Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Setting the stage: in search of Greek houses and households.
In 1788 the Abbé Jean-Jacques Barthélemy (1716-1795) published the first edition of his opus magnum: *Le Voyage du jeune Anacharsis*. This fictional work appeared at the height of the ‘return to Antiquity’ movement and is a travel narrative, describing Greece through the eyes of Anacharsis, a young Scythian living in the 4th century BCE. The four richly illustrated volumes became an instant hit. Not only were they widely read in France, translations appeared in all major European languages and the work was reprinted in many editions.\(^1\)

Barthélemy, whose intention it was to publish an accessible work on ancient Greek civilization, spent at least 30 years writing his masterpiece. The work had much in common with 18th century CE travel literature and was, in fact, a travel book which had drawn inspiration from the periegesis of the 2nd century CE author Pausanias. Barthélemy based his work on all major written sources known at the time, and carefully referenced Anacharsis’ adventures in a large number of footnotes.

In chapter 25, Barthélemy gives a description of Anacharsis’ visit to a typical citizen house in Athens and portrays the festive meals the Athenians enjoyed in these settings, especially in the form of symposia. Typically for Barthélemy, his description of this event was based on information from various ancient sources ranging from Lysias, Aristotle, Plato, Xenophon and Demosthenes to Pliny. Although he does not mention it in his footnotes, the accompanying illustration of the ‘typical Greek house’\(^2\) (see Fig. 1.1) shows that Barthélemy based his description of the Athenian dwelling largely on Vitruvius’ account of the Greek house.\(^3\) The most characteristic feature of his version of the Greek house is that it is divided into two sections, one part meant for men and one part meant for women, both with a courtyard. The courtyards are lined with colonnades and the surface area that the house occupies is large. This particular plan long dominated classical scholarship and became the embodiment of the idea of strict gender segregation in the Greek domestic sphere.

It would take until the second decade of the twentieth century before Bertha Carr-Rider wrote the first comprehensive study on Greek houses with due attention paid to the archaeological evidence.\(^4\) Her book, *The Greek House*, was published in 1916 and is a synthetic approach to Greek dwellings through time, starting in the Neolithic period and ending in the late Hellenistic.

In her research, Carr-Rider sets out to find particular characteristics that define ‘the’ Greek house when compared to other houses in different parts of Europe, northern Africa and the Near East. She considered a wide variety of archaeological sources in her work and she should be credited for refuting the exclusive existence of the so-called double courtyard house mentioned above, that had been the major blueprint for the reconstruction of the Greek house. At the time Carr-Rider wrote her study, the

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\(^2\) In the 1825 Dutch edition: Barthélemy, J.-J., 54-79. Fig. 1.1 derives from an anonymous French edition and was engraved by Foucherot after Croquié de M. Mariette.

\(^3\) Vitruvius VI.7.

quantity of archaeological data was still very limited, necessitating her to base her conclusions on housing largely on ancient written sources. Carr-Rider proposed an ‘imaginary house’ of the fifth century BCE (Fig. 1.2), which gives the general disposition of the Greek house based on contemporary sources, although she readily admits that houses of this period must have varied considerably in the details of arrangement. The main characteristics of this imaginary house are: it has a symmetric plan, a single entrance, a large peristyle courtyard surrounded by various rooms, with two rooms for men at the back (indicated with F) and at the very back two narrow rooms designated for the women, the gynaikonitis.

Two important notions in early studies such as hers on Greek housing had long shelf lives. In the first place the fact that there was one concept in Greek housing, meaning that there was a ‘typical’ Greek House, or, at least, that there were an important number of shared characteristics forming a solid concept regarding Greek domestic space. These characteristics include the organisation of the household, the activities of household members as well as the organisation of the space in which these household members fulfilled their daily actions. The second notion was related to the first: it was readily accepted that Greek men and women occupied separate spaces in their otherwise shared domestic realm.

The study of Greek domestic space received a new impetus in the nineteen thirties with the start of the excavations at Olynthus by the team of the American archaeologist David M. Robinson. The interest of the American archaeologists in ‘daily life’ of Greek citizens of the Classical period, which led to this large-scale excavation of a domestic district, was unprecedented. Classical archaeology in its old

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5 Carr-Rider 1916, 238.
guise, best characterised as an ‘archaeology of objects’, had hitherto mainly focused on the excavation of public monuments or cemeteries.\(^6\) The American archaeologists excavated over 100 houses and researched the city’s cemetery as well. Nicholas Cahill has aptly characterized the tremendously rich excavation results as “a treasure trove of information about household assemblages, the kinds of work that went on in Greek dwellings, and about the organization of houses and of the city.”\(^7\) Henceforth the houses at Olynthus became blueprints for the organization of Greek domestic space in the Classical period.

Steadily more archaeological material became available in the course of the twentieth century, which could have facilitated a more thorough analysis of artefacts and their relation to human action. For a long time, however, the study of Greek housing focused on the creation of typologies. A handful of mainly architectural studies appeared which emphasized form, function and architectural tradition related to the houses. Like artefacts, scholars catalogued houses as ‘types’, presuming that these types represented distinct buildings traditions valid for certain regions that evolved through time. A number of major types were identified based on the presence of prominent architectural features in the houses: the pastas, the prostas and the peristyle.\(^8\)

The houses at Olynthus were named ‘pastas houses’ due to the presence of the veranda-like space at the back of the courtyard.\(^9\) Other houses, like those at Priene\(^10\) and Piraeus were labelled ‘prostas’ houses named after the presence of a hall-like ‘prostas’ in front of the ‘andron’. To this were added two more ‘types’: the peristyle house and the ‘herdraum’ house. After the excavations at Olynthus it became clear that some houses had a courtyard that was lined with colonnades, with the pastas remaining an essential feature in the overall plan of the house. ‘Peristyle houses’ were therefore deemed a variation of the pastas house by John Walter Graham, one of the excavators of Olynthus.\(^11\) Graham viewed the evolution of the ‘Greek’ pastas-peristyle house and the ‘Roman’ atrium house as two separate developments which merged in eastern Roman context in the Late Hellenistic period, resulting in atrium houses with peristyle gardens.

In the late nineteen eighties, the German architects Wolfram Hoepfner and Ernst Ludwig Schwandner added another house type based on their archaeological research in and near Kassope in north-western Greece: the ‘herdraum house’ or the hearth room house.\(^12\) The types themselves often functioned as their own explanatory framework; the house types were deemed ‘building traditions’ linked to particular regions and their distribution was explained by way of diffusionist models.

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Instead of simply cataloguing houses based on their particular architectural features however, Hoepfner and Schwandner went much further. In their book, the authors attempted to broaden the scope of their interpretations by finding an ideological rationale behind the planning of new cities (and their houses), as they were convinced that a central planning authority wielded influence on the design and layout of domestic spaces. They proposed that ‘isonomia’, or the ideology of equality, was both enforced and reflected in the perceived regularity in plans of newly planned Classical cities and houses, such as Piraeus, Miletus, Olynthus, Priene and Kassope, the latter being the city they partially excavated themselves.

This all-encompassing explanatory framework had a large and not always positive impact on the scholarly community. Hoepfner and Schwandner’s notion of type houses, dwellings with an equal plan and size which they presented as the embodiment of the principle of equality, received much criticism. Scholars wondered whether such a strong and rigid regularity in house and city plans, as illustrated in Hoepfner and Schwandner’s book could (and should) truly and unequivocally be viewed as architectural expressions of social equalities. Related to this scepticism was the observation that Hoepfner and Schwandner allowed themselves a lot of freedom in the reconstructions of the plans of the houses and cities, making these more equal and regular than they in reality were.

But at the same time, the attraction of Hoepfner and Schwandner’s book was that it represented a courageous attempt to connect city plans, house forms, ideology and social practice. The importance of this type of approach was also recognized by Michael Jameson, who, with his background in the study of ancient economy and land use, felt that ‘domestic space should be studied in the context of Greek settlement patterns and town planning on the one hand and of Greek social structure and ideology on the other.’ It inspired scholars to move away from categorizing houses in typologies and instead promoted a critical evaluation of the study of domestic architecture as both reflections and reinforcements of social and political ideologies in their temporal and spatial contexts. This focus stimulated many new studies, among them this one. Some of these new studies concentrated on the allotment of urban and rural land in which underlying social equalities (and inequalities) may have played varying roles. This aspect of city planning is of particular significance to my study which focuses on a newly planned city in the early Hellenistic period. Furthermore, the similarities in size and plan of houses at their initial habitation stage as reconstructed by Hoepfner and Schwandner stimulated diachronic investigations of

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15 A first analysis was performed on the three houses at New Halos excavated at that time as part of the requirements of an MPhil degree at Cambridge University. Haagsma M.J., The creation and use of domestic pace. An analysis of three houses at New Halos. unpublished MPhil thesis, Cambridge University 1990.

the developments of Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic settlements, house forms and house decoration. On a broader scale, studies centered on domestic spatial differentiation combined with studies of artefact distributions as indicative for social structure and domestic economies, became topics for dissertations of a variety of, then, young scholars during the late nineteen eighties and –nineties and a plethora of new information was published over the past years. This led to new insights in how relationships between men and women were negotiated in domestic space, how domestic economies were distributed within an urban centre and how they were tied in with patterns of land use, and how Greek urban housing became more differentiated and articulated in the course of, and after, the 4th century BCE.

These dynamic and ambitious studies notwithstanding, a severe lack of detailed excavation data regarding ancient Greek housing was identified as a major issue by Michael Jameson in 1990, who called for ‘careful analysis of artefact distribution, especially on sites abandoned after sudden disaster, [which] can add nuance and complexity to the purely architectural evidence.’ The systematic excavation of domestic architecture with special attention to the quantification and distribution of artefacts, had already been taken up by Jameson himself, Thomas Boyd and Wolf Rudolph. They excavated five relatively complete houses at Ancient Halieis in the Argolid during the 1960s and 1970s. Their excavation methodology was sophisticated, but a drawback was that the houses were not excavated by room, but relative to 5 x 5 m grid squares which were subsequently analysed according to stratigraphy in so-called loci, which then needed to be reorganised to fit into the classification ‘room’.


21 Cf Ault 2005, 5-7 on the excavation and analysis methodology at Halieis.
During the 1970s, Reinder Reinders of the University of Groningen decided to make the study of the houses in New Halos, a Hellenistic city in Achaia Phthiotis in Thessaly, one of the major foci of study at the site. This was decided because the architecture of the houses was relatively well-preserved and the dwellings had only been inhabited for a brief period of time. This meant that the stratigraphy was not complicated and that the houses could be excavated within a relatively short span of time. Moreover, the recent deep ploughing threatened the preserved remains at the site, especially within the city walls. Reinders assumed that the houses were abandoned after an earthquake, especially since complete pots were found crushed under thick layers of roof-tiles. Thus, the quality and quantity of both architecture and artefacts at New Halos made for an ideal combination of architectural analysis and study of artefact distribution. Furthermore, the recent deep ploughing threatened the preserved remains at the site, especially within the city walls. Over a span of 30 years, seven houses in total were excavated as well as a large farmstead dating to the second half of the 3rd century BCE built in the former south-east gate of the former Hellenistic city. The excavation and quantification methods were specifically designed to facilitate a spatial analysis of artefacts distribution and the methodology used will be further explained in Chapters 2 and 4 of this book.

In order to increase the number of comparative data sets available, Manuel Fiedler, in cooperation with the 12th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Studies excavated a number of houses at Leukas in Acarnania in the late 1990s in which special attention was paid to the distribution of artefacts. The same was done by Nicholas Cahill, who excavated parts of Lydian Archaic and Classical houses at Sardis in Anatolia. From 2004 onward, the University of Alberta, in cooperation with the 15th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, studied the Kastro at Kallithea, a Classical/Hellenistic city at a distance of about 30 km east of New Halos. In order to

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create a more representative data set for housing in the region of Achaia Phthiotis and
obtain better insight into domestic economies and social structure located in inland
urban centres, the team decided to excavate ‘Building 10’, a large domestic structure
dating to the late 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE. It is the plan to excavate at least two more
houses at the site.25

While these projects are valuable, it must be said that overall few archaeologists have
taken up the challenge to increase the much deplored lack of detailed data. The new
excavation initiatives amount to only a handful of houses in all. One of the arguments
often heard is that the excavation of houses is a time- and money consuming
endeavour. It is indeed true that the excavation of a single house takes a lot of time. In
the case of Halos, excavation of one house usually took at least one season of six
weeks with ca. 20 people working for 8 hours a day 6 days a week.26 The work
included the excavation of an area measuring ca. 225 m² with a single floor level
located not deeper than 0.30 m, as well as careful plotting and quantification of the
artefacts. Sometimes the excavation of houses may take longer, for instance whenever
there are a lot of finds,27 large architectural remains to be removed, or a more
complicated deposit and stratigraphy than was first expected.28 Many archaeologists
are understandably discouraged by the fact that the few houses one can excavate in
the span of, let us say, five years, would not create a representative sample from
which it is possible to extrapolate and reach conclusions regarding domestic
economies and social organisation on the level of a complete city.

My reaction to this is twofold. First, in some of the more synthetic studies on Greek
domestic space, we find a tendency to present certain premises regarding social
domestic practice as all-encompassing frameworks valid for Greek culture as a whole.
While the analyses that have been published lately have indeed provided us with
much new information, we are, in our studies of domestic space, only beginning to
understand the extent and nature of regional trends in household economies and their
relation to domestic social organisation in Classical and Hellenistic Greece.
Additional regional data sets are therefore wanted, especially if they are part of or
accompanied by projects providing contextual data, such as archaeological surface
surveys.

It is also often argued that the excellent sample reached at Olynthus, where ca. 100
houses have been excavated, cannot be repeated. It is indeed true that Olynthus
provides us with an extraordinary comparative data set, but it has its problems too.
Despite the comparatively detailed recording strategies, the insightful observations
and the phenomenal speed with which the site was published, there are definite
lacunae in the large Olynthus sample, as Cahill readily acknowledges.29

Karapanou and S. Gougias. “The Kastro of Kallithea in its historical context,” 1 Diethnes Synedrio
Istorias kai Politismou ths Thessalias, ed. Lila Glegle et al. (Thessalonike: Periferia Thessalias
Ekdoseis Alexandros, 2008), 224-232.

25 Further evidence for housing in Achaia Phthiotis comes from New Halos and Pharsalos. In the latter
city my colleague Sophia Karapanou excavated a number of Hellenistic houses with special attention to
the distribution of artefacts which she is planning to analyze in detail.

26 This represents the approximate time schedule of excavation of the Halos houses.

27 The excavation of the House of Agathon took longer than one season, because of the number of finds
found in room 5.

28 This proves to be the case in Building 10 at Kastro Kallithea. The remoteness of the site prevents us
from using large equipment or cranes to remove the enormous building blocks that are part of the fill
and of the erosion deposits from higher elevations which accumulated to 1.50 m in height in some parts
of the building.

29 Cahill 2002b, 65.
In this book I will argue that what we cannot reach in terms of quantity of our data, we can make up for in terms of quality and range. The application of a solid methodology regarding artefact retrieval and analysis, such as was designed for New Halos, allows us to make more reliable inferences based on depositional and post depositional processes on the site and to study the relationship between artefact distributions and patterns of human action with more confidence. In addition, New Halos has had the great benefit of having been under investigation for more than thirty years by the University of Groningen, which has a long and distinguished tradition in environmental studies.30 The study of the faunal remains of the houses at New Halos by Wietske Prummel and the geological, palynological, botanical and soil mapping studies performed by Henk Woldring, Sietze Bottema, Paulien de Roever, Bert van Straaten, Ioannis Sgouras and Stamatios Floras have proven to be of vital importance for recognizing and interpreting relationships between city and countryside. And lastly, the preliminary data of the survey of the Halos chor a have provided a further context for the interpretation of the architectural and artefactual data of the houses in the urban centre. As I hope to show in this book, such a combination of good quality excavation data derived from a single period site and a wide range of contextual data can add much to our understanding of regional trends in domestic economies and social organisation. For New Halos, we have these in abundance.

1.2 Greek households in urban contexts: approaches to the ancient Greek city.

For what is a human being? A part of a city; first that of the gods and men and then, that city which is very close to it, the city that is a miniature of the universal one. Epictetus, Discourses 2.5.25-26.

The houses at Halos were excavated in order to gain better insight in the domestic economies and social organisation of households occupying the newly planned urban centre of the re-founded Early Hellenistic polis. This study presents the results of this endeavour. The fact that the city was newly planned raises additional questions. What do we know about ancient city planning in Antiquity? If we wish to study the economy and social organisation of urban households how, then, should we approach the relationship between ‘city’ and ‘household’?

According to Aristotle, the most important relationships in the Greek family consisted of ‘master and slave, husband and wife, father and children.’31 Greek households consisted of a nuclear family, sometimes with in-laws living in and often with slaves. The ancient Greek term oikos referred not only to the physical structure of the house, but also to the social unit of the household which inhabited this structure. Furthermore, the components of the household are identified as (1) human beings and (2) goods and chattels.32

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30 During the early 1990s, the ‘Groningen Institute of Archaeology’ of the University of Groningen was formed by a merger of the Department of Mediterranean Archaeology and the ‘Biologisch-Archeologisch Instituut’ (BAI).
31 Aristotle, Politics I.3. 5-7.
32 Pseudo Aristotle Oikonomika I, 2.1. Book II of the Oikonomika was most likely not written by Aristotle himself, but by someone belonging to his scholarly circle. Aperghis states that the larger part of the work dates from the late 4th century, but book II likely dates to the middle of the 3rd century BCE. Aperghis, G.G., The Royal Seleucid Economy. The finances and Administration of the Seleucid Empire. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 117.
Aristotle’s *Politics* and Pseudo-Aristotle’s *Oikonomika*, partially describing the economic organisation of both households and cities in the early Hellenistic period, are important works of reference for this study. These sources are of particular value because they do not only describe a utopian situation, as Plato does in his *Laws*. Especially Aristotle’s book VII can be read as a practical guide on how *oikoi*, both in their physical as social sense, can be most efficiently integrated in an urban environment. Secondly, Aristotle spent the years between 342-335 BCE at the Macedonian court as the main tutor of the academy there. As such, he taught Alexander the Great, but also other later Macedonian rulers as Ptolemy and Cassander. Alexander, as well as his successors brought a variety of Aristotelian elements regarding city planning into practice, not only in the newly established cities in the conquered territories of Asia Minor, but also on the Greek mainland. We will see that Aristotle’s ideas and ideals regarding the planning of urban centres had an influence on the layout of the newly established urban centre of Halos, developed under influence of either Cassander or Demetrius Poliorcetes. Finally, many contemporary scholars of ancient history have taken the writings of Plato and Aristotle as key sources for their development of socio-economic models of the ancient city. It is therefore necessary to briefly review the major viewpoints on city planning and households in these writings and evaluate some of the most important socio-economic models tying in the ancient Greek household with the ancient Greek city.

Aristotle writes that a city-state was made up of a community of households which were sometimes organised in villages, sometimes in towns, satisfying something more than daily needs. The ‘natural’ relationships, master-slave, husband-wife, father-children, structure the basic hierarchies, and the highest virtue of household members lies in the fulfillment of their tasks according to these relationships. Of course, every household member should be fit for his or her task: restraint, courage and justice should be moral values shared amongst all the household members. Only then, Aristotle argues, can the household acquire property and wealth in the most efficient way and could it serve the state well: ‘the virtue of the part ought to be examined in relation to the virtue of the whole.’

Regarding the government of the state, Aristotle expects that citizens take part in the governing process, but the class of citizenry should be restricted to those who can share in the honours of the state and the best state will, therefore, not allow poor people such as craftsmen to become citizens. The best state and households are integrated and if they both live up to their virtues and are able to amass wealth for the common interest, only then all citizens can participate in the government.

Aristotle lists three basic forms of constitution: those based on kingship, on aristocracy and on polity. These ‘normal’ forms of government can under certain circumstances become deviant. In the case of ‘unjust’ rule and disinterest in the common good they would become tyrannies, oligarchies, or democracies, respectively. This is the key in Aristotle’s concept of the ideal constitution in which ‘happiness’ and ‘the good life’ are central issues. The city state is not simply a business to maximize wealth (as the oligarchs assume), nor is it a context to solely

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33 For an assessment of Plato’s *Laws* and Aristotle’s *Politics* in relation to the city plan and organisation of Olynthus, see Cahill 2002, 5-18.

34 On the household as foundation of the Aristoteles’s Polis see Nagle, B., *The Household as foundation of Aristotele’s Polis*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

promote equality under the law (as democrats want). Both the good life and the good state can be achieved by virtue being nurtured and employed on every level, by every individual, while nobody should exploit the state at the expense of the common good. The ideal state, as described by Aristotle in his book VII, should be self sufficient. This means that it needs to have enough people to exploit the territory, but not too many. In turn, the territory of the city state should have enough potential to be productive and it should be in part privately and in part communally owned. The spot and where the urban centre is located should be well defended, it must be easy for expeditions to set out from there and for commodities to be received and exported. For the urban planning of the city, Aristotle favours the regular Hippodamean layout, but warns against an all too regular plan which may allow an attacking force to easily occupy the city. A mixture of the ‘old’ irregular layout and the new regularity has Aristotle’s preference and he proposes to arrange buildings in the same pattern as was used in fields for planting vines: ‘[…] and do not lay out the whole city with geometric regularity but only certain parts and localities.’ Aristotle grimly points out that his contemporary offensive strategies have taken such a flight that strong, and beautiful, walls are a necessity. Other aspects of the city plan should include communal dining places for committees and clubs in the city (sissitia) located near the city walls and towers, a market place, and a separate ‘large square’ to be used for sports and military exercises. Such squares are typical of cities in Thessaly, according to Aristotle. Buildings connected with public government should be located near the market place. In the countryside, fortified places should be provided for field and forest wardens and sanctuaries should be spread out over the state’s territory. That this ideal was not frequently brought into reality is self evident and we should realize that over the centuries Greek towns manifested themselves in many different guises. Several centuries after the writings of Aristotle, in the mid 2nd century AD, Pausanias in his Perigiesis gives a very different description of a town when he portrays Panopeus in Phokis. “[…] if you call it a city when it has no state buildings, no training ground, no theatre, and no market square, when it has no running water at a water-head and they live on the edge of a torrent in hovels like mountain huts.” Pausanias goes on to wonder how it can be that a town with such a distinctive history, and used to be known as ‘Panopeus with the fine dancing ground’, could have such a humble appearance. Nonetheless it was long a given amongst scholars that ancient Greek poleis normally had a well-defined urban centre with at least a number of the amenities such as described above. Moses Finley took the description by Pausanias as an indication that people in antiquity knew very well what a city was and looked like. But it was also

37 Aristotle, Politics VI, xi, 1330b17ff. Cahill (2002, p. 12ff) in his discussion of the same passage takes the 4th century Thessalian city on Goritsa hill as an example of this principle.
39 This view has now been moderated as it has been recognized that various poleis functioned quite well without an urban centre. In ‘polis development studies’ scholars such as Ian Morris emphasized the development as the polis as socio-political one in which state formation processes are inextricably linked to the development of the concept ‘citizen’. See among others: Morris, I., Burial and Ancient Society: The Rise of the Greek City-State. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). Morris, I., “The art of citizenship,” in New Light on a Dark Age: Exploring the Culture of Geometric Greece, ed. Langdon, S. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 9-43.
Finley who pointed out that in the study of Greek poleis one should not focus on the physical urban environment alone. Instead, he argued, the starting point for the study of the social and economic organization of a city and its inhabitants should be the relationship between the town and its hinterland.40

In his Oikonomika, Pseudo-Aristotle lays out the preferred relationship between household and state territory. ‘Agriculture,’ he writes, ‘is the most honest of all […] occupations; seeing that the wealth it brings is not derived from other men.’41 Farming is thus favoured above trade, and manufacture is seen as a lowly way to make a living. Just as states, households also should be self-sufficient and should aim at bringing in an agricultural surplus. The anonymous philosopher prescribes two different systems of storage of the yields; large estates, he writes, can store food for a year, but smaller estates do better to keep to the Athenian system, and sell off their yields while buying back from the market.

The agricultural base of the state does not mean that household members were to perform agricultural work themselves. Slaves were, in Aristotelian philosophy, inextricably linked to labour in fields, mines and workshops. And if slaves were not available for agricultural labour, then ‘peripheral people’ (perioikoi) should be employed for the heavy work.

The views of Aristotle and Plato that the economy of the ancient world was largely based on agriculture which, in turn, was related to the institution of slavery, was a major topic of study for Moses Finley. He concluded that the ancient city as a type came close to the notion of the ‘consumer city’ developed by Bücher, Sombart and Weber.42 This ‘minimalist’ or primitivist’ view of ancient polis economy still resonates strongly in the scholarly community and is for many researchers the model of consensus.43 It broadly assumes that at least 80% of the households of Classical poleis were in one way or another engaged in agricultural activities or in leasing agricultural land and that these households, and with them the city as a whole, mainly aimed at self-sufficiency. Others have elaborated on Finley’s model and have identified further characteristics of the ‘classic’ type of the ancient city that can be summarised as follows.44 The aim for self-sufficiency resulted in a notable lack of technological development; there is minimal evidence for profit-directed growth and for surplus-oriented agricultural or industrial production; there was limited long distance trade in non-luxury items and the production and manufacture of other goods

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41 Pseudo Aristotle, Oikonomika, II, 2.
was essentially seen as ‘petty’. In this model urban centres and their harbours mainly functioned as hubs for exchange of regional produce and commodities. Finley himself had already called for nuancing this rather rigid view of the economic basis of ancient cities but he held on to the ‘model’ approach; he speculated that documentation of many different variations diverging from the ideal type would establish a typology of ancient towns. Writing from a strictly historic perspective before the onset archaeological surface surveys and of more synthetic approaches integrating historical, environmental and archaeological data, the author deplores the fact that ‘the opportunities for genuinely quantitative and dynamic analysis are few and frustrating.’

Finley’s fundamental work on the ancient city has been reviewed, used, caricaturized and tackled in different ways, but to date much of it still stands. Some scholars have taken over his model of the ‘consumer city’ and firmly affirmed its validity, while others have furthered the idea of different ‘type cities’ and have proposed variations on the classical type, such as the ‘service city’ and the producer city. In his book on Roman Corinth, for instance, Donald Engels pointed out that this city could only partially support its population of 100,000 inhabitants on the basis of agricultural production alone, since only a limited area of its territory was suitable for agriculture. He therefore proposed that at least 80% of the population lived off other forms of cash generating economies, such as lamp, pottery and metal manufacture and that the city earned its major income from providing the service of transshipments via the diolkos.

The ‘producer city’ is a model which stressed that the value of goods that the inhabitants of the city produced was higher than that which was consumed. Finley was rather pessimistic about the possibility to expand the availability of useful data on ancient Greek economy, but subsequent archaeological fieldwork has fortunately proven him wrong. Much new information has seen the light. Armed in particular with new archaeological data derived from both excavations and archaeological surface surveys, scholars have assessed other forms and aims of production and consumption as part of the urban-rural environment relationship and recent individual and regional studies have added much complexity to the traditional understanding of the ‘consumer city’ in Classical and Hellenistic Greece.

The thus expanded model of the ‘consumer city’ will be used as a ‘backdrop’ in this book, although it still has a number of drawbacks. One of the limitations of applying the ‘neo-primitivist’ model of the ‘consumer city’ is that it is static to a certain degree.

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45 Not all scholars agree on the interpretation of Weber’s *the city*. Sensing that many scholars caricaturize his views; cf. Whittaker, C.R., “Do theories on the ancient city matter?” in *Urban Society in Roman Italy*, ed. Cornell, T.J. and K. Lomas, (London: Routledge 1995), 9-27 who argues that both Weber and Finley do not exclude the aim for cash and profit in running an agricultural estate. In my view, much in this discussion is a matter of definition and semantics. Cf. Finley’s remarks on slave-owners, money-owners and landowners, who were – in his view – rentiers and not entrepreneurs. (Finley 1977, 15.)

46 Finley 1977, 22.

47 Finley 1977, 22.


It well describes how citizens aiming at self-sufficiency need a market, an available (and cheap) work force, the vicinity of arable land and each other to make their community viable in an economic sense. But it does not provide very well for the development of such communities, nor does it easily explain economic growth or decline. But in this research, which can be characterised as a ‘single period/single site study’, it serves very well as a basic model from which one can fruitfully extrapolate both in space and time, taking into account the historic, environmental and regional contexts of the archaeological data.

This study, which focuses on household organization, takes a regional perspective and aims at placing the domestic economies that we are able to identify in the urban landscape of New Halos into the larger context of the regional economies in which the city played a role. Taking the existing debate into account, I present the analysis of domestic space within urban centre of New Halos as a case study.

Why is this case study of New Halos interesting and what does it add to the continuing debate of the interrelated economies of household, city and countryside? The answer, first and foremost, is that a study such as this can add much nuance and variety to studies on the economies of ancient poleis, as Finley himself already had considered necessary. Both the historical context of the urban centre and the environmental setting of the polis of Halos can be characterised as a-typical and, as we will see, do not fit the conditions of Finley’s ‘ideal type’; firstly, the urban centre of New Halos was not surrounded by an abundance of arable land and secondly, the urban centre was only very briefly occupied and was not replaced by another town elsewhere in the territory. The urban centre of New Halos was built around 302 BCE and was already abandoned around 265 BCE. The immediate reason for abandonment may have been the destruction caused by an earthquake, but the reasons for not rebuilding and reoccupying the defensive systems, the public buildings and the houses require an explanation of a more dynamic nature. At the time the city was built, an initiative of one of the Hellenistic diadochoi, households that were previously located elsewhere presumably moved to the new location. The rapid abandonment of the city and the houses only 35 years later, however, cannot be easily explained as the result of a similar act of human agency, even though the diadochoi were well-known for regularly (re)moving complete populations. We have neither historical nor archaeological evidence that this was the case in New Halos and we therefore have to take a different perspective toward the reasons of the abandonment.

Since the economies of household, city and country were inextricably linked, we may—under the circumstances—question how successfully the individual households were able and willing to exploit their new location and to sustain their new urban setting. The analysis of the architecture and artefactual contents of six houses in New Halos, presented in this study, provide important information regarding that polis’ domestic economies, social organization and exploitation of the countryside, but since these remains represent the last stage of habitation of the urban centre, they also provide important clues for its abandonment. It is therefore inevitable that this book not only

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50 Of late, scholars such as Ian Morris have tried to assess the percentage of economic growth from the later Early Iron Age to the Classical period, which he calculated to be ca 0,5 % per year. Morris, I., “Economic growth in ancient Greece.” Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics 160 (2004), 709-742. See also the various authors in Cartledge, P., E. Cohen and L. Foxhall, (eds) Money, Labour and Land. Approaches to the economies of ancient Greece. (London and New York: Routledge, 2001). Migeotte, on the other hand, maintains that the very concept of economic growth is problematic, first because it is difficult to measure, second, because he deems the concept in itself as anachronistic. (Migeotte 2009, 174.)
identifies and explains the socio-economic relationships between household, city and country at New Halos in terms of the dominant but static polis-models, but has also become an assessment of the dynamics and variables impacting the viability of that short-lived urban centre.

1.3 Domestic Space: theoretical outlook, method and the organization of this study.

In his book, *Wonen: kreativiteit en aanpassing: onderzoek naar voorwaarden voor optimale aanpassingsmogelijkheden in de woningbouw*. (Dwelling: creativity and adjustment: a study of the conditions for optimal adaptive strategies in housing construction and design), Hugo Priemus describes a ‘habitation history’ of one nuclear family living in one house in the area of Charlois in Rotterdam over a period of 26 years. The family first came to live in the house in 1941 when the ‘father’ and the ‘mother’ got married, and subsequently they had to make many adjustments to the way they used their domestic space. The factors which played major roles in these adjustments were: births of children, housing external family members during the war, the absence of the father due to forced labour in Germany, adolescence of the children, schoolwork of children, marriage of children, the acquisition of a TV and the construction of a shower. In all, nineteen major adjustments were made in those 26 years, each time changing the activities in and occupation of the individual rooms and sometimes changing the nature and degree of specialization of the space. Room 7, labelled the ‘woonkamer’ (living room), for instance, housed, in line with the factors mentioned above, a large number of activities over time, such as: consumption, listening to the radio, receiving visitors, sleeping, sewing and bathing children.

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Fig. 1.3 Plan and organisation of household nr. 1001 in Rotterdam. From Priemus 1980, p. 2.

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Sometimes all of these activities occurred in this room during the day (During the war the room housed the mother and her children while the father was performing forced labour in Germany and in-laws were living in, so all activities occurred in this room). At other times the ‘degree of specialization’ was higher and the room was only used as a dining room or a bedroom. Even though during the war the room was used as a bedroom, it continued to be ‘the living room’, implicitly referring to its ‘ideal’ usage. The changes in use consisted mostly of simply moving of furniture and the utensils used in the various activities. The adjustments are not articulated in the architecture. With this example I want to point out that the study of the material remains of houses and their contents is not a straightforward matter. Not only do we need to research what exactly a ‘house’ constitutes in the context of Classical and Hellenistic Greece, but the ideal picture of usage that most of the literary sources provide cannot and should not be directly projected on the material remains of domestic dwellings; social ideals and daily practice are two separate entities. We further need to acknowledge that households have a life cycle and that the use of domestic space is often adjusted to fit the needs of household at specific moments in time. In the context of Classical Greece an excellent example of this is found in Lysias. In this work he defends Euphiletus who had killed his wife’s lover after he discovered them together in his own house. The defendant’s house is described as normally having the women’s quarters located on the upper floor and the men’s quarters on the ground floor. With the birth of a child, this arrangement had been reversed, since walking the stairs at night with a baby was considered inconvenient and dangerous. But this also facilitated the nightly visits of the lover.

There is thus a dichotomy between the way in which people conceive of and label space and the way in which they occupy and use it. Space, and with this I mean space defined by human made structures, reflects human ideas and ideals, but spatial boundaries determine and are determined by human actions and beliefs and as such embody a form of control. The construction and production of space and meaning has been the focus of much social and theoretical research, mainly outside the field of archaeology, although many archaeologists have applied these theories in their studies. This study draws inspiration from a variety of theoretical writings directly or indirectly related to constructions of space. These include authors such as Henry Lefebvre who asserted that the production of space is a social process aimed at the reproduction of society and that space as such is an arena of domination and control. Michel Foucault, whose work overall focuses on the naturalisation of power and the conditions and modes in which human beings are made subjects pays particular attention to architectural embodiments of control, such as prisons, hospitals and asylums. It is mainly in Foucault’s questioning of homogeneous bodies of truth and his quest for constructions of alternative historical narratives highlighting marginalization, ambiguity, contradiction and marginal discourse and how these contribute to productions of meaning and knowledge that I have found motivation in this study.

52 Lysias I, 9-11.
Several theorists have operated on a more practical level and have focused on how patterns of human behaviour are generated and regenerated in society and how individuals perpetuate patterns of social convention. From this point of view spatial structures are seen as a product of formal social principles as well as the very locus where these social regulations are being reproduced and challenged. This mode of thought was furthered by Pierre Bourdieu in his definition of the notion habitus which he describes as a set of sub-consciously applied social rules put into practice in daily settings, such as schools, shops, offices and houses. Individuals each have their own habitus which becomes highlighted in situations of opposition, for instance in different settings related to social class or religious belief. The dynamic interaction between habitus and social practice, Bourdieu argues, creates ‘fields of cultural production’ providing for human agency to manipulate, negotiate, challenge, reinforce and resist pre-existing notions of social order. A related theorist I have used in this study is Michel de Certeau who, in his work The practice of everyday life defines and outlines everyday ‘strategies’ and ‘tactics’ people employ in their environment in consciously and sub-consciously challenging and defying dominant orders. In this book, these theorists generally play a role in the background and I will only briefly come back to them at the very end of this study. Even though I am researching the articulation, arrangement and use of domestic space in order to gain better insight in the relationships between social and economic practice in New Halos, the reader will find that, in fact, the methodology employed in the larger part of this research is rather ‘processual’ in nature. This is a necessity and is inherent to research dealing with raw archaeological data. Yet, consistent contextualization of the results has been a major priority in this study. I also found that ‘the theoretical background’ provided me with much needed modes of critical thinking; the questions we ask of our data and the results of the analysis of architecture and distribution of finds both evolve from and need to be placed back into a larger interpretative framework. I realised that it would be wrong to restrict this framework to a purely economic one. This would only lead, in my view, to a form of economic determinism which would limit our understanding of the role and influence of human agency and experience in relation to architecturally created environments. Thus, even though the model of the ‘consumer city’ has its merits, it falls short in explaining deeper social realities and ambiguities that may have played a role in the habitation and abandonment of the urban area of New Halos.

Architecture formalizes sometimes pre-existing and flexible boundaries. It differentiates space into sets of partitions which may be related to each other in different ways. These relations may be ‘hierarchical’, such as inside/outside, sacred/profane, public/private or ‘parallel’, depending on who designs, uses, articulates, conceives and perceives the space, at what time and under what circumstances. Formalized space is thus, in principle, highly flexible. But in practice it often is not. The arrangements and forms of spatial structures are influenced by social convention on the one hand and by practical use on the other. Archaeologists


57 A variety of the theories of the scholars mentioned in this paragraph has been summarized excellently by Louise Hitchcock in her book Theory for Classics. (Hitchcock, L., Theory for Classics. A student’s guide. (New York and London: Routledge, 2008).

have long discussed this dynamic and have argued either in favour of one or the other aspect being the more prevalent. This study will not directly engage in this discussion, nor will it focus on house form and architectural tradition in New Halos and environs. ‘House-form’ i.e. as part of an architectural tradition, as Rapoport has already argued, is notoriously difficult to explain, and since we are dealing with a single site and a single period, ‘house-form’ will be viewed as a given. What we will be looking for instead at New Halos is any form of patterning in the relationship between domestic spatial arrangements, size and accessibility of domestic structures on the one hand and their usages on the other, and how these patterns relate to the use of the surrounding urban and rural landscape; what can these relationships tell us about domestic economies and social organization at our site? How does this relate to the historic context of early Hellenistic poleis and Macedonian rulers?

For the ‘core’ of the research, the analyses of the archaeological data, I have used various theoretical and methodological approaches. On a more interpretative level I am indebted to Rapoport’s notion of ‘systems of activities and systems of settings’ which has aided me in embedding domestic activities and settings in a larger interpretative framework. The analytical methods include methods of excavation and recording, architectural ‘access analysis’ as developed by Bill Hillier and Julienne Hanson, ‘correspondence analysis’ and activity area research and site formation studies as first developed by the pioneers of the New Archaeology and furthered over time by processual, post-processual archaeologists and anthropologists alike. The various approaches and methods will be explained in more detail in the specific chapters devoted to them.

The results of these analyses will be embedded in the historical context in which the urban landscape was conceived and used. Since the houses are part of a newly planned urban environment, I have assessed ideals and practices of city planning in the Hellenistic period relative to our evidence at New Halos. The environmental information of the chora of Halos and the wider region of Achaia Phthiotis and Thessaly will be employed to give more depth to the interpretation of domestic economies identified within the individual houses. Various studies on domestic space in Classical and Hellenistic Greece at other sites will be employed to contrast and compare the results. Finally, this study evaluates the findings in connection with historical information we have regarding the economy, political and social organisation of the early Hellenistic poleis and their, often ambiguous, relationships with the Macedonian monarchs.

This book thus begins with an introduction on New Halos and provides a description of the excavated remains (chapter 2). It continues with a section dedicated to the analysis of the architecture of the houses and their spatial relationship with the city plan of New Halos (chapter 3). Chapter 4 examines the various depositional and post-depositional processes relevant to the site, and chapter 5 discusses the analyses of the distribution of artefacts in the houses. The combined outcomes of all analyses are assessed in chapters 6 and 7 and the final section, chapter 8, is dedicated to the contextualization of the results of the research and the concluding remarks.
