



AEGEAN LECTURES

Friday 6 March 2026, 19:00

Swedish Institute at Athens (Mitseon 9, Acropolis Metro station)

Domestic structure and kinship relations through an archaeological approach: The case of the Strong Building and the Minoan settlement of Kato Zakros

Maria Kyritsi (Dr of Archaeology)



Aerial photo of the Strong Building, from the SE.

The so-called “Strong Building” is one of the largest and most significant buildings of the Minoan settlement at Kato Zakros and has yielded a rich assemblage of artifacts. Recently, the study of its architectural features and movable finds was completed and has highlighted its distinctive layout and internal organization, the function of its rooms and the range of activities that took place within, thus offering a starting point for studying the composition and the character of the domestic group that inhabited it. Through the combined analysis of other domestic units from the same settlement, a composite picture emerges of a community that displays both similarities in structure and variation in the ways of expression and interaction. This presentation focuses on the analysis of the material remains from the Strong Building and

attempts an archaeological approach to the concepts of household, Oikos and kinship, seeking to reconstruct forms of social organization and the dynamics of the Neopalatial society.

A few words about the speaker

Maria Kyritsi studied Archaeology at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, where she completed both her postgraduate studies and her PhD thesis on the form and character of the basic social unit in Neopalatial Crete, with particular emphasis on the settlement of Kato Zakros. She has taught the course "Minoan Art" at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. At the same time, she is active in academic publishing, having undertaken the editorial work for the first volume of the publication of the Zakros Excavations, carried out under the auspices of the Archaeological Society at Athens, as well as for the proceedings of the first International Conference on Cycladic studies organized by the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Cyclades. She has participated in excavations, field surveys, and material studies at a range of Aegean sites, including Akrotiri on Thera, Mycenae, Aspis at Argos, Mesorachi, Sopata, Livari-Skiadi and Gaidourophas on Crete. She has also worked on the supervision of trial trenches in collaboration with the Ephorate of Antiquities of Piraeus and Islands, and on the digitization of the collections of the Hellenic National Archaeological Museum in collaboration with the Directorate for the Management of the National Archive of Monuments. Since 2009, she has been a regular member of the Zakros Excavations Programme, directed by Professor Lefteris Platon. Within this framework, she has published a number of articles on the material culture and social organization of the site, and she continues to contribute on the ongoing work towards the publication of the palace and the domestic assemblages at Zakros.