
Water management at Pseira, Crete, in the Late Bronze Age

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Abstract

Pseira is a small offshore island in the Aegean Sea near the northeastern coast of Crete. It was inhabited during the Minoan period from ca. 3000 BC to about 1200 BC. As the climate of this part of the Aegean became dryer during the second millennium BC, the residents built a complex water management system to catch and store rain water. The system was constructed in two ravines near agricultural terraces. Each ravine had a large stone and soil dam built as a massive double wall between the sides of the ravine with the space between the walls filled with packed soil and stones. Both uphill and downhill from the dams were smaller informal check-dams to slow the water flow and save smaller amounts of water.

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