688; Michael Choniates, Εγκώμιον εἰς τὸν Μακάριον Μητροπολίτην Χώνων Κύριον Νικίτα (Lampros 1879, 49 line 21).
\textsuperscript{113} Etymologicum Magnum, s.v. “Λαβύρινθος”; Tzetzes, Chiliades 11.379.
\textsuperscript{115} Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos, Excerpta de Virtutibus et Vitiis: Excerpta Malala 4 (Büttner-Wobst 1906, 159); Georgios Kedrenos (Synopsis Historion 1.214–21).
\end{flushright}
recalls the imagery of the Etruscan urns; he writes:\textsuperscript{116}

\texttt{<EXT>}[T]he Minotaur left for the area of the Labyrinth. He went up to a mountain and hid inside a cave. Theseus chased him and learnt from someone where he was hiding; he pulled him out and killed him directly. And he entered Gortyn and celebrated his triumph over the Minotaur. \texttt{/EXT>}

Several scholars have proposed that the localization of the labyrinth at Gortyn can be traced earlier, to a passage of Claudius Claudianus (ca. 370–404 C.E.) that describes the maneuvers of the Roman cavalry.\textsuperscript{117} Claudianus notes, “Next the companies divide and in skilled order wheel this way and that, in such path as neither the Cretan palace [\textit{Gortynia tecta}] of the half-human steer nor Maeander’s stream with all its many windings could surpass.”\textsuperscript{118} Claudianus is, however, not using “Gortynius” as a topographic marker but rather as a synonym for “Cretan,” a

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\textsuperscript{116} Malalas, \textit{Chronographia} 4.18: ὁ Μινώταυρος … ἔφυγε καὶ αὐτὸς εἰς τὴν Λαβύρινθον χώραν καὶ ἀνελθὼν ἐν ὅρει εἰσῆλθεν εἰς σπήλαιον κρυπτόμενος. Καὶ καταδίωξεν αὐτὸν ὁ Θησέως ἐμαθεὶς ὑπὸ τινος, ποὺ κέκρυπται ὅτι τοιαύτη ἐκβάλων ἐφόνευσεν εὐθέως. Καὶ εἰσελθὼν ἐν τῇ πόλει Γορτύνη ἐθριάμβευσε τὴν κατὰ τοῦ Μινωταύρου νίκην.

\textsuperscript{117} E.g., Cook 1914, 472 n. 6; Platakis 1973, 201; van der Vin 1980, 231; Sippel 1986, 75; Guidi 1990–1991, 179; Paragamian and Vasilakis 2002, 55; Stefanakis 2002, 50.

poetic convention that was common among Latin poets engaged with the mythology of the island, hence the translation above. The literal reading of the passage, which is widely found in modern literature on the Cretan Labyrinth, is incorrect. However, the same reference could have confused medieval authors like Malalas.

The reasoning behind the relocation of the labyrinth from Knossos to Gortyn remains unclear. D’Agata suggests that this happened in the seventh century C.E. when Knossos fragmented into villages. The work of Malalas, however, is from the sixth century C.E. and predates this development. Additionally, Gortyn did not outlast Knossos for long, as it was badly hit by earthquakes in the seventh century C.E. and lost its urban character from this time or from the eighth century C.E. A better indicator of the demise of Knossos and the relative resilience of Gortyn is provided by the internal organization of the Church of Crete. Indeed, it is assumed that the seat of the bishopric of Knossos was moved to Heraklion (Chandax) well before the Arab conquest of Crete in the 820s C.E., while Gortyn remained the ecclesiastical capital of the island until at least the Byzantine reconquest of the 10th century C.E.

The reconquest of Crete by the Byzantine Empire in 961 C.E. could explain the revived interest in the labyrinth in the literature of the 10th to 12th centuries C.E., after a gap of nearly four


121 Tsougarakis 1988, 22, 135; Di Vita 2010. See also Kalaitzakis 1984, 49–52.

centuries following Malalas. Indeed, the emperor Constantine Prophyrogenitus, who provides the earliest medieval reference to the Cretan Labyrinth, mounted an expedition against the Arab emirate of Crete, which fell to the Byzantines only a few years after his death.\textsuperscript{123} It is within this historical context that Byzantine scholars developed contradictory ideas about the location of the Cretan Labyrinth. This development recalls the rise of interest in the labyrinth that is identifiable after the Roman conquest of the island, and, more broadly, it compares to the pattern of redefinition of real and imagined space in the topography of the Holy Land that Halbwachs has discerned in the aftermath of the Crusaders.\textsuperscript{124}

The text of Malalas does not allow for the identification of the specific cave he refers to. The best candidate, however, is a labyrinthine, cavernous, limestone quarry used in the Roman period and located 3 km northeast of Gortyn, by the village of Ampelouzos. The Ampelouzos cave is the largest known man-made cave in Crete, with tunnels extending for at least 2 km and rooms covering a total of 0.9 ha. (fig. 8),\textsuperscript{125} and it was widely identified with the Cretan Labyrinth from the Renaissance onward, as explained below. Nearly a millennium separates the passage of Malalas from the Renaissance sources, but the time is bridged by an overlooked reference, which provides the first visitor’s report about the cave.

\textsuperscript{123} Kalaitzakis 1984, 84–5.

\textsuperscript{124} Halbwachs 1941, 201–3; 1992, 221–22.

This reference is found in the work of Nikephoros Gregoras (ca. 1295–1360 C.E.), whose *Roman History* covered the Byzantine Empire from 1204 to 1359 C.E. While he was imprisoned because of his ideas on the Orthodox doctrine, Gregoras was visited by a former student of his called Agathangelos, who narrated his extensive travels. One of these travels was to Crete, where Agathangelos visited the labyrinth, about which he said:

<EXT>

I have long had the desire to view the Cretan Labyrinth and because this was far from the port we reached, it occurred to me that since I had the time I should disembark now and view this site, which was located by the inland city of Knossos. The labyrinth is a vast man-made cave. The bedrock of this area happens not to be very hard and can be easily carved by anyone. The craftsman opened an entrance and continued straight ahead

126 Kaldellis 2013, 148–53.

a long way, also expanding left and right. In the middle, at regular intervals, the
craftsman preserved rock-cut pillars, which support the roof. He also divided the space
into houses and courtyards and fountains. The cave was shown to me by locals holding
many torches at hand. </EXT>

This unique passage has hitherto not received the attention it deserves. Gregoras follows
Malalas in considering the Cretan Labyrinth as a cave, but he is the first who identifies it as man-
made and provides a lengthy description of it. Kaldellis considers the possibility that the story is
fictitious because the information is second-hand, and the name of the informant, Agathangelos
(“the Good Messenger”), looks artificial. However, this possibility is unlikely since the
description of the cave does not serve any special purpose in the narrative. If one accepts the
reliability of this reference, as I am inclined to do, Agathangelos emerges as the first known
visitor to a physical Cretan Labyrinth.

The text places the Cretan Labyrinth by the “inland city of Knossos,” far from an unnamed port.
Convinced that the labyrinth must be the palace of Knossos, Kaldellis is troubled over how the
monument was known in the Late Medieval period. However, as I have argued above, the

128 Brief references in van der Vin 1980, 229–32; Tsiknakis 2011–2012, 490; Kaldellis 2013,
153. I thank Sarah Morris for drawing the text of Gregoras to my attention, and Christos
Stavrakos for providing a digital copy of Bekker 1855.

129 Kaldellis 2013, 153.

130 Kaldellis 2013, 148, 153.
identification of the labyrinth with the palace is a modern conception, and Gregoras clearly refers to a “man-made cave” rather than a built structure. Kaldellis also raises the possibility that the description of Gregoras refers to the Ampelouzos cave near Gortyn.\footnote{Kaldellis 2013, 153; cf. Chatzidakis 1881, 35.} Indeed, Gortyn lies far from any Cretan port, but it is also far from Knossos,\footnote{Nine hours distant, according to Chatzidakis 1881, 37.} which is said to be near the labyrinth in Gregoras’ text, and Kaldellis is skeptical about the possibility.

I think this skepticism can be dispelled by understanding the confusion that emerged over the location of Knossos during the Late Medieval period. The confusion must have been related to the second transfer of the seat of the bishopric of Knossos, this time from Heraklion to Agios Myron, halfway between Knossos and Gortyn (see fig. 1), after the Venetian conquest of Crete (1205–1212 C.E.).\footnote{Tsougarakis 1988, 232–37.} Kopaka and D’Agata have explained how this transfer confused western travelers and cartographers and have highlighted the case of the early fifteenth-century C.E. traveler Christoforo Buondelmonti.\footnote{For references to Buondelmonti, see Platakis 1973, 210–11, 215–16, 219; Legrand 1974, 129–31; for his confusion, see Kopaka 2004, 499–501; D’Agata 2009, 369–72; 2010, 62–3.} The Italian monk placed the otherwise unknown city of Philopolis at the site of ancient Knossos, while his Knossos (Gnosia) occupies a different location in the heartland of central Crete. The same confusion pervades the mid 16th-century C.E. text of Pierre Belon du Mans, who placed the village of Gnosio in the vicinity of Gortyn,
beside a quarry he identified as the labyrinth.\textsuperscript{135} The quarry mentioned by Belon du Mans can be identified with the Ampelouzos cave on the basis of his references to characteristics also recorded by other visitors, namely the existence of local guides,\textsuperscript{136} and of wheel marks from wagons.\textsuperscript{137} The confused localization of Knossos near Gortyn by Buondelmonti and Belon du Mans echoes the reference by Gregoras to “the inland city of Knossos” and suggests that the cave visited by Agathangelos was the Ampelouzos cave.

The case for the Ampelouzos cave finds further support in the physical description provided by Gregoras. Man-made caves created by the quarrying of soft limestone occur in the vicinity of both Gortyn and Knossos. Only very few of them, however, are large and show multiple spaces or rooms and rock-cut roof supports, which recall the reference by Gregoras to houses, courtyards, and pillars inside the cave of the labyrinth. The Ampelouzos cave best fits this description. Indeed, at times of political upheaval in the 19th century C.E., Christian Cretans

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\textsuperscript{137} Cf. the sixteenth-century C.E. references by scholars Antonios Callergis and Francesco Barozzi (Kaklamanis 2004, 146, 215) and prince Nicholas Christopher Radziwill (Rutkowski 1968, 91); and the nineteenth-century C.E. references by Sieber 1823, 512; and Chatzidakis 1881, 35; contra de Tournefort 1718, 27; and Cockerel 1820, 405. Such traces have been reported only once for Agia Irene at Knossos (Kopaka 1989–1990, 20), the floors of which are now covered by fill.
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took refuge in the cave for months and inhabited its different spaces, which came to be known as the houses of specific individuals.\textsuperscript{138} This type of proprietorship may have had an earlier history, and it persisted into the 20th century.\textsuperscript{139} Also, numerous visitors refer to a spring (or dripping water) in the Ampelouzos cave, which must correspond to the fountain noted by Gregoras.\textsuperscript{140} By contrast, no cave at Knossos presents these characteristics. The cave of Agia Irene (\textbf{fig. 9}) contains some large rooms but no spring or fountain.\textsuperscript{141} Yet, as we will see, it was the Agia Irene cave that was associated with Gregoras’ description by both Chatzidakis and Kalokairinos in the late 19th century C.E.

The anchoring of the Cretan Labyrinth to a specific location stabilized the memory of the place. The Ampelouzos cave has been widely identified with the labyrinth by travelers and

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\textsuperscript{139} Paragamian and Vasilakis 2002, 125–36.
\textsuperscript{140} Buondelmonti, in Legrand 1974, 130; Randolph 1687, 79; Pococke 1745, 254; Cockerel 1820, 406; Scott 1837, 275–76; Spratt 1865, 2:47; Raulin 1869, 586; Chatzidakis 1881, 34; contra Savary 1798, 223.
\textsuperscript{141} Kalokairinos reported water inside the cave (Kopaka 1989–1990, 21), and some seepage cannot be excluded, especially since the cave has never been explored systematically. There is a spring inside a different Knossian cave, that of Mavrospilio (see fig. 9), but this cave is very small and otherwise dissimilar to the description of Gregoras (Hood and Smyth 1981, 53–4, KS252).
cartographers since the Renaissance,\textsuperscript{142} and visits were organized for Venetian magistrates already in the early 15th century C.E.\textsuperscript{143} The cave would hereafter generate sensory and emotional experiences, especially amazement about its size and complexity and fear about not finding the way out.\textsuperscript{144} Many visitors recorded their visit on the walls of the cave, thus creating an impressive record of 1,200 inscriptions in the Room of the Table (fig. 10).\textsuperscript{145} These

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inscriptions document the affective impact of the monument, evoke memories of the distant and recent past, and materialize multiple time periods ranging from the Renaissance to the present.

Buondelmonti, who visited the cave in 1415–1416 C.E., noted that there were already some inscriptions on its walls, but he did not specify their date.\(^\text{146}\) Claude Étienne Savary (18th century C.E.), however, reported that the earliest inscriptions he traced dated from the 14th century C.E.\(^\text{147}\) Van der Vin has proposed that the beginning of this epigraphic practice, and more broadly of the revival of international interest in the Cretan Labyrinth, can be traced to the aftermath of the Cretan rebellion of 1363 C.E.\(^\text{148}\) The rebellion brought local Cretans and Venetian colonists together, in conflict with the Venetian administration, and this resulted in the amelioration of the relations between the two ethnic groups. The passage by Gregoras (who died ca. 1360 C.E.) suggests that foreign visitors to the cave began slightly earlier, but these were probably infrequent because of the numerous Cretan uprisings against the Venetians that followed the conquest of the island in 1205–1219 C.E. The proposed earlier beginning of visits to the Ampelouzos cave would explain the “long desire” of Agathangelos to visit the site.

The Cretan rebellion of 1363 C.E. was scorned by Petrarch, who was then resident at Venice. The founder of Humanism, however, expressed his admiration for the antiquity of Crete and cited the Cretan Labyrinth as a highlight, and his poetry often referred to the theme of

\(^{146}\) Buondelmonti, in Legrand 1974, 130.

\(^{147}\) Savary 1798, 222. See also Guarducci 1950; van der Vin 1980, 230.

\(^{148}\) van der Vin 1980, 232.
labyrinths. By the 15th century C.E., scholars based in Venice drew a conceptual link between the image of the impenetrable Cretan Labyrinth and the role of the island as a repository of ancient wisdom and a bastion against Ottoman expansion. The Venetian interest in the Cretan Labyrinth is linked to the concurrent rise of European antiquarianism and stimulated the spread of the concept of a labyrinth in western art and the creation of the first turf and garden mazes.

An antiquarian tradition also emerged among local, Creto-Venetian scholars during the Renaissance. Manifestations of this tradition include a eulogy for the ancient monuments of Hierapytina, the creation of the earliest known collection of Cretan antiquities, and not least the revival of local interest in the labyrinth. Francesco Barozzi, a Creto-Venetian from Rethymno, argued that the labyrinth was not the cave at Gortyn but a subterranean structure underlying the ruins of Knossos. Likewise, in his unfinished History of Crete (Historia Candiana), Ioannis Vergitsis, a scholar of the 16th century C.E. who was personally acquainted

\[\text{References}\]


150 Sassi 2012, 110–11.

151 On Renaissance antiquarianism, see Schnapp 1993, 121–77.


with Barozzi, argued against the localization of the labyrinth at Gortyn and proposed a different location.\textsuperscript{156} This location remains unspecified in the surviving summary of his text, but his reference to “the ancient and true labyrinth” and to a “demonstration based on very true and vital reasons” suggests this is at Knossos, the only other site with a strong claim on the labyrinth.\textsuperscript{157} Clearly, the fame that the Ampelouzos cave won in the Renaissance did not eliminate the claim of Knossos to the labyrinth.\textsuperscript{158} Nonetheless, the counter-memory developed by Creto-Venetian scholars was only recorded in manuscripts and so had a limited impact on later scholarship.\textsuperscript{159} This problem must have been aggravated by the Ottoman conquest of Crete in 1669 C.E.; hence it comes as no surprise that Onorio Belli in the 16th century C.E., Richard Pococke in the 17th, and Charles Nicola Sigisbert Sonnini de Mancocourt in the 18th overlooked the relevant

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\textsuperscript{156} Lydaki 1999, 260 n. 171; Kaklamanis 2004, 132 n. 146, 215 n. 91. Lydaki reports that Vergitsis’ text survives in unpublished fragments in the codex Venetus Marcianus Italicus, vii 648 (8067), 38v (Biblioteca Marciana, Venice).
\textsuperscript{157} Kaklamanis 2004, 132 n. 146: “L’antico e verace Labirinto” and “Con verissime e vive raggioni si dimostra.”
\textsuperscript{158} Ca. 1440 C.E., Pero Tafur was told that the Cretan Labyrinth lies 3 miles away from Knossos (Jiménez de la Espada 1995, 37; cf. van der Vin 1980, 54, 231, 692; Kopaka 2004, 501; D’Agata 2009, 373; 2010, 63), but he may be referring to the location of the Ampelouzos cave in the vicinity of Gnosia (cf. Cornelius 1755, 1:14).
\textsuperscript{159} D’Agata 2009, 376; 2010, 65.
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references and reported that no remains of the labyrinth were visible at Knossos. Creto-Venetian antiquarianism in general and local interest in the labyrinth in particular revived, however, in the late 19th century C.E. with the work of Kalokairinos.

**<A> MONUMENTS AND MEMORIES OF CRETAN LABYRINTHS IN THE MODERN ERA**

The Cretan Labyrinth seems not to have attracted the attention of Ottoman scholars, including Evliya Çelebi who discussed the island at length. An exception is the *History of the City of Philosophers* (1715 C.E.) by Mahmud Efendi, an Ottoman mufti of Athens. This work involved a didactic retelling of the deeds of Seseya (i.e., Theseus), including his travel to Crete, where he defeated the manlike dragon Manutu and closed him in an unnamed dungeon. More creative is a Cretan folk tale of this period, which provides a rare insight into local interpretations of the labyrinth. According to an anonymous priest whom Joseph Pitton de Tournefort met at Vrysses (Amari) in 1700 C.E., the walls of the Cretan Labyrinth (most probably the Ampelouzos cave) were inscribed with two ancient prophecies. The first, which decreed that Crete would fall to

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160 For Belli see Falkener 1854, 24; and Beschi 2000, 15. Also, Pococke 1745, 256; Sonnini de Manoncourt 1801, 1:447–48; cf. Kopaka 2004, 501–5. Ludovico Pascale (16th century C.E.) notes that he visited the labyrinth but does not give its location (Vincent 2000, 742–43, who suggests that Gortyn is meant).


163 Tunali 2014. I thank Marinos Sariyannis and Antonis Anastasopoulos for this reference.

the Ottomans, had been fulfilled. Indeed, a Greek had revealed it to the Ottoman vizier during his siege of Heraklion. The second inscription prophesized that the czar of Moscow would conquer the Ottoman empire and liberate the Greeks. De Tournefort responded to the priest by regretting his “ignorance pitoyable” (sic) and noting, “[C]es bonnes gens prennent pour les prophéties les caractéres dont les étrangers barbouillent les murailles de ce lieu.”

This condescending reaction is symptomatic of western attitudes toward local counter-hegemonic interpretations of antiquities in Ottoman Greece. Indeed, de Tournefort’s text is revealing of a powerful set of binary oppositions: named foreigner versus anonymous local, knowledge versus ignorance, writing versus hearsay, rationality versus irrationality. Nevertheless, the counter-memory of the “ignorant” priest adheres to the Venetian concept of the Cretan Labyrinth as a repository of knowledge and as a politically charged monument. The political overtones of the labyrinth would resurface at the end of the 19th century C.E.

Localizations of the Cretan Labyrinth at Knossos revived early in the 19th century C.E., mostly by chance. On his way to the Ampelouzos cave in 1811, Charles Robert Cockerel was forced into a detour through Knossos, about which he noted, “along the side of the road, which then led us southward into some rocky passes, we observed a vast number of catacombs.” Cockerel did

165 de Tournefort 1718, 28: “These good people take as prophesies the writings that foreigners inscribe on the walls of the site.”

166 Hamilakis 2011; Anderson 2015.

167 Cockerel 1820, 404.
not connect these “catacombs” (probably the rock-cut tombs at Spilia; see fig. 9)\textsuperscript{168} with the labyrinth, but the insertion of this reference in his 1820 essay titled “The Labyrinth of Crete” was enough to attract interest in them. In the 1830s, Robert Pashley expressed his disbelief in the existence of the labyrinth at Knossos but also explained that the caves at Spilia recalled the mythical monument.\textsuperscript{169} Slightly later, Captain Thomas Spratt assumed that the labyrinth could have been a subterranean quarry near the ancient city. Spratt added, possibly with reference to a cavernous quarry in the area of Spilia:\textsuperscript{170}

\begin{quote}<EXT>And there is, in fact, an excavation in the side of the ridge overlooking the site of Gnossus, on the east side of the Makri Teikion rivulet, that is said by the natives to be the entrance to extensive catacombs, which, however, have become choked up by the falling in of its sides, and cannot be explored. The sides of the cavernous excavations have, indeed, several votive niches and tombs, and were first noticed in Walpole’s work, by Mr. Cockerel.</EXT>

The identification of the Knossian labyrinth with one of the caves in the vicinity of the ancient city was pursued more extensively by Chatzidakis and Kalokairinos, who offer valuable but

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[168] Hood and Smyth 1981, 61, KS361.
\item[170] Spratt 1865, 2:65–6 (cf. 51). This quarry lies east of Hood and Smyth 1981, 61, KS359, and is illustrated in Papageorgakis and Mposkos 1988. I thank Todd Whitelaw for this suggestion.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
largely overlooked perspectives on a discourse that is otherwise dominated by non-Cretans. It is uncertain whether the antiquarian interests of the two scholars preserve memories of Creto-Venetian scholarship, but these interests were certainly facilitated by the pact of Chalepa of 1878, which granted privileges to the Christian Cretans,\textsuperscript{171} and by the formation of the autonomous Cretan State in 1898. These developments and the discovery of the palace of Knossos by Kalokairinos (1878) stimulated deeper local interest in the antiquity of the island, emblematic expressions of which include the use of the image of the maze from ancient Knossian coins (see figs. 7b, c) for bank notes of the newly established Bank of Crete (\textbf{fig. 11}) and for seals and commercial logos of the time,\textsuperscript{172} as well as the printing of Cretan postcards showing the entrance to the Ampelouzos cave.\textsuperscript{173} By largely covering the time of the autonomous Cretan State (1899–1913), this local emphasis on the labyrinth reaffirms the monument’s political overtones and suggests its metamorphosis into a \textit{lieu de mémoire},\textsuperscript{174} a realm of national memory for the Cretans, which was increasingly anchored to the newly excavated palace of Knossos. Notably, this local emphasis peaked on the single occasion after antiquity when the island was self-governed.

\textsuperscript{171} On Cretan antiquities after the pact, see Kopaka 1989–1990, 8–9; Sakellarakis 1998, 131–65.

\textsuperscript{172} Traeger 1996, 30–1; Sidiropoulos 2004, 657–58.

\textsuperscript{173} Traeger 1996, 84.

Chatzidakis and Kalokairinos associated specific caves with the Cretan Labyrinth, and both also engaged with the account of Gregoras; however, they did not cite the work from which it came, and they erroneously identified the author as Gregorios Phokas or Nikephoros Phokas.\footnote{Gregorios Phokas: Chatzidakis 1881, 35; Kalokairinos 1906–1907, 51; Kopaka 1989–1990, 21, 31. Nikephoros Phokas: Kalokairinos 1906–1907, 6, 32. The error persists in Kopaka 1989–1990, 65–6 nn. 42, 49; Galanaki 2002, 69.}

In his quest for the Cretan Labyrinth, Chatzidakis visited the Ampelouzos cave and two caves at Knossos, one by the Kairatos river and one at Agia Irene.\footnote{Chatzidakis 1881, 17–9, 32–40. For his visit to the Ampelouzos cave, see Xanthopoulou 2008, 110–15; cf. Paragamian and Vasilakis 2002, 16; Paragamian et al. 2004, 6.} He was convinced that none of these caves was the mythological labyrinth and that all were ancient stone quarries.\footnote{Chatzidakis 1881, 37.} Although Chatzidakis described the Knossian caves only briefly, he considered them more beautiful than the Ampelouzos cave and suggested that one of them, probably Agia Irene, was the one visited by Agathangelos.\footnote{Chatzidakis 1881, 35.} Chatzidakis described the first cave, Speliara, as follows:\footnote{Chatzidakis 1881, 17.}

\begin{quote}
<EXT>Ca. 100 steps [βήματα] away from Knossos, on the left bank of river Kairatos, many ancient Greek graves are located. Most of them are within small caves, each containing three tombs: a tomb on the back wall was flanked by two tombs on the sides.
\end{quote}
Slightly higher than these caves there is a large cave, which is called Speliara by the locals, and has a width of 24 steps and a length of 27 steps. Two thick pillars in the middle support the roof. Thirty tombs were found inside this cave. Traces of better-shaped, rock-cut caves are visible on the opposite side of the river, together with traces of rock-cut staircases. The river has, however, destroyed these features so much that we cannot tell if these caves contained subterranean graves or served a different purpose.

</EXT>

The route of Chatzidakis is not easy to map. His reference point must be the ruins of the palace uncovered by Kalokairinos, which is the only ancient monument he discusses prior to this passage. The features “on the left bank of river Kairatos” should probably be located east of the palace, but the existence of the mysterious Speliara and other tombs in this area comes as a surprise. However, the rock-cut tombs and staircases located by Chatzidakis on the other side of the river closely match features in the area of the Minoan cemetery of Ailias (see fig. 9). Nonetheless, Whitelaw considers that the passage may refer to the area of Spilia and that Speliara may be the cave mentioned by Spratt, in which case the distance given by Chatzidakis is incorrect. In any case, the reference by the Cretan scholar to the cave complex at Agia Irene (fig. 12) is much clearer.

180 Only a Minoan terrace wall (Hood and Smyth 1981, 53, KS240) has been excavated there.


182 Todd Whitelaw (pers. comm.) 2017.

183 Chatzidakis 1881, 17–9. The cave complex of Agia Irene is private property. I have visited
Not far from this location, by the village of Agia Irene, there is a large cave that some erroneously call the Knossian labyrinth. Even a superficial examination suggests that this was nothing but a stone quarry.

A broad and tall cave leads to a square area with a side of ca. 25 steps. The roof of the cave follows the contours of the rock, which is white sandstone, and is supported by a thick pillar, which was spared from quarrying. Next to this first cave there is a second, slightly larger, that communicates with the first through a broad entrance, which seems low because of the accumulation of soil, but was once high. This second cave leads to a third, very deep cave, which is very dark. This cave is twice as large as the other two. The roof of this cave is supported by four pillars, the sides of which are 1 fathom broad [ca. 1.8 m].

The sides of the caves are cut vertically, and channels and small notations of scale suggest the extraction of square blocks. In the innermost part of the deepest and largest cave there is a pit that is ca. two meters deep, three meters long, and somewhat smaller in width. It is clear that square blocks, appropriate for building, were cut from here, and quarrying debris from the cut blocks abounds. No usable stone blocks, however, remain in the caves, apparently because the inhabitants of nearby villages removed them.

The outermost part, which may correspond to the first two caves of Chatzidakis. His third, largest cave is locked, but Whitelaw largely confirms his description and notes that there are cement-blocked passages in several directions. I thank Todd Whitelaw for guiding my visit to the site.
Chatzidakis’ ideas and his account of the cave at Agia Irene, which is probably the earliest currently known, influenced the slightly later writings of Kalokairinos. Kalokairinos also visited different caves at Knossos in addition to the Ampelouzos cave.\textsuperscript{184} He was convinced that the labyrinth was at Knossos and wrote a book by this name (\textit{Ὁ Κνώσσιος Λαβύρινθος}).\textsuperscript{185} This work is now lost, but glimpses into Kalokairinos’ ideas are offered by other authors, the earliest of whom is Evans, who visited Agia Irene on 24 April 1894, together with Kalokairinos and Federico Halbherr. The notebook of Evans refers to an “underground quarry of Knossos – which also passes as ‘Labyrinth’”; the monument is described as follows:\textsuperscript{186}

\begin{verbatim}<EXT>The entrance to the quarry imposing – there are in fact several & one or more on the other side of the hill. We went along several great tunnels but not deeper than about 200 metres. There had been falls from the roof which barred further progress but according to Minôs [Kalokairinos] it extends 3000 m.! has a square form & a great Central Chamber. He implicitly believes it to be the Labyrinth. The Mahometan owner told us a tale of a calf that entered at the end & after 6 months came out at the other side\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{184} He reports he visited the last site in 1864 (Kalokairinos 1906–1907, 21; Kopaka 1989–1990, 43), but the inscription he wrote on the walls of the cave reads 9/7/1861 (Paragamian and Vasilakis 2002, 34, fig. 24; Paragamian et al. 2004, 6, 27, 46).

\textsuperscript{185} Mentioned in Kalokairinos 1939, unnumbered introductory page; cf. Kotsonas 2016, 300.

\textsuperscript{186} Brown and Bennett 2001, 185, 189; cf. MacGillivray 2000, 131.
of the hill—but its hair had turned quite white! I have met this kind of story in
Dalmatia.</EXT>

This passage indicates that Kalokairinos was convinced about the identification of the cave complex of Agia Irene with the Cretan Labyrinth. He showed the same confidence in a manuscript he composed in French ca. 1900 ("Fouilles à Cnossos faites par M. Calocherinos"), which reads, “Je suppose que j’ai été assez heureux d’avoir découvert le Labyrinthe de Cnossos.” Kalokairinos also indicated this localization of the labyrinth on a sketch map of Knossos that accompanied the manuscript (fig. 13). In this manuscript, Kalokairinos noted that he visited Agia Irene with the French archaeologist Joseph Demargne only a few days after 25 August 1898, when an Ottoman mob, reacting to the implementation of the newly established autonomy of Crete, murdered hundreds of Christians at Heraklion, including Kalokairinos’ brother and his first-born son, and destroyed his mansion and archaeological collection. The timing of the visit is highly relevant to his passion for the antiquities of Knossos and of his resolution to promote them.

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188 Cf. Kopaka 1995, pl. 52; Kotsonas 2016, 303, fig. 2.

Kalokairinos provides further information on the labyrinth in different issues of the *Cretan Archaeological Journal*, which he was publishing in the last months of his life.\(^{190}\) Here he compiled ancient references to the Cretan Labyrinth\(^ {191}\) and expressed his disagreement with Stillman’s identification of the mythical monument with the palace of Knossos.\(^ {192}\) Elsewhere, perhaps in his lost book (*Ὁ Κνώσσιος Λαβύρινθος*), the Cretan antiquarian called this identification “misguided” and “erroneous” and accused Stillman and Evans of “inadequate knowledge of the ancient authors.”\(^ {193}\) Kalokairinos put forward his own identifications of the labyrinth with the cave of Agia Irene and, alternatively, with a cave at Spilia, without settling on one of the two. He also remained uncertain which of these two caves was the one visited by Agathangelos.\(^ {194}\) In the first issue of the journal, Kalokairinos placed the labyrinth “at the site of Agia Irene, by a watermill owned by Ibrahim Baba Afedakakis, in the property of the lawyer Mr. Antonios Chatzidakis.” He goes on to describe the site:\(^ {195}\)

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\(^ {190}\) *Kalokairinos 1906–1907*, 6, 21, 31–2, 51. The journal was published once a fortnight from mid September 1906 to mid January 1907. The numbering of pages is continuous across the different issues. The British School at Athens and the Historical Archive of Crete at Chania hold full copies of the Journal and I have consulted the copy in Athens.


\(^ {192}\) *Kalokairinos 1906–1907*, 21.

\(^ {193}\) As reported by Odysseus Kalokairinos (1939, 82), son of Minos.

\(^ {194}\) *Kalokairinos 1906–1907*, 6, 32 (Spilia), 51 (Agia Irene).

\(^ {195}\) *Kalokairinos 1906–1907*, 6.
This is a large, rock-cut cave located at a distance of 2 km from Knossos ... The low hills that overlie the cave extend from Agia Irene to Phoinikia. The entrance to the cave is at Agia Irene and the exit at Phoinikia, and the distance between the two is ca. 2 km. I visited this cave and I assume that most probably this was the Knossian Labyrinth. I am convinced that the architect Daidalos . . ., who was called from Athens by King Minos, constructed two great works at the same time: the quarries of Knossos, that is the Knossian Labyrinth, and the palace of King Minos I, which was built with material from the quarries. . . . Nowadays it is difficult for anyone to move into the Labyrinth because of the collapse of the roof in certain spots following the great earthquake of 1856. The collapsed material blocks access to the inner part. An old popular anecdote that survives to the present reaffirms that 50 years earlier (1850) a cow entered the cave at Agia Irene and exited one year later at Phoinikia. The marks \[\text{ἀποτυπώματα}\] from the tools that were used for the carving of the stone, namely of the double axe, which is rendered on blocks from the palace, explain why the place was called the Labyrinth. According to the Carian dialect, the axe was named \textit{laven (λαβήν)} [sic] and the naming of the cave as Labyrinth suggests this was carved by the \textit{laven}. 

Clearly, Kalokairinos is here influenced by Evans’ identification of the \textit{labrys} with the double axe, and its association with the labyrinth, which he places at Agia Irene. Later issues of the journal return to this localization of the labyrinth, to the tooling marks at Agia Irene, to the use of
the site as a quarry for the building of the palace, and to the catastrophic earthquake of 1856.\textsuperscript{196} Kalokairinos, however, also adds: “The sign [σημεῖον] of the double axe that was carved on blocks and gypsum blocks from the palace and on the roof of the rock-cut Labyrinth . . . at the site of Agia Irene convinced me that this is the famous Knossian Labyrinth.”\textsuperscript{197} Likewise: “In the Labyrinth I found signs [σημεῖα] of the double axe, which are visible on the stones [of the palace].”\textsuperscript{198} The reference to these signs is notable and cannot be explained away as a problem in the terminology used by Kalokairinos;\textsuperscript{199} it is either an invaluable report on the date and use of the cave at Agia Irene, or the outcome of slippery deductive reasoning, which transformed the tooling marks assumed to be from the double axe into representations of this instrument.\textsuperscript{200} Minoan inscribed signs representing double axes are ascribed religious or practical functions; they are typically found on the stone blocks of Minoan palaces but are very rarely seen on other architecture,\textsuperscript{201} and they are unknown in Cretan quarries. It is disquieting that no scholar other

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Kalokairinos 1906–1907, 21, 51 (Agia Irene); 51 (Phoinikia); 21, 31–2, 51 (quarry); 51 (earthquake); cf. Kopaka 1989–1990, 33, 37–8. On the earthquake and the collapse (of 1850 or 1856), see Kalokairinos 1906–1907, 6, 51; Kopaka 1989–1990, 20. Phoinikia has produced Bronze Age and Early Iron Age remains, especially tombs (Galanaki and Papadaki 2009).}
\footnote{Kalokairinos 1906–1907, 21.}
\footnote{Kalokairinos 1906–1907, 51.}
\footnote{Examples of such problems are mentioned in Kotsonas 2016, 307 n. 21, 311, 317.}
\footnote{For the sole known instance in which Kalokairinos introduced an otherwise nonexistent piece of evidence, see Kotsonas 2016, 310–11.}
\footnote{Shaw 1971, 109–11; 2009, 76–9; Begg 2004.}
\end{footnotes}
than Kalokairinos has reported such marks at Agia Irene, though the cave has never been adequately explored. Evans, who was reportedly shown the signs by Kalokairinos, never mentioned them, although he agreed with the Cretan scholar that Agia Irene was a Minoan quarry. More recently, Shaw expressed reservations about the use of the quarry in Minoan times, and Hood suggested a Roman or later date. The uncertainty about the signs of the double axe would probably be resolved if Kalokairinos’ Ὀ Κνώσσιος Λαβύρινθος could be found. I think, however, that if Kalokairinos was confident about the existence of the signs he would have mentioned them in the French manuscript, and he would not have proposed the alternative localization of the labyrinth at a cave at Spilia.

Scholarship has missed Kalokairinos’ alternative localization of the labyrinth at Spilia. As he emphasizes, this cave was unknown until 1885, hence it cannot be identified with any of the caves mentioned by earlier visitors. The same cave may have been rediscovered in the 1970s, but remains poorly known. In Kalokairinos’ account:

\[202\] Cf. Kalokairinos 1939, 19, with Evans 1921, 532–33; 1928, 62. On the use of the cave in Minoan times, see also Heaton 1911, 700; Papageorgakis and Mposkos 1988.

\[203\] See, respectively, Shaw 1971, 38–40; 2009, 34–5; Hood and Smyth 1981, 27.


\[206\] Kalokairinos 1906–1907, 6.
A hole was found in the foothills of this rocky hill [Spilia] in the year 1885, that is seven years after my excavations, when Nousouret Alibabadakis was mayor of Heraklion. The hole leads into a man-made, labyrinthine cave, which extends a great distance from the entrance. No systematic exploration was conducted because the hole was sealed in accordance with an order by the governor of Heraklion. . . . [I]t is highly possible that the Knossian Labyrinth underlies Spilia, and the cave in question ought to be explored to confirm whether this is the Knossian Labyrinth.

In a later issue of the journal, Kalokairinos added:

The people who entered the cave in 1885 describe that they proceeded to the interior and found a large space, which opened into two corridors which they could not enter because the roof had collapsed and blocked the way. This is confirmed by the fact that the surface of the hill has receded on that spot. Undoubtedly this cave extends to a great distance, as far as the opposite hill of Prophetes Ilias, because the latter hill has a sinkhole, which was visited and was found to have reeds that were moving with the wind. It would not take great expenses to conduct systematic explorations in the cave to confirm whether this is the Cretan Labyrinth, the famous work of Daedalus. I estimate that ten thousand (10,000) drachmas would be enough.

Kalokairinos 1906–1907, 32. The features mentioned are indeterminate.
It is ironic that while Kalokairinos was searching for the labyrinth around Knossos, some influential voices argued that he had already discovered it at his excavations of 1878. As previously mentioned, Stillman first proposed the identification of the labyrinth with the palace of Knossos in 1881. Kalokairinos rejected this idea and indirectly implicated Stillman’s name in a curious incident in which the sign of the double axe was cut off from one of the stone blocks at the palace.208 Chatzidakis and other Cretans were also skeptical about Stillman’s idea,209 and Evans did not fully embrace it until after his first few seasons of fieldwork. However, the identification of the palace with the labyrinth has prevailed since, and scholarship has marginalized, if not eclipsed, the counter-memory and alternative discourse developed by Cretan antiquarians.210 As Gere has observed, “The Labyrinth [i.e., the palace] of Minos was one of the sensations of the age and became . . . a site across which some of the most urgent political, spiritual, and aesthetic questions of the early twentieth century were asked and answered.”211

The modern discourse about the identification of the Cretan Labyrinth has developed more openly outside academia. For example, in Ariadne’s Children, the British scholar Roderick Beaton embraces the ideas of Evans, while in the Century of the Labyrinths, the Cretan novelist Castleden 1990.

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209 Chatzidakis 1881, 116; Nouchakis 1903, 110, 130.

210 Evans (1921, 532–33) quickly dismissed the association of Agia Irene with the labyrinth without explaining its basis or naming its supporters.

211 Gere 2009, 5. For a recent emphatic identification of the palace with the labyrinth, see Castleden 1990.
Rea Galanaki adopts Kalokairinos’ suggestion of Agia Irene.\textsuperscript{212} Conversely, oral histories recorded in the Messara perpetuate a counter-memory focused on the Ampelouzos cave.\textsuperscript{213} These histories focus on the use of this cave during the German occupation of Crete for the storage of ammunition and supplies, and they emphasize the huge workforce that the Nazis employed in it. Some of these histories also record the visit of an unnamed archaeologist in 1942, perhaps Friedrich Matz, who coordinated the German archaeological work in occupied Crete.\textsuperscript{214} Before their departure, the Nazis covered up their operations by detonating a massive explosion that destroyed part of the cave (online fig. 3) and inspired colorful stories among the local inhabitants about the removal of precious ancient artifacts. The ammunition left by the Nazis inside the cave attracted local villagers in search of profit, and these searches triggered a second explosion that caused human casualties—the only known victims of the Cretan Labyrinth. This incident brought about safety measures that made the site inaccessible. The Nazi ammunition, however, also inspired the final act in the drama of the Cretan Labyrinth. During the Cold War, there were allegations that a weapons cache was concealed in the Ampelouzos cave by the “Red Sheepspring” (Κόκκινη Προβιά), the shadowy paramilitary force organized by NATO in Greece for protection against the communist threat.\textsuperscript{215} Whether as an arsenal for the Nazis or as a safe house for anti-

\textsuperscript{212} Beaton 1995, 52, 131, 255; Galanaki 2002, 28–9, 68–70, 168.


\textsuperscript{214} Xanthopoulos 2008, 219; cf. Paragamian and Vasilakis 2002, 118. The suggestion of Matz (1890–1974) relies on the age reported (ca. 65 years) and also on references to a German named Antz (Paragamian and Vasilakis 2002, 135; cf. 137–38); see Matz 1951; Flouda 2017.

\textsuperscript{215} Paragamian and Vasilakis 2002, 110, 143.
communist militias, the Ampelouzos cave reaffirms the persisting, notional, but occasionally also pragmatic centrality of the Cretan Labyrinth for the political history of the island.

**CONCLUSION**

The Cretan Labyrinth, like the structure of the Dragon’s Mound that was entered by Beowulf, or the legendary monuments of the Holy Land studied by Halbwachs, is best conceived not only as a tangible but also as an imagined landmark. As such it cannot be fully approached through the quests for its excavation and identification but requires also the systematic study of the range of discursive and material regimes of truth with which it became imbued through time.

The present study has drawn from a wide range of stories related to—or originating from—the eclectic cast of characters that populate the cultural history of the Cretan Labyrinth: legendary kings and heroes, conquerors and refugees, western scholars and professional archaeologists, but—significantly—also local antiquarians and anonymous informants. Based on the memory and counter-memory that pervade these stories, I have demonstrated the exceptional capacity of the Cretan Labyrinth for metamorphosis from abstract memory (in antiquity) to physical monument (in the late Medieval period); also, I have traced its relocation from Knossos to Gortyn and back during the Medieval to modern period, and I have argued for its development into a Cretan lieu de mémoire in the early 20th century C.E.

This cultural history of the Cretan Labyrinth reaffirms the argument of Halbwachs that social memory is primarily aimed at serving the agendas of the present, rather than at preserving the affairs of the past. The ebb and flow of Cretan and foreign interest in—and memory of—the
labyrinth can be closely related to the political history of the island. Diachronically, this monument attracted most attention shortly after the annexation of the island by various overseas powers, including Rome, the Byzantine Empire, Venice, and—to a lesser extent—the kingdom of Greece and Nazi Germany. By contrast, the interest of the Cretans themselves in the labyrinth is most notable in the rare periods of political autonomy, namely at the times of the ancient city-states and the modern Cretan state. At all times, however, the Cretan Labyrinth emerges as an iconic monument in the island’s cultural history.

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Figures

FIG. 1. Map of Crete with sites mentioned in the text (drawing by J. Wallrodt).

FIG. 2. Plan of the palace of Knossos, with star showing the location of the Labyrinth Fresco. (after Hackens and Vanschoonwinkel 1990, 76; courtesy J. Vanschoonwinkel).
FIG. 3. Stillman’s sketches of two parts of the palace of Knossos that were excavated by Kalokairinos, with the location of signs of the double axe indicated (Stillman 1881). The floor plan of the palace is juxtaposed to a version of the maze shown on Knossian coins.

FIG. 4. Four Minoan seals showing a maze or a bull-man (Evans 1921, 358, fig. 260).


FIG. 6. Interior of Attic red-figure kylix (ca. 440–430 B.C.E.), attributed to the Codrus Painter, showing a colonnaded edifice associated with the Minotaur. London, British Museum, inv. no. 1850,0302.3 (BAPD, no. 217213). (© The Trustees of the British Museum).

FIG. 7. The labyrinth on Knossian coins: a, silver didrachmon with the Minotaur holding a stone(?), and a cross-shaped maze, 425–375 B.C.E., inv. no. 1966.453.2333; b, silver stater with the head of Hera or Ariadne, and a rectangular maze with the inscription ΚΝΩΣΙΩΝ (of the Knossians), 300–280 B.C.E., inv. no. 1973.1.115; c, silver tetradrachm with the head of Apollo and the name of the magistrate ΠΟΛΧΟΣ, and a circular maze, end of second century B.C.E., inv. no. Luynes 2336; d, silver drachma with the head of Apollo, and Minos or Zeus seated on a rectangular maze with the inscription ΚΝΩΣΙΩΝ, 280–270 B.C.E., inv. no. Fonds général 84 (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Monnaies, médailles et antiques; courtesy Gallica BnF [not to scale]).
FIG. 8. Image and plan of the Ampelouzos cave in the vicinity of Gortyn (Spratt 1865, 2:49).

FIG. 9. Map of the area of Knossos with locations mentioned in the text. KS numbers from Hood and Smyth 1981 (drawing by V. Antoniadis).

FIG. 10. Inscriptions in the Room of the Table of the Ampelouzos cave (Xanthopoulos 2008, 146; courtesy A. Xanthopoulos).

FIG. 11. Early 20th-century C.E. bank notes from the Bank of Crete reproducing images of the Cretan Labyrinth as depicted on ancient Knossian coins: top, 100 drachmas, issued in 1901, front and back; bottom, 25 drachmas, issued in 1915, front and back. Historical Archive of the National Bank of Greece, Banknotes Collection ETE, inv. nos. 23057 and 30832, respectively (courtesy the Historical Archive [not to scale]).

FIG. 12. One of the entrances to the cave of Agia Irene (author).

FIG. 13. Sketch map of the Knossos area produced by Minos Kalokairinos ca. 1900, placing the Cretan Labyrinth at Agia Irene; other locations indicated include (counterclockwise): the cemetery of Spilia, the Vlychia stream, the Kephala hill (with the “Royal palace of king Minos”), the Kairatos river, the Makryteichos village, the Makryteichos wall, a low hill, a cemetery, and Fortezza; the centrally located labels designate a grand street, the ancient theater and Roman ruins (courtesy Ephorate of Antiquities of Heraklion).
Online Figures

Fig. 1. Commercial poster for Coca-Cola commercial in Crete in summer 2017, showing various themes inspired by Cretan, especially Knossian, mythology and art; the design of the Taureador Fresco from the palace of Knossos (Evans 1930, fig. 144) is transformed to render a labyrinth on the body of the bull (© 2017 The Coca-Cola Company. All rights reserved).

Fig. 2. Early fifth-century Attic black-figure lekythos, attributed to the Beldam Painter, showing the Minotaur next to a structure. Athens, National Museum, inv. no. 1061 (CC 878; ABL, no. 268.54; BAPD, no. 352150) (Cook 1914, 474).

Fig. 3. Crater created by the explosion detonated by the Nazis inside the Ampelouzos cave (Xanthopoulos 2008, 33; courtesy A. Xanthopoulos).

Works Cited


Images have been edited to approximate publication size; some additional resizing may be necessary during article composition.

Kotsonas Fig-01

Kotsonas Fig-02
Plan of the Labyrinth of Gortyn.

A. B. Entrance to the quarry now filled up.
C. The corridor here is obstructed by blocks of stone and chips: an entrance must have existed in the rear part.
D. A communication with the interior must have existed here.
E. A small cistern near by the site of principal entrance.
Open Access Image Gallery

Kotsonas Online Fig-01