Elite Minoan Architecture

Its Development at Knossos, Phaistos, and Malia



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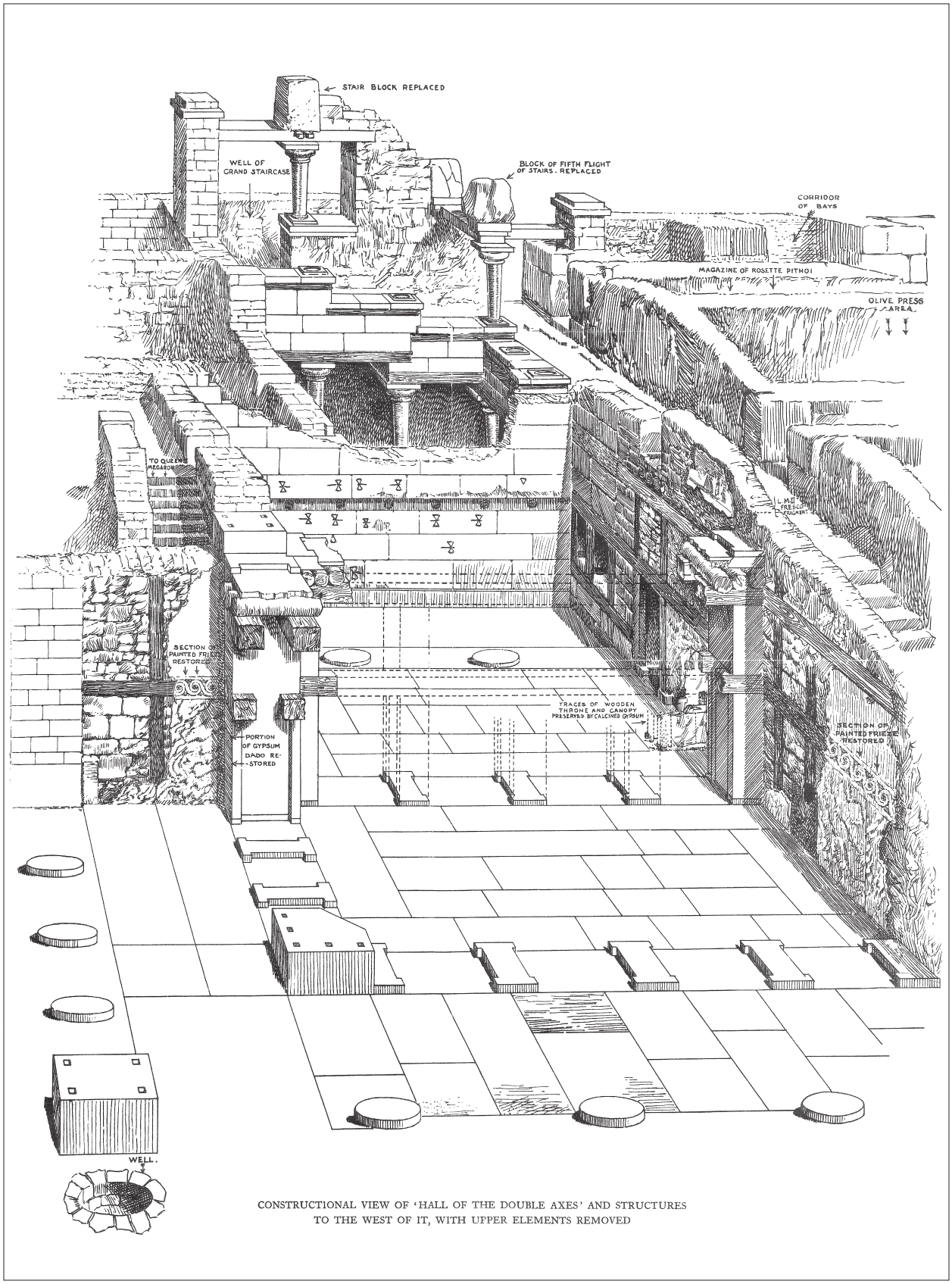

CONSTRUCTIONAL VIEW OF 'HALL OF THE DOUBLE AXES' AND STRUCTURES TO THE WEST OF IT, WITH UPPER ELEMENTS REMOVED

Frontispiece. Knossos palace, Residential Quarters, looking west in the Hall of the Double Axes. Evans 1921–1935, III, plan G.

PREHISTORY MONOGRAPHS 49

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by

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Dedicated to the pioneers
in Minoan archaeology

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Introduction and Acknowledgments

When I wrote *Minoan Architecture: Materials and Techniques* (hereafter *MA:MAT*) in the late 1960s,[1] I had only five, fortunately rich, years of fieldwork in Crete, chiefly at the Kato Zakros excavations under the direction of Nicholas Platon. Although I had visited many sites and met many of the excavators, that first edition of *MA:MAT* was more a simple description of the basic ways and means of construction used by Minoan architects than an attempt to reveal the chronological relationships, differences, or similarities in construction within and between sites.

Years of teaching at the University of Toronto and, in particular, the process of excavating and publishing the site of Kommos from 1976 to 2011 exposed me to many aspects of the challenge of trying to interrelate sites and their surrounding areas during the Minoan floruit. These experiences aided the long process of revising *MA:MAT* after 2006, and it was published as a monograph (rather than a very long article) in 2009.[2] The book was brought up to date, often with the help of others, and a new chapter was added that deals with a few aspects of development, the work force for building, and the appearance of the Minoan architectural style abroad. In its new form I hoped it was an improvement.

That second edition also set the scene for this book, the aims of which differ substantially from its predecessor. Specifically, my goal here is to trace the development of elite Minoan architectural forms that arose during the late Protopalatial and early Neopalatial periods—Middle Minoan (MM) II and MM III—which come before and after, respectively, a destructive event. The event most likely was an earthquake, or a series of earthquakes, that occurred toward the end of MM II. Any attempt to study architectural developments chronologically automatically encounters problems because our dating is usually only an estimate based on incomplete evidence. With architecture, transitional