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Minoan Religion: Ritual, Image, and Symbol

By Nanno Marinatos

MINOAN RELIGION



Ritual, Image, and Symbol

NANNO MARINATOS

University of South Carolina Press

Columbia, S.C. 1993

To the memory of Sir Arthur Evans

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Published in Columbia, South Carolina, by the University of South Carolina Press
Manufactured in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Marinatos, Nanno.

Minoan religion : ritual, image, and symbol / by Nanno

Marinatos.

p. cm. — (Studies in comparative religion)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-87249-744-5 (alk. paper)

I. Minoans—Religion. 2. Crete (Greece)—Religion. I. Title.

II. Series: Studies in comparative religion (Columbia, S.C.)

BL793.C7M34 1993

299'.1—dc20

92-11628



CONTENTS

Series Editor's Preface / viii

Preface / ix

1 Introduction / 1

×2 The Cult of the Dead in Prepalatial Crete / 13

3 The Palaces as Cult Centers / 38

4 The Shrines in the Palaces / 76

5 Town Shrines and Nature Sanctuaries / 112

(x)6 The Priesthood / 127

×7 Goddesses and Gods / 147

8 Shrines and Rituals / 175

9 The World of Nature / 193

×10 Ritual Contests, Hunting, and Rites of Passage / 201

×11 Minoan Religion after the Fall of the Palaces / 221

×12 Conclusions / 242

Abbreviations / 245

Notes / 249

Illustration Credits / 297

Glossary / 301

Index / 303

SERIES EDITOR'S PREFACE

This book represents a significant breakthrough in the analysis and interpretation of Minoan religious sites, artifacts, and symbols. Combining archaeological, historical, semiotic, and cultural anthropological approaches, Dr. Marinatos has arrived at a new way of understanding the religious world of Minoan civilization.

Perhaps the most important aspect of this new synthesis is its bold venture of attempting a reconstruction of Minoan ritual processes within their original contexts rather than by inference from classical Greek religion of historical times. This effort would be impossible without the balanced multidisciplinary approach that the author has taken. Her

extensive experience as a field archaeologist has prevented the project from becoming overly speculative, whereas Dr. Marinatos's thorough acquaintance with comparative religion theory and method has lifted the project far above the merely descriptive level of technical scholarship on sanctuaries and material culture. In short, *Minoan Religion* is both a technically accomplished book and an accessible survey of one of the most appealing yet difficult topics in the history of Minoan studies, the beliefs and ritual practices of the prehistoric Minoans in the context of eastern Mediterranean culture of the time.

Frederick Mathewson Denny



PREFACE

The idea of this book was conceived on a sunny day in Colorado when Frederick Denny invited me to contribute a monograph to his series on world religions. At that time I was not sure I could accomplish the task of writing a book on such a large topic, but I ended up undertaking the project. One of the main reasons I did so is that there exists no other work dealing exclusively with Minoan material which stresses cult practice over archaeological data and makes use of anthropological models.

The greatest challenge has been to present detailed information on the material necessary for the argumentation, and yet not to make the book incomprehensible or boring to historians of religion to whom the series addresses itself. I am not sure I have succeeded, but the attempt to present Minoan religion from the perspective of ritual process had to be made.

In my discussion of the iconographical sources I have deliberately omitted two important objects, the so-called Nestor and Minos rings, because I believe them to be forgeries. Although the genuineness of these rings has been defended

recently by eminent authorities in the field, I remain unconvinced.

I wish to thank the Institute for Aegean Prehistory for providing me with a grant to prepare the line drawings. These were made by Lily Papageorgiou. Photographs were provided by the Italian Archaeological School in Athens, Mrs. Alison Frantz, Dr. E. Hallager, Dr. A. Hirmer, and Prof. P. Warren, all of whom I thank warmly. For permission to reproduce illustrations I have to thank Drs. Y. Tzedakis, A. Kanta, L. Morgan, W.-D. Niemeier, G. Rethemiotakis, S. Hood, K. Branigan, and the Managing Committee of the British School at Athens.

The manuscript has profited much from the support and encouragement of my friends and colleagues whose advice in various matters helped me improve the book. Editorial assistance was provided by Ms. B. Conrad, especially regarding the preparation of the illustrations. Individual chapters were read and commented upon by Drs. S. Diamant and Ch. Sourvinou-Inwood.

The entire manuscript was read by Prof. E. Davis, Prof. W.-D. Niemeier,

Prof. K. Kilian and Dr. I. Kilian, to all of whom I owe not only valuable comments but a much enriched bibliography. Most of all I want to thank R. Hägg for his comments, his meticulous, pains-

taking editing and patience, and Prof W. Burkert for his moral support, stimulating comments, additional bibliography, and feedback on the entire manuscript. The errors remain mine.

Minoan Religion

1

INTRODUCTION

Some Basic Information about the Discovery of Minoan Civilization

Ever since the discovery of the Palace of Knossos on Crete by Sir Arthur Evans in the beginning of our century, the early civilization of the island has attracted much attention. Although it lacked the monumental buildings of Egypt and the Near East, its art had a freshness and subtlety that surpassed even those high civilizations of the Orient. Evans became totally involved with it and gave it the name "Minoan," after the legendary king Minos. He published the results of his excavations in four richly illustrated volumes with the title *The Palace of Minos at Knossos*.

Evans's contribution to our understanding of the Minoan culture is immense and of lasting value. Not only did he work out the architecture, the pottery sequences, the script, religion, and iconography, but he also devised a chronological system based on correlations with the more firmly established Egyptian chronology. The various destructions that the palace of Knossos and the other towns on Crete had undergone gave Evans some starting points for a

historical reconstruction, parts of which are now disputed by recent scholarship. The problem was, and is, that the Minoan script, known as Linear A, remains undeciphered. Although Evans did some basic work on the structure and ideogrammatic meaning of the signs, neither the origin of the language nor its contents is quite understood even nowadays. What is most clear, however, is that it was used for record keeping and for dedicatory inscriptions.

Consequently, if we want to deduce any historical or social information about Minoan Crete, we have only archaeology at our disposal. It is natural that Evans's sociohistorical reconstructions would be questioned. The most common complaint is that they reflect Victorian models and ways of thinking.

In the meantime, the picture is becoming more complete. Other major palaces have been unearthed and published. An Italian team excavated the palace of Phaistos in the southern part of Crete. French archaeologists worked at the palace of Malia in central Crete, east of Knossos. In the 1960s the palace of Zakros in the easternmost part of the island was excavated by Greek archaeologists.

The discovery of Minoan settlements and cemeteries throughout the island led to a more thorough understanding of pottery sequences, which in turn allowed for a more subtle understanding of the various phases. One major aspect of Evans's system has been modified: chronology. He divided the Bronze Age of Crete into three periods, calling them Early, Middle, and Late Minoan. In this he followed Egyptian historical divisions of Old, Middle, and New Kingdom. The starting point is sound and is based on correlations between Minoan and Egyptian artifacts found together in the same deposit either in Egypt or in Crete. There is only one problem with this division: the Egyptian chronological articulation in three basic periods makes sense because each change, say from Old to Middle Kingdom, corresponds to a historical event. The transference of this scheme to Minoan culture is mechanical and arbitrary. Although it gives us a firm chronological base¹ through the correspondence with Egypt, it is not in itself meaningful in historical terms. We can find no event that signals the transition from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age, for example. For this reason many scholars today prefer another division: *Prepalatial*, the era before the palaces; *Palatial*, the palace era; and *Postpalatial*, the period after the fall of the palaces.² The Palatial era itself is subdivided into *First* and *Second Palace* periods (or *Proto-* and *Neopalatial*). This is because the first palaces were destroyed and rebuilt (see below).

Evans's system is not actually abandoned, however, as it allows for finer nuances and distinctions, especially in pottery classification. It is thus sometimes used concurrently with the new division. In this book I shall mostly use the new terminology, but in the notes I shall also refer to the other system.

Historical Outline

What follows is a historical sketch of the Minoan civilization for the non-expert reader.³

2900–2000 BC: Prepalatial or Early Minoan Period (EM I–III)

During this period Crete moved out of the Neolithic stage of culture. It cannot be decided with certainty whether new peoples, the Minoans, migrated to Crete from Anatolia or North Africa, or whether it was the same people that had inhabited the island since the Neolithic that advanced technologically. At any rate, the characteristic material culture included several bronze items and exhibited a degree of advanced technology. Exquisite stone vases and jewelry were manufactured. The stonemason's technique was influenced by Egypt, so that some degree of contact may be safely postulated. Closer were the contacts with the neighboring Cycladic islands to the north (fig. 1). Small towns began to appear toward 2300 BC (fig. 2). The most monumental architecture was funerary (see chapter 2).

There is little doubt that the impetus for the economic flourish came from a new shift in agriculture, especially the cultivation of vines and olive trees. A surplus of produce must have opened up new possibilities of trade.⁴

2000–1700 BC: First Palace or Middle Minoan Period (MM IA–MM II)

Palaces were built in east and central Crete; their construction coincides with and is perhaps related to the expansion of towns (see chapter 3).

Exquisite pottery, known as Kamares ware, was produced. Mountaintop sanctuaries with votive figurines indicate



Fig. 1. The Aegean

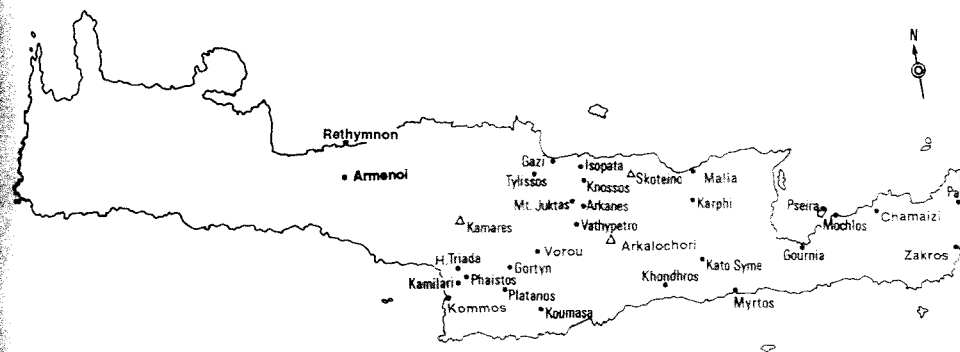


Fig. 2. Crete: major sites

some kind of massive outings from the towns into nature where holy places were sought. The peak-sanctuaries came under palatial control (see chapter 5).

Technology advanced even more. In the miniature arts, notable are the jewelry and the engraved seal-stones. Crete established links overseas and gradually produced a network that is often referred to as the Minoan empire.

It is in this period that writing was introduced, a necessary corollary to palatial administration. Hieroglyphic scripts first came to existence to be gradually supplanted by a linear one: Linear A.

Around 1700 BC, a massive earthquake destroyed the first palaces.

1650–1450 BC: New Palace Period or Middle Minoan to Late Minoan (MM IIIB–LM IB)

Sometime after their destruction, the palaces were rebuilt on a grander scale than before. In the north there was the palace of Knossos, in the south that of Phaistos, in the east the palaces of Malia and Zakros. Their plans are similar enough to presuppose a certain degree of unification throughout the island. The splendid architecture was made more impressive through the use of wall painting. Fine pottery was produced; the predominant styles were the *floral* and the *marine*. Jewelry, faience, ivory, and bronze industries resulted in the production of luxury items, but stone vessels (the manufacture of which was perhaps considered too time-consuming) became rarer. Great advances were made in the art of seal-engraving. The subtlety and complexity of the scenes on the Minoan seals is unsurpassed even in the Near East.

The quick recovery after the earthquake of 1700 BC shows that the economy of the island was flourishing.

Indeed, the Minoan empire was expanding during this period. Some islands in the Aegean show indisputable Minoan influence. Among them is the island of Thera.

Around 1500 the volcano of Thera erupted. This event must have caused major destruction in the entire Aegean. Crete must have been affected. Some fifty years later, around 1450 BC, there was islandwide destruction on Crete itself. The Minoan palaces, mansions, and towns all show signs of burning or abandonment; only the palace of Knossos survived. The reasons are still not clear. Evans thought that another series of earthquakes was responsible for the destruction. Sp. Marinatos was the first to connect the catastrophe with the volcanic eruption of Thera. Although this theory won acceptance at first, it now has to be abandoned because it seems certain that the palaces survived the eruption for another half century. S. Hood and others suggested an invasion by the mainland peoples, the Mycenaeans (see chapter 11).

1450–1200 BC: Postpalatial Period or Late Minoan (LM IB/IIIA–LM IIIC)

At about 1450 all the palaces were abandoned or violently destroyed. But the palace of Knossos survived as a Minoan center for more than three quarters of a century, until approximately 1375 BC or a little later. Possibly it had the overlordship of the island. Throughout this period there is evidence of an influx by the peoples of the mainland of Greece, the Mycenaeans. They introduced their own language and used a modification of the Linear A script, the so-called Linear B. Yet the culture remained distinctly Minoan and many towns continued to flourish.

A Brief Survey of the Minoan Cult Equipment

This work is not meant as a handbook on Minoan religion. In this respect M. P. Nilsson's monumental book is still indispensable. And yet, it would be unreasonable to ask the reader to consult another book in order to comprehend the terms used here. I have thus made a list of the most important cult equipment. I have included a pictogram, followed by a few paragraphs concerning the use of each item. For more detailed information the reader is asked to consult Nilsson's *Minoan-Mycenaean Religion* and the notes to the text of the ensuing chapters.

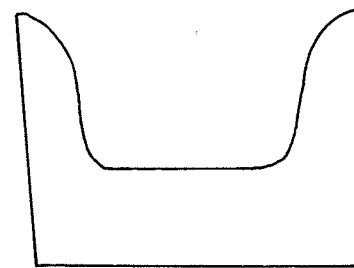


fig. 3

Horns of consecration (fig. 3): Horn-shaped object, perhaps the most ubiquitous symbol of Minoan religion. Horns can be mounted on an altar or an entire building. For this reason they help us identify shrines in the iconography. When horns crown an altar, there is often a bough or a double axe between them. A hole between two horn projections serves for the insertion of the bough or axe. Presumably the horns were permanent, but the boughs or axes were inserted during festivals. The symbolic meaning of the horns is unknown, although the similarity with bulls' horns cannot be entirely fortuitous.

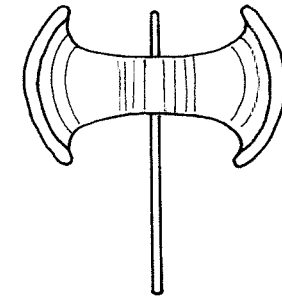


fig. 4

Double axe (fig. 4): Also a common symbol of Minoan religion. It was assumed to have been a sacrificial axe, but it is never shown in such a context. On the contrary, seals show it carried by women; on a LM III mold from Palaikastro two double axes are displayed by a goddess. The most common depiction shows the double axe being set up as a symbol in places where some ritual takes place. We do not know what symbolic significance the double axe had for the Minoans. It is paradoxical that it is held by females rather than a male weather god. It obviously denotes power, but more we cannot say.

Rhyta or libation vessels: Minoans were obsessed with the pouring of liquid offerings, or so it seems, to judge from the multiplicity of vessels they used for libations. We find both open and closed shapes, the common denominator being the good quality of the material, the cheapest of which was clay, the more expensive stone, metal, or faience.

A common type has a conical shape with a hole in the bottom for the pouring of liquids (fig. 5). A recent suggestion by R. Koehl that they were used in connection with beer is very attractive. Corical rhyta exist in clay, metal, and stone varieties. The latter were sometimes decorated with elaborate figurative scenes.



fig. 5

Conch shell: Another type of libation vessel must have been the conch shell in its natural state. Alternatively, it may have been used as a musical instrument.

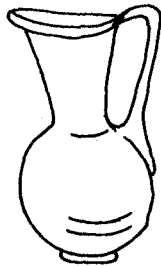


fig. 6

Common also is the jug (fig. 6). Different vessel types may have been used for different liquids.

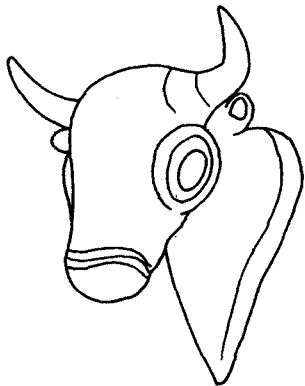


fig. 7

The most interesting of all libation vessels is the animal-shaped rhyton (fig. 7). There exist bulls, bull heads, lion heads, boar heads, goat heads, etc. The objects are hollow; the liquid is filled from an opening in the bottom or top and is poured out from a hole on the snout.



fig. 8

Libation table (fig. 8): Libations were sometimes poured on small stone tables which were hollow on top to receive the liquid. Many such stone tables have been found in sanctuaries. Some have what may be dedicatory inscriptions in Linear A.

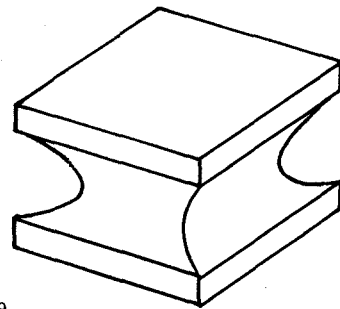


fig. 9

Incurved altars (fig. 9): Normally made of stone, these objects are portable. They have a characteristic shape, curving inward in the center. They have been found *in corpore* like most of the above implements, but they appear more often as a symbol in religious iconography. One of their main functions was to form the substructure or support for a throne or platform on which the goddess sat (see chapter 7).

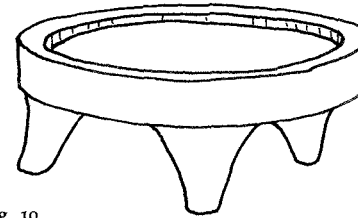


fig. 10

Offering tables (fig. 10): Another type of small portable table may have been used as an altar (although this identification has been disputed). The object is tripod and circular in shape. It can be made of stone, but more often the material is clay with painted decorations. On these tables would have been placed food offerings, most likely fruit.

Permanent stone altars: Stone altars are rare in Minoan Crete but one is depicted on the stone rhyton from Zakros. Few have been found *in corpore*.

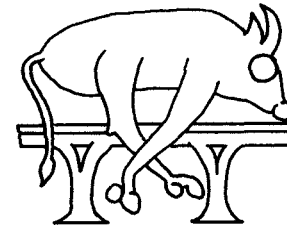


fig. 11

Sacrificial tables (fig. 11): Wooden tables attested only in the iconography, where they are always shown in connection with a sacrificial animal on top. It is thus certain that they were used for sacrifice. The elaborately carved legs suggest that they were made of wood; they thus must have been portable.

Conical cups: The cheapest and handiest type of offering vessel is the conical cup. In size it is smaller than a teacup. Sometimes conical cups are found upside

down in shrines. A ceremony of offering in which the contents were to be received by the earth can be inferred. The conical cup is certainly an everyday, mass-produced vessel to be used in the household for consumption of food. Thus: *not every conical cup is an offering vessel*, but their presence can allow us to infer offerings and/or dining.

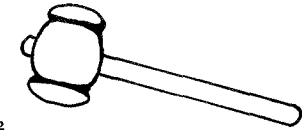


fig. 12

Stone maces (fig. 12): Instruments consisting of a wooden shaft ending in a stone ball. They have been found *in corpore* in palatial and burial contexts mostly. In the iconography they are held by male priests only. Maces are certainly a kind of scepter denoting power, but they may well have been used also for stunning the animal during sacrifices.

Composite vessels or kernoi: The designation *kernos* refers to any kind of vessel which comprises several smaller receptacles. Presumably they were used for multiple offerings.



fig. 13

Tubular stands (fig. 13): These are tubular vessels with several handles, often

decorated with snakes. For this reason they are also referred to as snake tubes. Recent research has shown that they have little to do with snakes (as Evans had supposed); rather, they are stands on which offering bowls were to be placed.

History of Research on Minoan Religion and the Methodology Followed Here

It was Evans, of course, who laid the foundations for the study of Minoan religion. Discussion of his outlook and methods are taken up in subsequent chapters. Here it should be mentioned that the methodological tools he had at his disposal were exciting but not subtle.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century scholars had been made aware of cultural alternatives to western civilizations. They indulged in studies of the "primitives," whom they regarded as possessing primitive minds, interesting but undeveloped. L. Lévy-Bruhl in his *L'âme primitive* (1927), for example, expanded on the dichotomy between the primitive and civilized mind, each possessing its own logic. Evolutionism, the belief in development from primitive to civilized modes of thought and perception of the world, became fashionable.

Two fundamental assumptions were at work in evolutionism. Firstly, there was the belief in the "psychic unity of mankind"; secondly, it was thought that all cultures followed the same kind of development.⁵ Development here, however, implied gradual change toward progress. The affinity with Darwin's model is obvious.

Another feature that should be stressed is the emphasis many scholars placed on rituals, especially those that

were related to fertility, vegetation and renewal. W. Mannhardt published his *Wald- und Feldkulte in 1875/77*. He spoke of a corn demon, a vegetation spirit. Later, the classical scholar J. Harrison would create the concept of "*Eniautos daimon*," a spirit symbolizing "not only vegetation, but the whole world-process of decay, death, renewal."⁶ Sir James Frazer in his *Golden Bough* (abridged version 1922) stressed fertility and the magical practices (magic is thought to characterize the "primitive mind") which ensured renewal. With its emphasis on ethnological comparanda, this work was a model for many a researcher dealing with religion.

In 1902 Sir Arthur Evans published the important article "The Mycenaean Tree and Pillar Cult."⁷ At that time he had not conducted enough excavations on Crete to be aware of the richness of the Minoan material which he would later have at his disposal. He based his analysis only on iconographical evidence, most of which came from seal-stones. The results of his study confirmed what was thought to typify the "primitive mind": the Mycenaean (this is how the prehistoric peoples of Greece were known before terms got more specific) used aniconic (non-imagistic), animistic forms of cult.

As Minoan culture came to be better known through the excavations at Knossos and Phaistos, Evans deepened his study of religion. He never regarded the Minoans as savages, but, as a genuine antiquarian, he could not resist extensive comparisons with other ancient cultures, which by definition included "primitive" features. I do not think he was wrong in broadening his scope. The problem rather lies in his analysis and the almost naive equation of foreign customs with those of Minoan culture. Most serious is the lack of internal analysis of

Minoan evidence alone; this is a step crucial in the reasoning; otherwise, one forces models upon the evidence.

Then came an important breakthrough with M. P. Nilsson's *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and its Survival in Greek Religion* (1927, 1950). Nilsson had some experience with archaeology, but his main field was Greek religion, where he has made a lasting impact.⁸ His perspective combined the descriptive and analytical approaches of the archaeologist with the insights of the religious historian. Moreover, he was a positivist; he paid close attention to the evidence and avoided the speculations and leaps of fantasy that sometimes characterized Evans's writings. It is fair to see Nilsson as consciously reacting to Evans, who belonged to the previous generation. Nilsson's most important contribution was the systematization of the study of Minoan and Mycenaean religion through a collection of all the available iconographical and architectural data, through the setting of methodological parameters, and through the introduction of a sensible classification of the evidence.

Nilsson must be given credit not only for an amazingly thorough job, especially in regard to iconography, but also for a sound approach. His dictum that Minoan religion is like a picture book without a text became famous. His work is still the basic book on Aegean religion, even though it is a little out-of-date since excavations have brought much more material to light.

This said, *Minoan-Mycenaean Religion* suffers from three important shortcomings. First, Nilsson's own bias is evident already in the second part of the title, *and its Survival in Greek Religion*, which betrays his interest in Greek rather than in Minoan-Mycenaean religion. Schliemann's sensational discoveries at Troy

and Mycenae, which supposedly proved the historical veracity of the Homeric epics, added a dimension of true historicity to evolutionism: the historical origins of Greek religion became tangible and could be found in the Minoan and Mycenaean layers. It should be noted that this search for origins still dominates many a modern study of Greek religion.⁹

Nilsson thus was interested in Bronze Age religion less for its own sake than as a prefiguration of Greek cults: the origins of Greek religion had to be found. The latter started from primitive origins, he claimed. Concepts such as "animism," "primitive mentality," "totemism," "tabu," "magic," and "fetishism" are not uncommon in his work.¹⁰ Note that Nilsson was very familiar with and interested in folk religion, in the peasant's rituals related to harvest and renewal. This too influenced his approach, especially in regard to the so-called tree-cult (see chapter 8). Thus, *Minoan-Mycenaean Religion* reflects the evolutionist tendencies which started in the mid-nineteenth century.

Second, Nilsson treated Minoan and Mycenaean religion as though they were the same. He was not unaware that the inhabitants of the mainland and Crete had distinct cultures, of course. But he could not see a way of separating the two, since so much of Mycenaean iconography and the cult implements were borrowed from the Minoans.

Third, Nilsson's work reads like an encyclopedia. It lacks the kind of coherence that characterized Evans's vision. A social component, a model that would tie the various aspects of the cult together, is conspicuously absent.

Other scholars, such as the Swedish archaeologist Axel W. Persson, continued the investigation of Minoan religion. His work also is permeated by nineteenth-century ideas about magic,

fertility, and vegetation. His most influential work, *The Religion of Greece in Prehistoric Times* (1942), contains much which is exciting. And yet it is flawed by the same mistake: the forcing of Greek mythology and religion onto the more "primitive" Minoan-Mycenaean.

Supplementary studies taking into account the ever-increasing material have appeared more recently and are frequently referred to in this book. B. Rutkowski's *Cult Places in the Aegean* (1971², 1986²) is not only an update on nature and town sanctuaries but includes some speculations (not too systematically developed) on the social order. G. Gesell's *Town, Palace, and House Cult in Minoan Crete* (1985) is a thorough examination of all types of urban shrines, classified according to type and place. In addition to these books there have been important articles by K. Branigan and P. Warren discussing new material, especially in regard to Early Minoan cult and burial customs. Warren's most recent piece, *Minoan Religion as Ritual Action* (1988), is a synthesis of the various current trends in religious studies on Minoan Crete. The publication of the shrine of Phylakopi on the island of Melos in the Aegean by C. Renfrew and of the cultic material on the Mycenaean mainland by K. Kilian have introduced new methodological approaches to the study of prehistoric religions (see chapter 11). Now we can regard Minoan and Mycenaean religion as coherent autonomous and distinct systems, not primitive prefigurations of Greek cult. Still, the search for origins continues.

But it is in the field of theory and methodology of Greek religion that the greatest advancements have been made. The French structuralist school, on the one hand, and Walter Burkert, on the other, have shed new light on Greek myth and ritual. Burkert not only regards religion as part of a definite socio-historical context, but also explores the

symbolic dimension of cult, especially in regard to myths and rituals.¹¹ The school of J.-P. Vernant in Paris¹² has enhanced our understanding of the codes of Greek religion and myths by employing structuralist methods, at the same time stressing the importance of the socio-economic system. A new way of looking at religion thus emerges: it is a code to be understood only in relation to specific cultural data.

The above are some of the landmarks that are crucial for the history of scholarship, and there is little doubt that considerable progress has taken place since the times of Evans and Nilsson, both in the refinement of methodological tools and in the richness of the material.

On the other hand, there has been a tendency to marginalize religion by the positivistic school of New Archaeology. Religion is elusive, it is claimed, in comparison to economy and subsistence. Statistics and quantification of data may yield more secure results than speculation on mental processes. Inherent in every attempt at reconstruction of rites is the danger of fantasy.¹³ And who can claim to understand a religion that has left no written sources behind?

The skepticism is legitimate, but the resigned attitude is dangerous, for no ancient culture can be understood without its religion. If we reduce the study of culture to pottery classification and data quantification (with some spice from the socioeconomic sphere) the scope of the humanist may be lost to that of the pseudo-scientist.

In the present book, I shall not try to present all the data as Nilsson did in 1927 and 1950. Regarding the material, the reader is referred to Nilsson, Rutkowski, and Gesell (above). Rather, my intention is to explore *the ways* in which the data can be interpreted. I have attempted to raise questions that are more relevant to the historian of religion than to the archaeologist. For this reason I

have not shrunk from attempting reconstructions of both religious ritual and the entire cultural pattern. Structuralism, semiotics, anthropology of religion, and cultural anthropology have all influenced my methodology. But the most decisive influence on my work has been exerted by W. Burkert. With him I firmly believe that there is a level of explanation of human behavior that goes back to our origins as a human species; let us call it a biological level of explanation.¹⁴ We cannot ignore the fact that on the level of ritual, be it initiations, weddings, funerals, or sacrifices, there are striking similarities between cultures unconnected in both space and time. The common factor must be human nature itself: the sharing of a common biological heritage which influences human behavior.

This does not mean, of course, that human behavior is monolithic and uniform, reducible to a few simplistic formulas. We have to introduce a second level of explanation which takes into account that which is culture-specific. A third level is the psychology of particular individuals, but that is normally not the concern of the historian of religion.

Anthropology of religion thus can be regarded as a discipline in its own right. By isolating those patterns which recur in many societies (and which are almost universal) we can create a basis for understanding the mechanisms, purpose, and function of religion. But we must not confuse this uniformity of human behavior in certain areas of religious activity with the ideas about the "primitive mind" proposed by the evolutionists. Technologically backward and more advanced societies can be seen to converge in the field of ritual action and symbolic communication.

All this is very relevant to the study of Minoan ritual. As mentioned above, we have no intelligible texts. But we can make considerable progress toward the

understanding of the system if we combine (a) the more modern theoretical approaches, as outlined above, with (b) the archaeological data and (c) comparative material from other cultures. Egypt, the Near East, and the Mycenaean mainland, which demonstrably had historical connections with Minoan Crete, provide, of course, the most valuable comparanda.

Three more points need to be made. First, in regard to the archaeological data, I have used a semiotic approach in decoding architectural structures and iconographical scenes. In order to understand the signs, I have attempted to make correlations which reveal their internal relations. Thus, even if the specific meaning cannot be totally understood, the structure is at least revealed.

Second, I often use comparative material from Greek religion. I hope I shall not be accused of projecting backwards, as Evans and Persson did. If I use Greek cult as a comparison, it is not because I necessarily believe in continuity (although I do not totally and in all cases exclude it), but because I want to stress the similarity of the phenomena. The reason for choosing Greek religion rather than, let us say, Chinese, results from the simple fact that I am more familiar with the former than with the latter.

Third, I have laid more emphasis on the ritual practice than on the beliefs of the Minoans. This is because I am convinced that ritual can be decoded through internal analysis of the data and a recourse to anthropology of religion, whereas the beliefs of a people are hardly accessible without written texts. The question of gods and goddesses is nevertheless addressed in chapter 7.

My goal has been to understand Minoan religion as a whole, taking into account its symbolic expression as well as the historical and the social setting. Religious systems are dynamic rather than

static; with every change in the social structure, there come also changes in religion. Although this book is primarily about the religion of Crete in the Neopalatial period (richest of all in evidence), one chapter is devoted to the Prepalatial, another to the Postpalatial era. I have thus tried to keep the diachronic component in perspective, al-

though it is evident that there is scope for more work on these early and late phases.

This work is dedicated to the memory of Sir Arthur Evans. To him we owe a vision of the Minoans which has proved a "thread of Ariadne" in the path along the Minoan labyrinth.

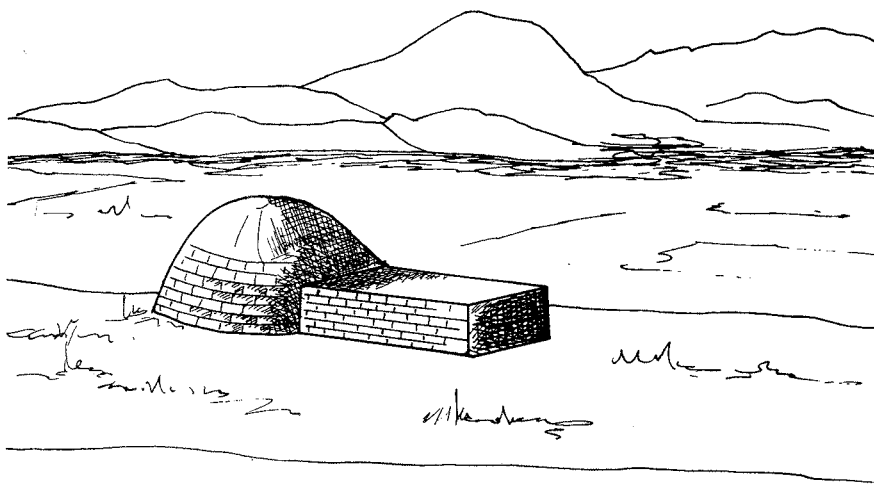


Fig. 14. Tomb of Apesokari, reconstruction

2

THE CULT OF THE DEAD IN PREPALATIAL CRETE

Introduction

In the mid-third millennium, Crete did not yet possess true urban centers, nor palaces. However, it did have settlements scattered mostly along the eastern and southern part of the island. Two of them, Myrtos and Vasilike, are particularly well documented.¹ Neither possesses spectacular architecture, and monumental religious expression is notably absent. Although Myrtos has yielded a shrine complex which was apparently used by a wider public,² the rooms are small and the cult equipment is very modest. We must turn from the domain of the living to that of the dead in order to find something that approaches monumentality.

Although the tombs of the Prepalatial period (c. 2800–1900 BC) differ in size and shape depending on the region, they were the most monumental constructions on the island. The large size can be partly explained by the fact that they were designed for collective burial, but the elaborate form must have had other reasons. As one can see from the reconstruction of the Apesokari tomb (fig. 14), it is a large, imposing building

that dominates the plain. The exceptional role of the dead can also be deduced from the richness of burial gifts: most known luxury items of the Prepalatial era, such as gold, ivory and stone objects, come from funerary contexts. Like the contemporary Egyptians, the Minoans were willing to invest in the dead.

Most important for our purposes is the evidence of communal cult around the tombs. It has, in fact, been suggested that cemeteries were the ritual foci of the communities of Prepalatial times.³ Cult of the dead and funerary ritual, however, can be easily confused in the archaeological record; to clarify the issue, a few words must be said about each.

A few simple observations and functionalist definitions will have to suffice. Beliefs in afterlife or the concept of the soul are not necessarily relevant to this discussion, since they can apply to both categories.

Funerary ritual involves rites conducted at the time of death of one particular individual. Visitations and tending of the grave by the family and bringing of offerings at regular intervals can be regarded as cult of the dead. Still,

they are family operations and lack the communal aspect which I wish to include in my definition.

Thus, it is communal participation on occasions independent of the funeral that interest us here.⁴ The venerated dead need not be one individual, a king or a hero, but spirits of the dead ancestors. The crucial factor here is the belief in the potency of the dead experienced communally.

The type of cult, of course, depends on the type of society. Where kingship is strong or in need of assertion, cult of dead kings is prominent.⁵ In relatively egalitarian societies, such as that of ancient Greece, it was the hero, the protector of the city, who was the recipient of the cult.⁶ African tribal communities commonly worship the collective spirits of the ancestors who are invoked to help in situations of need; conversely, they are placated with offerings when a disaster, thought to result from their anger, befalls the tribe.⁷ In Egypt, the cult of the dead king played a major role, but there were also festivals of "the dead" in general, attached to seasonal occasions or to festivals of certain gods.⁸ Thus, the situations in which the cult of the dead is practiced are independent of funerary ritual; they can even be connected with seasonal festivals or crises of various sorts.⁹

Ideally, one should be able to infer from the archaeological finds whether funerary ritual or cult is involved. The Minoan tombs of the Prepalatial era give evidence for the latter. The large size of the communal tombs indicates that they were deliberately constructed for conspicuous display. In addition, many had paved areas for gatherings and altars. Cult implements and offerings were found *outside* the tombs, thus suggesting periodic visitation to the cemeteries by *sizable groups of people*. Evidence of *collective* secondary burial implies treatment

of the dead. This is not unimportant, because it suggests the involvement of not one but several families. In the ensuing discussion of the monuments, particular attention will be paid to the evidence of cult implements and secondary burial.

The Monuments

On the peninsula (now an island) of Mochlos in eastern Crete existed a very important Prepalatial cemetery with collective burials. It was relatively extensive and included small as well as larger tombs carved into the rocks and facing the sea.¹⁰ The latter easily earn the designation "monumental," as they have impressive facades built with large irregular slabs. They contained exceptionally rich finds so that the excavator, R. Seager, identified them as belonging to princely families.¹¹ The area outside the tombs is spacious, capable of serving communal gatherings. In one case, a series of steps leads to a built structure which could have served as a bench-altar, although no finds were reported on it.¹² An important fact is that some of the tombs were empty of bones and it was suggested by Seager that they were mortuary chapels. Others were ossuaries containing disarticulated skeletons and many skulls. Tomb I, for example, had one empty chamber which could have served as a chapel, whereas another room contained as many as thirty skulls.¹³ Obviously, secondary burial was important at Mochlos.

That the cemetery was visited for a long period of time, and that offerings were brought to the tombs, is certain. Even during the New Palace period, visitations continued, as can be inferred from objects found in the top layers without associated burials.¹⁴ Seager notes: "It is not easy to understand the pres-

ence of MM I-III objects in and near the big chamber tombs, as they are seldom associated with human remains."¹⁵ He considered cult of the ancestors as a possible explanation for the phenomenon.

Also of considerable interest are the finds. Predominant are stone cups/bowls and jugs of exquisite quality and craftsmanship.¹⁶ Toasting rituals can be inferred from such vessels. Small stone vessels could have contained unguents. Stone palettes, which are common in other graves as well, probably were used for coloring the dead.¹⁷ There is some gold jewelry, including pendants, pins, and headbands. The latter are too fragile to have been worn in life, and it has been suggested that they were manufactured specifically for the use of the dead.¹⁸ It is interesting that one of these bands has eyes: is that because it gives back to the body the sight it has lost?

All of the above objects suggest treatment of the corpses, but need not imply cult of the dead. It is only when we turn to certain items, such as libation vessels, which we know were used in sanctuaries, that we are on safer grounds. Of these, two will be mentioned here. One is a vessel in the shape of a woman holding her breasts (fig. 15). As it is hollow, liquid could flow out of the breasts. It is generally agreed that she represents a goddess.¹⁹ The other is a bull vessel of a later date (MM II), covered with a net.²⁰ The symbolism of these will be explored further on; for the time being it is sufficient to note that they are implements likely to have been used in religious ceremonies.

Another group of tombs was situated in the south of Crete, in the Mesara plain and its surroundings. Although their early phases coincide with those of Mochlos, some continue into MM III/LM I—namely, the Palace era. Unlike the Mochlos examples, the tombs are not cut into the rock; they are freestanding cir-



Fig. 15. Goddess vessel from Mochlos

cular buildings. Most likely, they had some kind of rudimentary vaulting (fig. 14).²¹ Being built on the flatland, they must have stood out visually.

The burial chambers proper were spacious and contained a large number of bodies; they too seem to have been communal. A special feature of these tombs are rectangular chambers either in the form of anterooms or annexes, attached to the exterior walls (figs. 19; 20).²² The purpose of these chambers is obscured by the fact that they were later used as storage rooms or ossuaries.²³ Yet, the original function of the annexes cannot have been that of ossuaries, since many of them are empty of skeletal material. They can be best interpreted as auxiliary rooms for deposition of equipment which would have been used by those who visited the graves.

Typical finds in the annexes are: conical cups in large quantities, jugs, and, sometimes, storage pithoi or wine jars.²⁴ These imply toasting rituals²⁵ or offerings of whatever liquids were kept in the jars. It is likely that the liquids were meant as offerings because in some of the annexes, or areas outside the tombs, the conical cups were found upside down.²⁶ Offering to deities below by inverting vessels is a widespread custom, especially in the Mediterranean, and has been studied recently in its broader context.²⁷

Another category of finds unequivocally points to cult practices: ritual equipment. A bull rhyton (libation vessel) was found in one of the outer chambers of the tomb at Hagios Kyrillos along with a statuette of a Minoan male. In this context it is worth noting that figurines of humans are common in Minoan sanctuaries. At Apesokari Tomb II, there were double axes, implements commonly found in shrines.²⁸

The location of certain cult items outside the tombs is most important as it shows that the ceremonies were practiced in the open. No doubt the activities can be brought into relation with the paved areas or courts that some of the tombs possessed. These would have made ideal places for communal gatherings.²⁹

Such a paved area exists at Koumasa where there is a cluster of three tombs. Between them, the following vessels in various shapes were found: several "goddesses" (fig. 16); several bulls, one with men hanging from the horns (fig. 17); several birds; three jugs with humans clinging to the necks; and in addition, a vessel in the shape of an egg.³⁰

This remarkable assemblage not only testifies to public ritual but also gives clues regarding the symbolic contents of the rites. Prominent are the figures of women (presumably goddesses) and an-

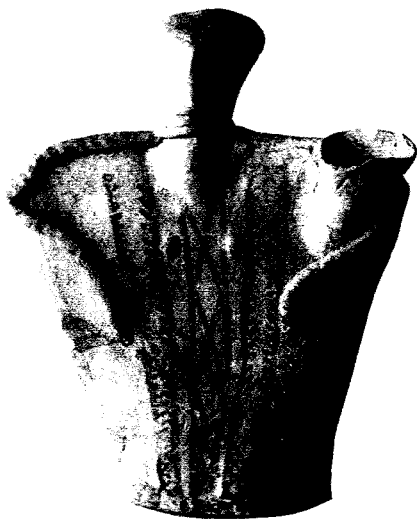


Fig. 16. Goddess vessel from Koumasa

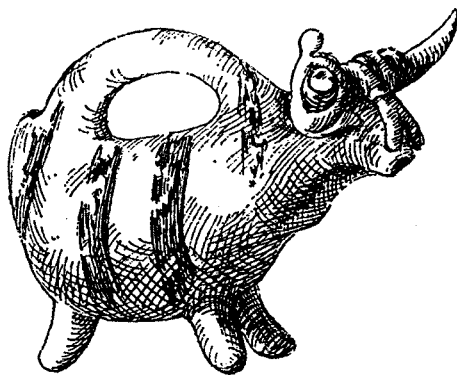


Fig. 17. Bull-rhyton from Koumasa with men hanging on the horns of the bull

imals, among which the bull emerges as especially important. It will be remembered that vessels of similar shapes were present at Mochlos; they recur in other tombs in the Mesara as well, notably at Platanos and Porti. The activity that can

be inferred from such vessels is libations or toasting rituals. More will be said at the end of this chapter about the importance of liquids. Suffice it to stress here that the conceptual spectrum implied by the human and animal vessels extends beyond funerary practice to encompass wider concerns of fertility and regeneration.

The double tomb complex at Vorou also yielded interesting finds. The rectangular annex contained no skeletal material, only jugs and cups, as well as a strange object of the class known as "sheep-bell idols"; consequently it can be established that the chambers were used as repositories, not ossuaries.³¹ In the area outside the tomb were found 18 more "sheep-bell idols" under the wall thickening, and they may be plausibly considered a votive deposit.³² At any rate, they testify to public ceremonies outside the tomb.

A few words must be said here about the mysterious "sheep-bell idols."³³ They have received this designation because of a vague resemblance to sheep bells. It should be noted, however, that groups from different regions exhibit considerable variation. They are quite small. On top they have two hornlike projections with a handle between them. Sometimes they come in pairs with a bull or some other figure in between (fig. 18). In front they are perforated, usually with two holes, sometimes more. The impression of a bell is destroyed by the "horns." On the other hand, the so-called horns can be seen as raised arms attached to a robed female. One specimen in faience has painted eyes and a nose, thus resembling a face.³⁴ To anyone who has handled them it will be obvious that there is little consistency in the features; their makers felt free to invent and experiment. It is perhaps because of this vagueness that none of the proposed interpretations re-

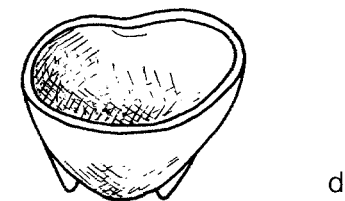
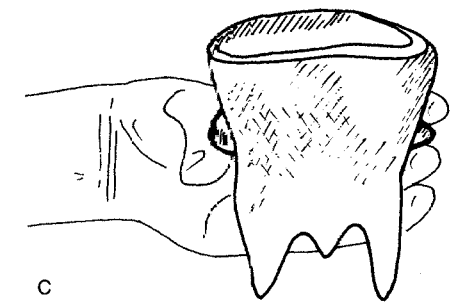
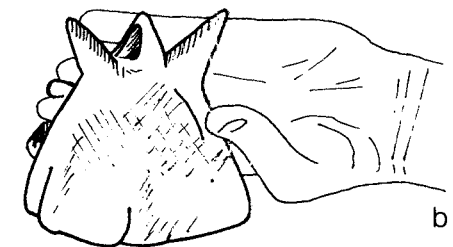
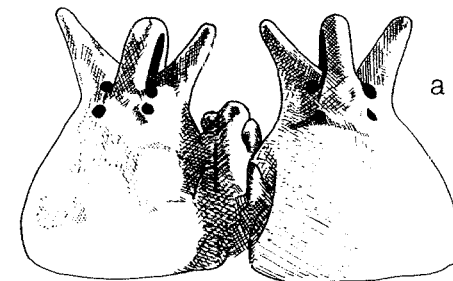


Fig. 18. "Sheep-bells": a, a double specimen from Tylissos; b, c, and d, from Vorou. The last are held upside down.

guarding the meaning of their form³⁵ has been fully convincing: the objects themselves do not reproduce faithfully any particular object. Thus, I agree with a suggestion made recently that they are deliberately ambiguous.³⁶

Let us turn to the find context now. It is in cult places of the MM period that "sheep-bell idols" occur: nature sanctuaries, tombs, and urban shrines. From Tylissos comes the "double sheep-bell" with the double perforations of figure 18a. However, the specimens from the tomb of Vorou give us more specific contextual associations: they were found together with cups and jugs. Given the context, it is reasonable to at least ask the question whether they may be actual vessels, and not figurines or votive idols, as has been hitherto assumed. These vessels were small, so they must have been designed for drinking very small quantities of liquid, perhaps strong wine. In cases where the perforation is large, they could also be used as rhyta for pouring. However, in order for the objects to be used as vessels, they have to be turned upside down, in which case they have a distinct similarity to conical cups (fig. 18d). Seen in this inverted position, the vessels now resemble sheep or goat udders. What looked like horns now can be seen as teats. A magic shape is thus achieved. When carried by the handle, the objects look like a woman with raised arms; when turned upside down, they look like udders. If that is true, the small bovine animals that sometimes feature in the double specimens can be better understood.

Given the fact that we have met vessels with female form and perforated breasts in tomb contexts, this play with images is interesting. It establishes a certain link between the shape of "woman with breasts" and "udder": namely, forms connected with life-giving liquids. I would then suggest that the so-called

sheep bells are yet another type of vessel. Their peculiarity consists in that, after the liquid was consumed, they would be inverted, mouth down and handle upwards.

Before leaving the subject of cult practiced in the areas outside the tombs, an offering table and a votive wild goat figurine from Porti should be mentioned, as they are objects typically found in shrines.³⁷

We now turn to a tomb known as Apesokari I in the Mesara (figs. 14; 19) which has yielded unambiguous evidence of cult within a mortuary chapel. The tomb had a spacious anteroom with a pillar.³⁸ The room proper had no burials, although some skeletons were found in adjacent compartments (marked with X's on plan, fig. 19). The finds included stone bowls, cups, and a storage pithos.³⁹ Most important was a niche in the anteroom (B) with a stone concretion in a human shape. The excavator suggested it was a deity,⁴⁰ but it could also be a visual symbol of the dead. The position of the niche with the idol at the entrance to the tomb shows that it was accessible to visitors. But the main altar was located outside (C), and it was from there that the most numerous finds were made; most common were stone vases and cups.⁴¹

Of great interest is another circular tomb with rectangular annex chambers, at Kamilari, near Phaistos in the Mesara (fig. 20). It obviously was a significant monument because it stayed in use for a long time, starting in the Prepalatial and extending into the New Palace period. Evidence of the cult of the dead can be adduced for all the phases.

The area outside the tomb was marked off by a wall; inside the enclosure was an altar. Next to the latter were found a series of inverted conical cups forming a semicircle.⁴² The annexes con-

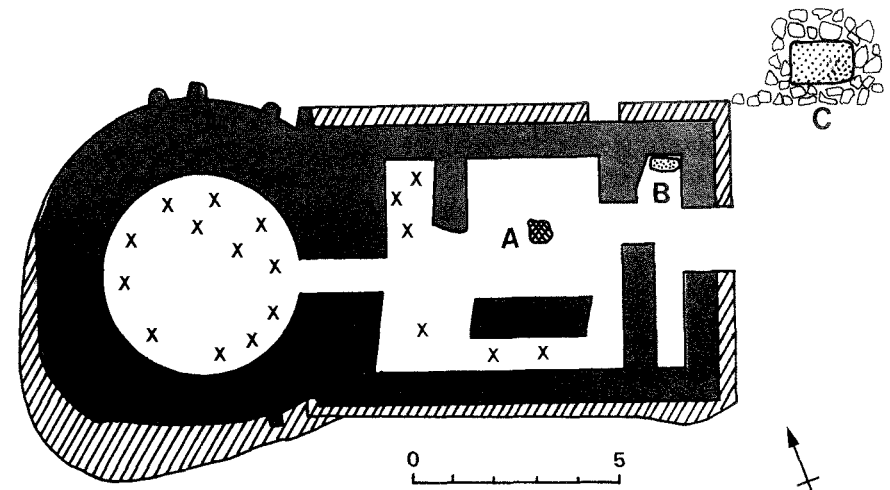


Fig. 19. Tomb at Apesokari, plan

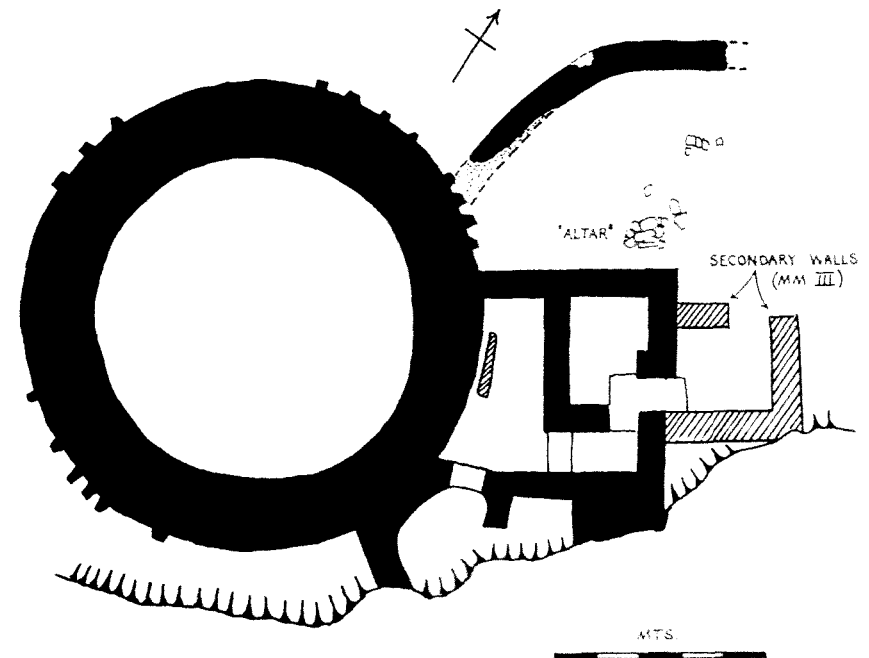


Fig. 20. Tomb at Kamilari, plan



Fig. 21. Offerings to the dead. Model from Kamilari

tained storage jars and conical cups. We can infer that liquids were used in connection with toasting rituals.⁴³ Some annexes were used also as ossuaries. By far the most exciting finds from the annexes, however, are a series of clay models of human figurines engaged in different activities (see figs. 21–23). These will be discussed in some detail as they are a most eloquent testimony in regard to the cult of the dead.

The first model (fig. 21) depicts four figures of varying sizes which look vaguely male; at any rate they look deliberately sexless, having neither genitals nor breasts. They are seated against the wall of a portico (there existed originally columns and a roof). The wall is surmounted by sacred horns.⁴⁴ The latter are important as they define the space as sacred; we thus know that this is not an everyday, secular scene. In front of the seated figures are tables.

Remnants of clay discs, representing cups(?) are atop two of the tables, and possibly all four originally. Facing each pair of the seated figures are two males (they at least have genitals) holding jugs. The excavator, D. Levi, assumed that the seated figures were deified dead.⁴⁵ Although this interpretation has been questioned, there are good reasons to identify the figures as the dead or deified ancestors. They are larger than the humans serving them; they are of undefinable sex, and, finally, they are receiving offerings. On these grounds a secular interpretation is untenable.⁴⁶ In addition, the offerings are libations, the very rituals for the practice of which there is incontrovertible archaeological evidence from tombs, as is evident from the numerous libation vessels and conical cups. It remains to clarify one issue: why must the figures be the deified dead rather than divini-

ties? Yet, had divinities been intended, their sex and attributes would have been more clearly defined; how else could one have recognized which god is which?⁴⁷ Noteworthy also is the absence of a goddess, although the female element seems to be very much present in the ritual symbolism represented by the anthropomorphic goddess vessels. It therefore seems more likely that the figures, who look male but whose sex is left somewhat vague, are dead ancestors of varied status; this would explain why some are bigger than others.

The other two models represent practical activities carried out in a sacred context. Both take place in enclosures surmounted by sacred horns.⁴⁸ The second (fig. 22) shows two women in the act of preparing bread. The space must be imagined by the viewer as being en-

closed by a wall; otherwise, the presence of the doorway cannot be explained. A man seems to be looking through the latter. This spectator from the outside suggests that the preparation of bread was done in secrecy. This Peeping Tom effect suggests that the intrusion of the male in the female activity is forbidden. The juxtaposition of male and female here is interesting in so far as the spheres of the sexes do not mingle. Note that in the previous model with the offering scene, no woman was present. That preparation of bread takes place in a mortuary context may seem surprising at first, and yet the nexus death/fertility/grain is widespread.⁴⁹ The connection is operative on two levels: on a conscious level the participants may have supplicated the dead ancestors for help with their crops by offering them food; on a



Fig. 22. Preparation of bread. Model from Kamilari



Fig. 23. Treading on grapes. Model from Kamilari

less conscious one, the food-producing activity for the living is a counterforce to death.

The third model (fig. 23) represents four male figures with peaked caps. It is generally said that they are dancing.⁵⁰ Yet, the small round enclosure is not well suited for this, as it is too confining a space. Another activity seems therefore far more probable and especially appropriate to the posture of interlocked arms: treading on grapes to produce wine. This fits the picture much better since wine pouring and libations match the archaeological finds betokening extensive usage of liquids. In addition, there is confirmation of wine production from the cemetery at Archanes (to be discussed below). That such an occasion should be connected with the dead can be explained by principles similar to those delineated above: vegetation is juxtaposed to death, merrymaking to grief and desolation. As an analogy

only, the god of wine, Dionysus of Greek historical times, can be mentioned. The polarity of wine/merry making to death is combined in the articulation of his divine personality. He is connected both to joyous festivals and to the underworld. One of his festivals was carried out in an atmosphere of ambivalence, mixing joy, guilt, and an awareness of the spirits of the dead.⁵¹

From the Mesara in the south, we now move to Archanes, near Knossos, in central Crete. The cemetery of Phourni, located at the foothills of the impressive sacred mountain of Juktas, has been rightly considered the richest and most significant burial site in Crete.⁵² It was first used in the Prepalatial period and continued all the way to Postpalatial times, when other burial grounds had fallen out of use. The quality and richness of the finds shows that personages of exceptional status were buried there, while the extensive grounds of the cemetery further testify to its importance; no comparably sized burial site has been found in the whole Aegean.

For the purpose of our discussion, the chief interest lies in the complexity of the functions of the cemetery. The excavators, J. and E. Sakellarakis, have shown that it did not function merely as a burial site, but that it included cult buildings and industrial installations. It even has been suggested that there was a permanent priesthood residing there in charge of the cult of the dead, as was the case in Egypt.⁵³

Both primary and secondary burials are attested: we can thus divide the buildings as tombs or ossuaries.⁵⁴ But the distinction is arbitrary, since each building could have contained both. Secondary burial is especially apparent when bones of several individuals have been enclosed in clay boxes (larnakes)⁵⁵ in one case a skull was contained in a

pot.⁵⁶ The custom of secondary burial is thus securely attested at Phourni.

As far as cult buildings go, they are all Palatial in date and fall therefore outside the chronological limits of this chapter. Still, it is important to mention them briefly, if for no other reason than to show that the cult of the dead continued into the Palace era.

Especially important is a subterranean vaulted chamber accessible by a stairway, where offerings may have been deposited. A chthonic (underworld) cult may be plausibly conjectured in connection with it.⁵⁷ Another important site is a pillar crypt complex, or "Temple Tomb" as Sakellarakis calls it,⁵⁸ adjacent to the major circular Tomb B.

One building was devoted to production: grinders (for the making of bread?), loomweights, and stone tools abound, while a wine press confirms the process of wine production in a funerary or post-funerary context.⁵⁹

Of the innumerable finds of exquisite quality only those few will be mentioned here which are relatively early in date and seem to have been cult implements, rather than burial gifts. They conform to such symbols and forms as we have met so far. A pouring vessel in the shape of a woman holding a jug (fig. 24)⁶⁰ is very similar to those from Koumasa, Myrtos, and, to a lesser extent, Mochlos (figs. 15; 16). Bull figurines, birds, animal-shaped rhyta, and so-called sheep-bell vessels⁶¹ are also attested. From the burial gift category, on the other hand, come personal items such as jewelry, seal-stones and rings, stone vessels, daggers, etc., all of splendid quality. This brief description by no means does full justice to the importance of Phourni, the publication of which will add a significant dimension to our picture of Minoan burial customs and religious practices. But enough has been said to show that cult of the dead, which has been deduced

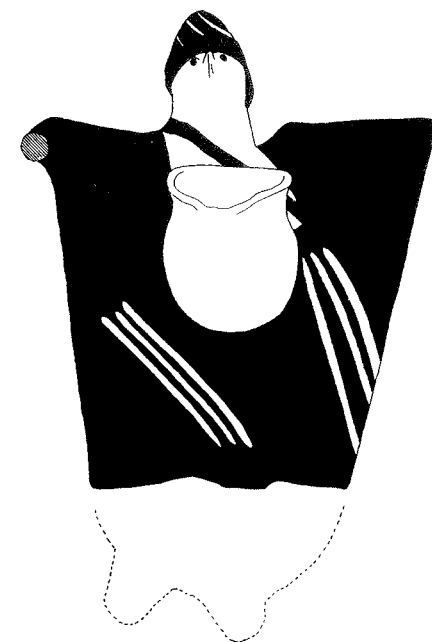


Fig. 24. Goddess vessel from Archanes

from other sites, is confirmed here; indeed something has been added to the picture concerning the organization of the cult.

If mortuary priests were in charge of Phourni, in order to tend the graves and administrate, we can postulate similar priestly personnel conducting the cult also in the Mesara tombs where the rectangular annexes could have accommodated only a few people of specialized status. They would have been the ones handling and storing the ritual equipment and officiating in the ceremonies.⁶² The existence of an officiating funerary personnel can thus be indirectly deduced.

This picture is confirmed by an analysis of the society of the early town of Gournia. The cemetery and town were

situated close to one another: they were even visually related, since the tombs did not differ much from the houses in appearance. A shrine existed close to Tomb II, so that funerary cult can be firmly established here also.⁶³ Note, however, that a second separate cemetery existed, comprising individual pithos burials, but not a shrine. An attractive suggestion is that the cemetery with its shrine, which was close to the town, was reserved for people of higher social rank and that Tomb II, next to which the shrine was set, belonged to an especially important family of the community.⁶⁴ If that is so, then the rise of important families with cultic ties may be traceable in the archaeological record.⁶⁵

Such questions open up another path of investigation in the cult of the dead: that of social ranking. As a rule, there is a change as we move from Prepalatial to Palatial times, from collective burial to individual interments in larnakes (clay coffins) or pithos jars.⁶⁶ This emphasis on the individual probably coincides with major social changes such as the development of a more pronounced hierarchy. By the time we get to the Palatial period, the monumental burials are no longer destined for the collective dead but for the ruling elite.⁶⁷

Such a special case of "monumentalization" may be found in one of the most elusive of all burial structures in Crete, that of Chrysolakkos near Malia (fig. 25). The building, which is usually called an ossuary, seems to have originated in the Prepalatial era but was rebuilt in the First Palace period in a more monumental form.⁶⁸

The First Palace period structure was fronted by a portico and built in part with ashlar blocks which were reused from an earlier unknown predecessor. Yet, it has no entrance (at least none has been identified securely) and it encloses

rooms without interconnecting doors. It is generally agreed, therefore, that the enclosure wall contained rooms belonging to an earlier phase. But what were these rooms originally and why were they walled off in this grand fashion? A few bones found inside (some *in situ* on the floor),⁶⁹ suggested to the excavator, P. Demargne, that they were burial chambers or ossuaries. The latter had no interconnecting doors because the deposition of the bones was made from above. When the ossuaries fell out of use, they were enclosed in the rectangle out of respect for the dead ancestors. Although this hypothesis has been laid open to doubt recently,⁷⁰ it seems to me that it makes the best sense out of the evidence. The existence of cultic installations, including an "altar" (?), lamps, and pottery of exactly the types attested in funerary contexts,⁷¹ along with the admittedly slight but unmistakable presence of bones, makes the hypothesis of domestic usage for Chrysolakkos untenable. One of the arguments of Demargne was based on the gold jewelry which he found: such comes mostly, if not exclusively, from graves.⁷² Note also the important fact that the building in question is situated in the cemetery area of Malia, by the seashore. From this area come numerous finds of which I shall mention only one: a goddess vessel with perforated pronounced breasts similar to those so far encountered from other burial sites.⁷³

As to the small quantities of bones, this paradox can be resolved if the original buildings were used not for proper interments, but for treatment of the bones in a secondary burial context. The "altar" and cult paraphernalia could thus be easily explained. The building complexes in the cemetery of Phourni, Archanes, have taught us that funerary installations were varied and multifaceted.

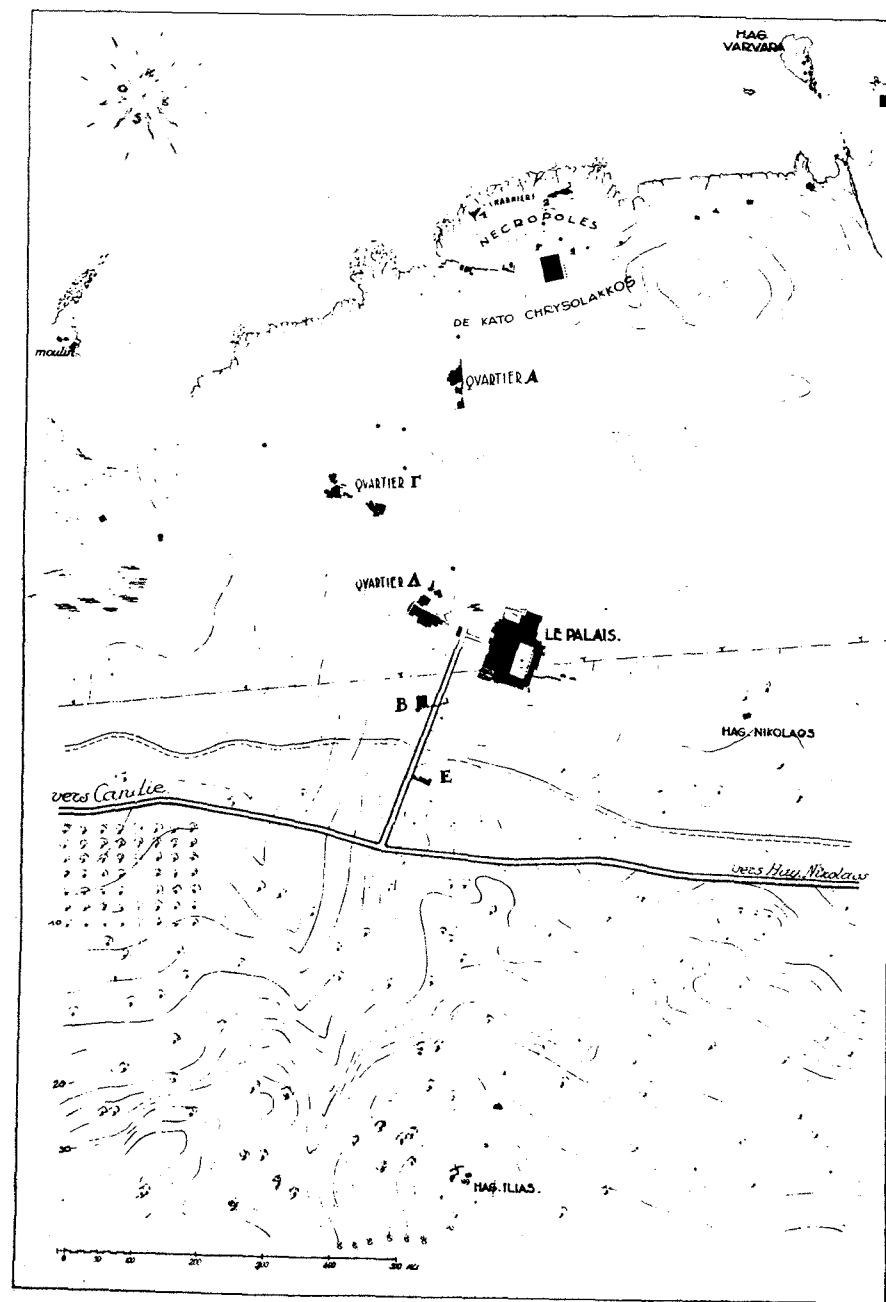


Fig. 25. Plan of Malia, showing the palace, buildings in town, and the cemetery with the building of Chrysolakkos

In summary, the enclosure of the earlier funerary buildings by the spectacular "rectangle" with a portico facade of the early Palace era represents a monumentalization of a special kind, an elevation to high status of the dead ancestors by a later generation. Is it not reasonable to assume that the ruling class at Malia glorified their ancestors by building this monument, and that they established a religious link between Chrysolakkos and the palace? At any rate, it seems certain that mortuary cult practices did not cease at the onset of the Palace period, but were merely transformed and diversified. Communal cult now took place at mountaintop shrines, in caves, and around the palaces. As for the diversification of funerary cult, it retained its original character when carried out in the vicinity of tombs, but assumed a different form when performed in the west courts and in the pillar crypts of the palaces and mansions. But that is a different story to be taken up in later chapters.

The Significance of Secondary Burial

It must have become evident by now that the Minoans were very concerned with mortuary rituals. The corpses were given rich burial gifts including figurines and amulets;⁷⁴ they received special treatment, perhaps by coloring, as the numerous palettes and cups containing pigment testify.⁷⁵ The occurrence of secondary burial was apparently common, although not absolutely necessary, since some corpses have been found intact within the burial chamber. Secondary burial must have been practiced after periodical cleaning and fumigation of the tombs.⁷⁵ After removal from their resting place, not all the bones were kept; skulls and femurs were often selected and stored, the other bones being

thrown away. Skulls received special treatment probably because they were considered an integral part of the identity of the deceased. Note that when bones are exhumed for secondary burial in rural modern Greece, it is the skull that is greeted and kissed; it is then wrapped in a special cloth.⁷⁷

Selected bones were placed in special ossuaries, as at Mochlos; in rectangular annexes, as at Mesara; or in larnakes, as at Archanes and other places. But there is also evidence of interference with the bones: some were broken; others were placed in cooking pots.⁷⁸ All this implies ritual treatment preceding secondary burial and testifies to the continuous preoccupation with the dead.

Anthropologists who have dealt with death rituals have tried to connect the practice of secondary burial to beliefs in the afterlife and the soul. Especially important is R. Hertz's analysis of death as transition.⁷⁹ One must start with attitudes toward the corpse. Most of us think of burial as the final disposal of the corpse, but, for some peoples, there are clearly two distinct phases in "death." First the person becomes lifeless, color drains from his or her face, the eyes are blank. Yet, since the physical appearance remains the same, the visual identity is retained. The corpse has at least a physical resemblance to the person that was once alive. Then the process of decomposition sets in. The features alter and it becomes increasingly difficult to recognize the physiognomy. In due course, the flesh disappears and with it all trace of the previous persona: one skeleton looks much like another. Hertz's fundamental insight is that death is not an instantaneous change, but rather a long, drawn-out process of transformation from corpse to skeleton. Further, this transitional period corresponds to the belief that the soul is in a state of liminality. While the flesh is still on the corpse, the soul is thought to flut-

ter about and to be potentially harmful to the living. The period of decomposition is seen as a period of transition before the soul reaches its final resting place in the beyond. This phase ends when decomposition is complete; it is then that secondary burial occurs and the dead need no longer be feared, because the soul is at peace. This model is derived from a study of the Berawan in Borneo,⁸⁰ but it applies surprisingly well to other cultures, including early Greece. In Homer's *Iliad*, the soul of Patroclus hovers around and troubles Achilles before the destruction of his corpse is complete.

Let us now consider whether the archaeological material can yield us any evidence of afterlife beliefs.

Some scholars have drawn attention to the fact that skeletons were treated with irreverence. This supposedly cannot be reconciled with a belief in the immortality of the soul. In Branigan's words: "Disturbance, clearance and fumigation of skeletal remains . . . all imply that there was no concern for the physical body of the dead, once it had decomposed and become a skeleton."⁸¹ At another place the same author states that "these are unlikely to be the actions of a society who hold to the concept of a physical after-life."⁸² Branigan draws the conclusion that the Minoans could not have had a belief in a physical hereafter.⁸³

Yet, what we have seen above regarding the meaning of secondary burial as signifying the final transition of the soul to the beyond explains why the skeletons were treated with irreverence once the flesh had decomposed. The discarding of skeletons, far from being irreconcilable with belief in the immortality of the soul, only shows that there was no reason to fear the corpse once secondary burial had been completed. The soul was thought to be at a safe distance in the world of the dead. Belief in the im-

mortality of the soul and casual attitudes toward the skeletal remains are thus not mutually exclusive. Let us also add the psychological factor of time. The dead are remembered only by the generation who buried them. Emotions wear away with time.

Before the subject of secondary burial is closed, a few reflections concerning when it was carried out may be appropriate. The period of transition between primary and secondary interment is, of course, determined by the time required for decomposition. In modern Greece, where secondary burial is still practiced, it is usually two to five years, which is how long it takes for flesh to rot in the Mediterranean soil. But in rural Greece, the exhumation is carried out by the family of the deceased and constitutes an act of continuing concern in the process of funerary cult. In Minoan times, however, there seems to have been a collective exhumation, attested by the storing and sorting out of skulls and femurs of several individuals. I therefore suspect that this periodical cleansing of the graves was also an occasion of communal gathering around the tombs for the practice of death cult.

If a feast was a feature accompanying the rites of exhumation, it is reasonable to assume that availability of resources may have been a crucial factor in determining the calendrical date of the gathering.

It is interesting to cite a parallel from the Berawan of Borneo without pretending that the ensuing description is necessarily applicable to Minoan funerary ritual. But because human nature displays a certain behavioral consistency, it is helpful for the archaeologist to think in terms of human activities.

When the time has come to perform the second ceremony, guests are summoned from far and wide to attend. . . . The ceremony lasts four to ten days, and every evening there is a boisterous party on the

veranda adjacent to the jar or coffin. . . . The second ceremony corresponds to what Hertz calls the "great feast."⁸⁷

Concepts such as feast, celebration, and summoning of crowds from afar seem to fit the Minoan picture particularly well. Animal bones and dozens of conical cups testify to feasting, whereas the paved areas outside the tombs point to gatherings of sizable crowds. If then we can assume a large feast for the Minoan rites of secondary burial, a time of year coinciding with harvest is a very plausible one. In that case celebrations of death and life would seem once more to coincide.

One final interesting detail: in the Berawan ceremony the soul is sent to its final resting place in the sea.⁸⁵ This is perhaps typical island mentality. Is this why many Minoan cemeteries are by the seashore, and the dead receive boats as offerings? The subject will be addressed again in chapter 11.

The Symbolic Dimension of the Rites

Having presented the evidence for secondary burial and having reflected on its significance, we can now return to the subject of primary concern, the cult of the dead.

We have seen that there is evidence of group ritual performed outside the tomb proper and that secondary burial was practiced for a group of corpses *collectively*. This is certain, as the selected bones stored in ossuaries or clay coffins come from a dozen or more individuals.

It will be remembered that festivals of the dead can also be associated with seasonal festivities as well as with festivals of certain gods.⁸⁶ That the Minoan cult of the dead involved symbols extending beyond strictly funerary concerns can be seen from the nature of

the cult implements. They encompass a wide spectrum of antithetical concepts which are united in ritual and which can be said to revolve around regeneration and vitality.

Indeed it is not uncommon that death rituals are associated with activities that negate death by affirming the vitality of life.⁸⁷ Wine making has already been mentioned above. I shall cite another instance, observed among Bara funerals in Borneo: "At this point, the cattle are brought up and stampeded around and around the coffin while the young men vie with one another in the somewhat risky sport of cattle wrestling, which consists of leaping up onto the hump of one of the members of the herd and holding on as long as possible."⁸⁸ But we need not go as far as Indonesia; bull-fighting, as well as wrestling between men, was a feature of Egyptian funerary iconography.⁸⁹ I venture to suggest a similar meaning of bull wrestling for the Minoan bull vessels and figurines found in various burial sites. The men hanging from the horns on two examples from Koumasa (fig. 17) and Porti⁹⁰ evidently represent some form of sport involving confrontation between man and bull.

In the context of death rituals, the bull sports are meant to draw attention to the vigor and bodily strength of the young men of the society: the old generation is gone, but a new one is there to replace it. The contest of men with the bull, the wildest animal indigenous to the island, results in the reestablishment of order after the trauma experienced by a society when some of its members are lost.

This is not to suggest that Minoan bull grappling was practiced only in connection with death rituals; indeed there is evidence that it also played a role in rites of passage (see chapter 10). But the association of the animal with funerary rites, which has long been recognized, can be explained by the fact that the bull

is the very image of vigor and strength, and thus is a dangerous opponent to be overcome.⁹¹ In that way a double tribute to the dead and living could be paid. It is worth noting that bull-leaping scenes are painted on some clay coffins from Tanagra on the mainland, dating to the Mycenaean period. We can certainly observe here the continuity of a long tradition which the Mycenaeans took over from the Minoans.⁹²

Another predominant symbol is the bird; both vessels and figurines of birds have been found in and around tombs.⁹³ It is strange that creatures of the sky, rather than of the earth, such as snakes, were selected as symbols for rites dealing with the dead. There is no evidence that the Minoans conceived of the soul as a bird (although one cannot exclude the possibility), otherwise one could have assumed that the flying bird provided a suitable image for the final departure of the deceased to the realm of the beyond.⁹⁴ The birds are, at any rate, attributes of divinities; as we shall see in chapters 6 and 7, they are consistently connected with deities and priests.

The most striking of all the implements are those vessels which have the shapes of females, most likely representing goddesses. The latter either hold jugs close to their bosoms or have perforated breasts through which the liquid can flow. It will be remembered that all burial sites discussed here have yielded such figures: Mochlos, Koumasa, Archanes, and Malia. The goddess vessels must thus be considered among the most important of all the items. The allusion to nourishment through a life-giving liquid is unmistakable, and the goddesses can be considered nurturing figures. Liquid is vital for the continuation of life in two ways. Whereas milk nourishes the young, water fertilizes the earth to bring forth grain. Egyptian thinking is in this case also strikingly



Fig. 26. Goddess from Myrtos

similar. The patroness of the festival of the dead and the necropolis was "Hathor the divine mother in the image of a cow, goddess of fertile life and of birth, the tree-goddess, the patroness of ecstatic joy. . . ."⁹⁵

The goddess vessels of the Minoan burial grounds can also be considered goddesses of fertility in general, since one of them was found in a sanctuary of the Early Minoan town of Myrtos. In one of the shrine rooms, a goddess figurine, holding a jug as though it were an infant, originally stood on a bench (fig. 26).⁹⁶ She has an unusually long neck which, as the excavator P. Warren suggests, confirms her divine status. As the figure is hollow, it could have functioned very easily as a vessel. Warren sees her as the earliest form of the household goddess providing water and draws attention to the morphologically similar figures from the cemeteries.⁹⁷ Yet, if the goddesses of the town shrine and of the necropolis are the same, I

would prefer to see an as-yet undifferentiated goddess of nature, not a household divinity.⁹⁶ Her most important functions must have been to personify fertility, supply life-giving liquid, and counteract the forces of death by guaranteeing regeneration and a plentiful harvest.

This brings us to other libation implements such as the so-called sheep-bells which, if I am right, may be a play on the images of the female form and the udder. At any rate, they too were most probably used for pouring or drinking liquids. Toasting rituals and libations must therefore have been cult practices of crucial importance. It is difficult to reconstruct what the Minoans thought when they poured the liquids. On one level they probably felt that they were offering to the dead; on another they were simulating an act of fertilization to ensure regeneration. To this we might add a third, less conscious thought: the living leave marks of their presence by staining the soil with liquids such as oil.⁹⁹ This action of territorial presence can likewise be regarded as opposing death.

Offering tables, which are attested in the Mesara and Mochlos tombs, for example, would have held edible fruit or bread.

Let us now turn to the "Great Feast" that Hertz associates with secondary treatment and festivals of the dead,¹⁰⁰ and which I have postulated above for the Minoan rites in connection with harvest. A further link with harvest of grain can be indirectly established through the model from the tomb of Kamilari which shows women making bread (fig. 22). More concrete evidence comes from Archanes building 4, where grinders were found. Finally, some clay objects, identified as representing phalli, outside the Mesara tombs¹⁰¹ can be better interpreted as models of pestles. Once more, Egyptian parallels are help-

ful. From certain pyramid texts, we learn that sowing and harvesting were preparatory measures for one of the festivals of the dead. In another text we read of a pharaoh who wanted to honor his grandmother with libations and offerings at the "first of every season".¹⁰² Seasonal festivities, especially harvesting and planting, seem thus to coincide with celebrations in honor of the dead.

Feasting, however, is an occasion primarily for eating meat, which involves animal sacrifice. Animal bones have been found in sizable quantities in or near the graves; sometimes they are mixed with the human skeletal remains. There exists even more direct evidence of animal sacrifice. On the Hagia Triada sarcophagus (fig. 30), a bull is shown slain on a table, whereas goats awaiting their turn are depicted below it.¹⁰³ At Archanes, Sakellarakis found sacrificial remnants of horse and bull in one of the tombs.¹⁰⁴ Bull or goat figurines, found close to the tombs, can be considered substitutes for sacrificial victims. Eating opposes death in that it provides sustenance for the continuation of life. But there is more to the meaning of sacrifice in a funerary context: in the killing of the animal a repetition of the death act occurs, this time to be put to the service of the living.¹⁰⁵

Conclusions

The cult around the tombs is the earliest type of communal ritual in Minoan Crete that can be discerned by archaeological testimonia. We can reconstruct offerings and feasting in post-funerary rites, whereas secondary burial apparently provided one of the occasions for communal gathering in the cemeteries.

As time went on, the cult implements became more varied. At the dawn of the Palace era we meet the standard equipment of Minoan religion: offering tables,

double axes, and libation vessels in the form of birds, bulls, and goddesses. At the same time, the practice of individualized burial sets in; certain tombs or burial complexes attracted more attention and one suspects that they were appropriated by families rising in status.

Yet during the ensuing Palace period, neither the communal cult of the dead nor the symbols associated with it died out. The cult buildings in the cemetery of Archanes, the models from Kamilari (figs. 21; 23), and the painting of a dead man receiving offerings on the sarcophagus from Hagia Triada (figs. 27-29)¹⁰⁶ all date from the Palace period, thus showing that the essential characteristics of the Prepalatial period were retained.

It is thus certain that some of the forms of the rituals of Palatial religion originated in the cult of the dead.¹⁰⁷ This is not to deny the existence and importance of celestial deities for Prepalatial Crete, the cult of which has perhaps left no visible traces in the archaeological record. Rather, it is to stress that the conception of a nurturing goddess who protects the dead, nourishes the living, and ensures regeneration, was established already, and to emphasize that Minoan religion never divorced itself entirely from the notion of cycles and periodical renewal.

Yet, major transformations also occurred. There was great diversification in the ritual practices. Cult was centralized and controlled by the ruling elite. This new constellation of ideas and ritual practices will be the subject of the next chapters.

The Hagia Triada and Knossos Sarcophagi: Death and Renewal

This chapter has focused mostly on the Prepalatial period but, as must have become evident, the cult of the dead

persisted into the Palatial and even Postpalatial era. It seems logical to close our discussion with two pieces which supplement the archaeological data with iconographical evidence. The most important of these is the Hagia Triada sarcophagus, a limestone coffin painted with figurative scenes. It was found at Hagia Triada inside a destroyed building assumed to have been a tomb. The paintings depict various rituals of offering; the sarcophagus is therefore one of the most valuable pictorial documentations of the Minoan cult of the dead that we possess.

Dated to around 1400, it is rather late, belonging to the transitional period between the end of the Palace period and the beginning of the Postpalatial era. Yet, it seems to preserve the essence of Minoan ritual as it was established already in the Prepalatial period. As we shall see, libations, sacrifice, and offerings to the dead, which were inferred from the archaeological finds, are corroborated by the iconography.

All sides of the coffin were painted, both the short and the long ones. Each panel represents one or two rituals which are distinct and yet obviously related. It is the relationship of the paintings, especially that of the two long sides, that has puzzled scholars most.¹⁰⁸

Side A (fig. 27-29) is obviously related to the cult of the dead. It is divided into two distinct scenes which cannot be confused with one another because the participants face different directions.

At the right end (fig. 27), the focal point is the dead himself, rendered as a relatively small male figure without arms. He is standing in front of a structure which must be the tomb. In front of him, to the left, is a stepped altar and a tree. Note that the latter, although of unidentifiable species, is clearly of a non-fruit-bearing type. Three male figures, dressed in hide skirts, are bringing offerings: a boat and two calves.¹⁰⁹

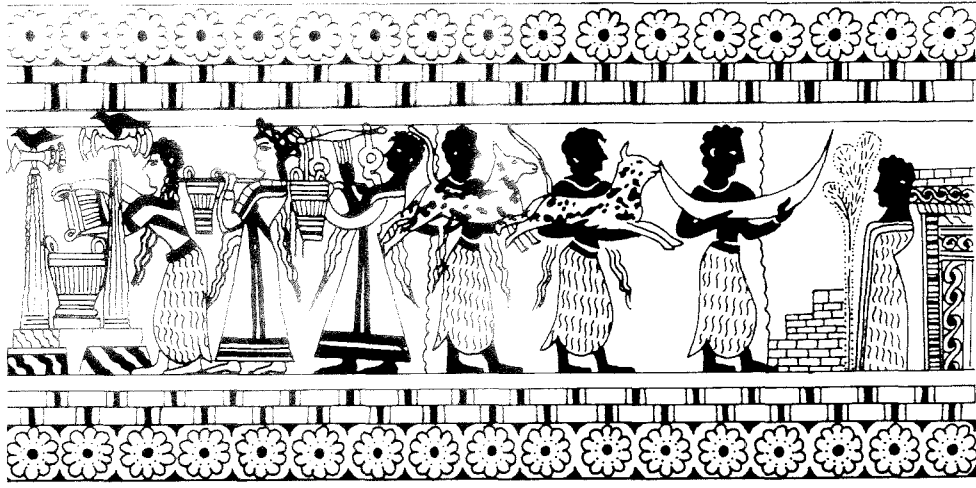


Fig. 27. Hagia Triada sarcophagus. Side A: death cycle

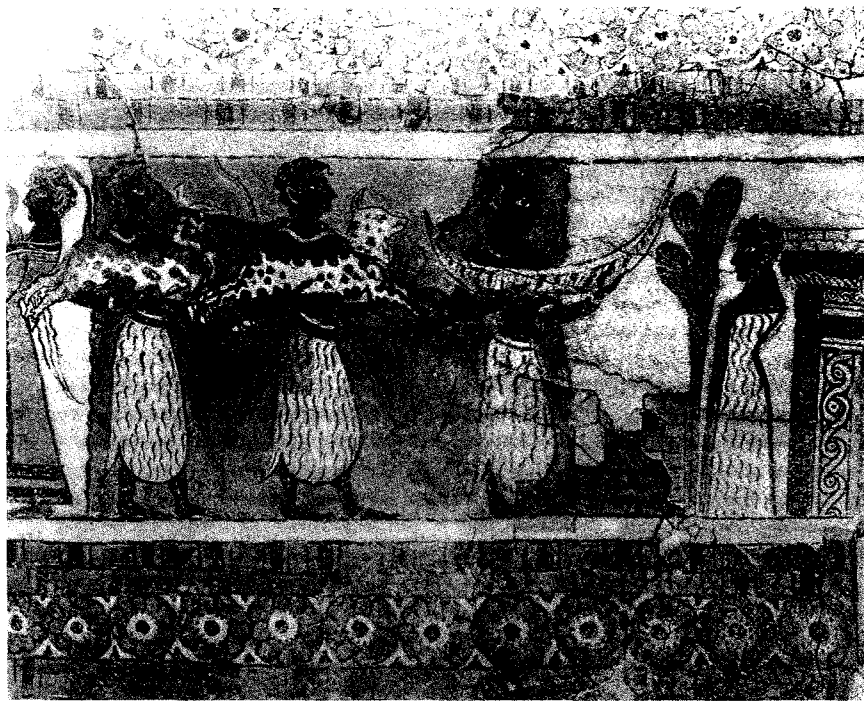


Fig. 28. Hagia Triada sarcophagus. Side A: death cycle. Detail

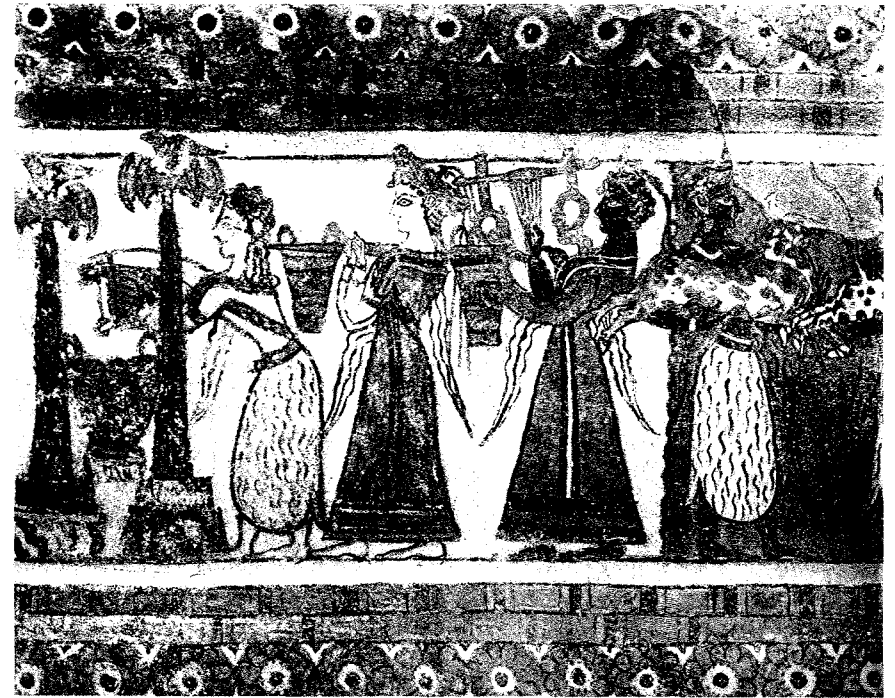


Fig. 29. Hagia Triada sarcophagus. Side A: death cycle. Detail

The left half of side A (fig 29) is taken by another scene. The figures here move to the left. The focal point is a bucket framed by two poles; they are crowned with double axes.¹¹⁰ Atop the axes birds are perched. One woman, dressed in a hide skirt (similar to that of the men bringing the offerings to the dead), is pouring the contents of a vessel into a bucket. She is followed by another woman in a long robe who carries two more vessels containing liquid for the libation. A man in a long robe is playing the lyre. We can infer soft, soothing music accompanying the ritual. Note that the libation is directed *downward*: it is poured inside a bucket which

was probably perforated so that the contents would drain into the earth.¹¹¹

Side B (fig. 30) has a single focal point which is to the right. It depicts a shrine topped by four pairs of sacred horns between which stands a small olive tree. Note that the latter belongs to a fruit-bearing species. In front of the shrine is a pole with a double axe; here again a bird is perched atop the axe. To the left is an altar on which stands a bowl.¹¹² Above it a pitcher and a basket with fruit "float" in mid-air, an artistic convention showing that these objects were involved in the cult.

A woman in an animal-hide skirt stretches her hands, palms facing down, above the bowl. Moving to the left, the

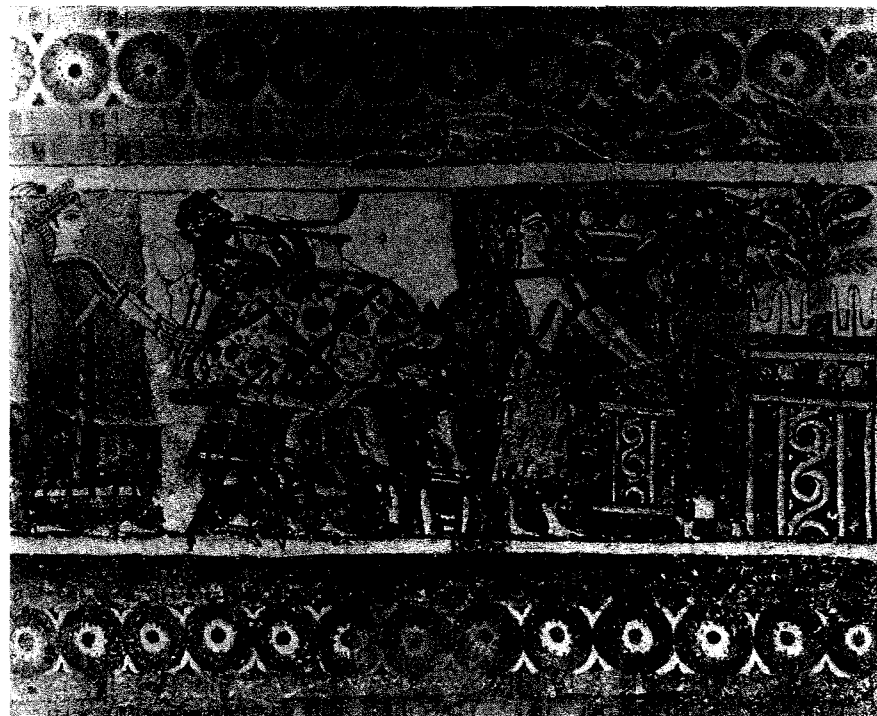


Fig. 30. Hagia Triada sarcophagus. Side B: regeneration cycle

background color changes and a sacrificial scene is depicted in the center of side B. A bull tied on a table is being bled, his blood being collected in a vessel underneath. Two goats under the table await their turn for sacrifice. A man in a long robe plays the flute, an instrument which produces piercing and exciting sounds. However, the officiating person is a woman in a long robe and plumed hat. She stretches her hands, palms downward like the woman in the hide skirt. The deliberate mirroring of the gesture joins the two scenes symbolically. Finally, more women, similarly dressed in long robes, form a procession behind the officiating priestess.

Now to the meaning of these two sides. It has been generally recognized that some cycle is depicted here and that it has to do with the cult of the dead.¹¹³ I would put it thus: the two major ritual complexes of Minoan religion are represented on the long sides. On the one hand, we have ceremonies concerned with the dead which is the focus of side A; on the other, we have rituals of renewal with the tree on the shrine as a focus of side B. These rituals are distinct, even antithetical, and yet related. The two sides depict equivalent rituals which, however, are performed with different utensils and can therefore be said to have different meanings. Libations are

Similar and antithetical elements on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus

<i>Side A, Death</i>	<i>Side B, Regeneration</i>
Tree (fruitless)	Tree (fruit-bearing, olive)
Offerings of inanimate (?) calves	Sacrifice of live animals
	Offering of fruit
Libation downward with large bucket-like vessel	Libation on top of the altar with pitcher
Lyre (soothing music)	Flute (piercing sound)
Double axes	Double axes
Birds	Birds
Long robes	Long robes
Hide skirts	Hide skirts

shown on both sides but on side A (cult of the dead) the liquid is poured from large vessels into a bucket and will eventually be soaked up by the earth. On side B (regeneration with the tree as a focal point) the liquid is contained in a pitcher to be poured into the bowl on top of the altar.

Other antithetical elements on the two sides are the different instruments, different types of trees, different types of offerings. And yet there is an essential unity shown by the similarity of garments. The chart above illustrates the results.

It remains to discuss briefly the relevance of all this to the two short sides. On one of them (fig. 29), the figures are directed toward the dead of side A. The space is divided into two registers. The upper one shows two male figures whose upper half is lost so we do not know what they were doing; presumably they were carrying offerings. The lower register (fig. 31) depicts two females in a chariot drawn by wild goats.

The other short side (fig. 32) is composed of a single panel in which the figures are directed toward the shrine of side B. Once more there are two females in a chariot, this time drawn by griffins.

A bird is landing on the wings of one griffin and is facing the females.

Thus on one short side the figures are directed toward the dead, on the other toward the shrine.

Now to the identification of the figures. There is little doubt that the females coming to the shrine are goddesses, as it is difficult to imagine mortals arriving in a griffin-drawn chariot.¹¹⁴ The bird is a messenger of the gods (see chapters 6 and 7). If we now look at figures 27–29 and 32 together, we can surmise that the ritual activity conducted by the priestess by the tree shrine is designed to invoke the goddesses and it is their imminent arrival which is shown on the short side.

More problematic are the females in the goat-drawn chariot (fig. 31) and the males above them, on the opposite short side. Are they also deities?¹¹⁵ It is not without significance that they are arriving at the spot where the dead is presented with offerings; it is thus hardly likely that they are mortals. From the point of view of structural symmetry, the goddesses in the goat-drawn chariot should be equivalent to the ones in the griffin-drawn chariot. Is it possible that they are chthonic divinities, the counter-



Fig. 31. Hagia Triada sarcophagus. Short side: two chthonic goddesses

parts of the celestial pair? As to the males, it is highly unlikely that they are mortals in funeral procession, because the short sides obviously depict the supernatural sphere, in contrast to the long ones, which show cult practices. Perhaps the hypothesis that the male figures are dead ancestors might be ventured.

The iconography of the Hagia Triada sarcophagus condenses the major cycles of death/fertility/regeneration into a few coherent scenes. The rituals concerning death and regeneration that have been inferred for the cult of the dead are echoed here. Further, the paintings yield information concerning the use of ritual equipment. It becomes evident that the same symbols can be used in different contexts to express different meanings. Cultural anthropologists have also observed that one ritual can become a model for another and that the same or



Fig. 32. Hagia Triada sarcophagus. Short side: two celestial (?) goddesses

similar paraphernalia can be used for different (but related) ceremonies.¹¹⁶ But this would have come as a surprise to as learned a scholar as M. P. Nilsson, who could not conceive of a unity of chthonic and celestial cults.

Another clay coffin (larnax), this time from Knossos,¹¹⁷ and dating not much later than the Hagia Triada sarcophagus, offers further testimony to the connection of the life/death cycle. It is decorated on one long and two short sides. The long side has two panels containing one female figure each (fig. 33). Though the scenes are closely linked, the paneling indicates some sort of separation. The woman on the left raises her hand to the forehead in a position of adoration. Behind her is a lily which can be seen as a sign determinative of the spring, the season of renewal. She must be a worshiper. Within the right panel, another

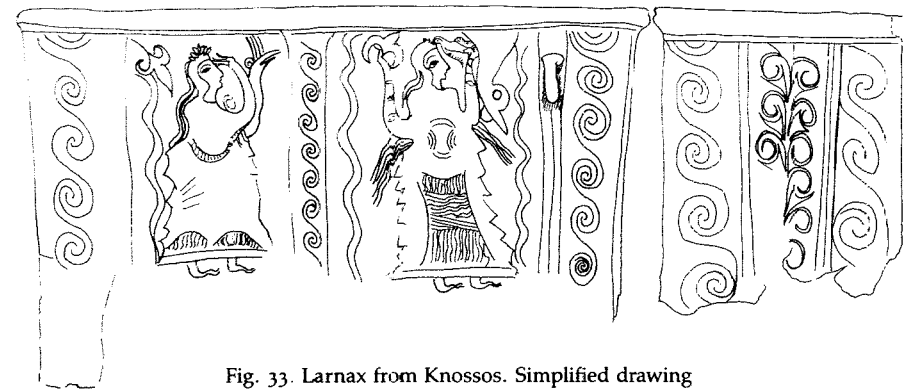


Fig. 33. Larnax from Knossos. Simplified drawing

woman, larger than the first, seems to be of higher rank. Both her hands are raised. In one she holds a lily, with the other she touches a bird flying toward her. In front is a strange object identified as a vessel.¹¹⁸ Is this woman also an adorant? It is likely that the paneling warns us against seeing the scene as totally unified; the two females have distinctive roles. The woman in the right panel, taller and higher in status, is not merely worshipping, but announcing the new season by displaying the lily and welcoming the bird. Compare this with a scene on a vessel from Kalamia (fig. 109). There a male priest is holding up a branch of vegetation and a bird is flying toward it. I see in such images the heralding of a season of renewal which ensures the continuation of life even in death. The regeneration cycle of side B (fig. 30) on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus springs to mind.

The Knossos larnax is painted on its two short sides as well. As L. Morgan observed, both females face to the right, toward one short end of the larnax.

Whatever is depicted there must have been considered significant: it is a tree.¹¹⁹ The tree, a symbol of fertility, is thus the focal point of ritual action, as it was also on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus, the difference being that there it was placed atop the shrine and shown in direct relationship to the priestess.

The other short side of the Knossos larnax is taken up by a peculiar figure, most likely a god descending from the sky.¹²⁰ Other larnakes of approximately the same period as well depict deities on their short sides; most interesting is one from Armenoi, where the image is not the deity in human form, but a clay goddess idol of the type to be described in chapter 11.¹²¹ That deities should appear in connection with funerary rituals and rites of regeneration is not surprising; the tradition was started already in Prepalatial times with the presence of goddess vessels in funerary contexts. Funerary iconography and finds thus show that death and renewal remained interlinked in cult through all the periods of Minoan history.

3

THE PALACES AS CULT CENTERS

The Emergence of the Palaces

At the turn of the second millennium BC the society of Minoan Crete underwent considerable changes. Diversification and improvement of agriculture, population explosion, and an increase in trade produced, in the terminology of C. Renfrew, a "multiplier effect"¹ which resulted in a fully urban culture. P. Warren has made a cogent case for the emergence of strong families who would have provided leadership in a society undergoing change.²

Most importantly, monumental buildings made their appearance dominating the urban landscape. The era between 1900 and 1450 BC has therefore been conveniently termed *Palatial*. So far four palaces are known: Knossos, Phaistos, Malia and Zakros. Most probably each of these formed a self-sufficient economic territorial unit, although Knossos is substantially larger than the other three.

An as-yet unsolved question is whether the appearance of the palaces coincided with the emergence of the towns, or whether urban centers came first and the palaces were planted within

them at some later date.³ Whichever explanation we choose, one thing is certain: that there was a happy symbiosis between the two which lasted at least four and a half centuries.

The First Palace era, the Protopalatial period, lasted about two centuries, from 1900 to 1700 BC. The Second Palace period, also called the Neopalatial, lasted from 1650 to 1450 (Knossos lasted longer).

A matter of interest is the question of the primary social function of the palaces. It has been suggested that "the growth of the palaces has to be seen in the first instance as the development of redistributive centers for subsistence commodities, controlled by a well-defined social hierarchy."⁴ In another view, the redistributive role of the palaces is stressed less and the social function emphasized instead. The argument is that their main role was to provide food in cases of famine.⁵

The first palaces, having left only scanty remains in the archaeological record, are less well documented than the second ones; consequently most of the evidence that I shall be dealing with

here comes from the Neopalatial era. This, however, should not obscure the fact that the two periods were distinct and that there were changes from one to another.⁶ These changes affected social, cultural, and religious expression.

It would be out of place here to discuss these changes at length, but a sketchy outline might prove useful. It is certain for example that the relationship between town and palace became more rigid in the Second Palace period. This is evident from the fact that the entrances to the buildings became less direct and more controlled. The large granaries, which were situated outside the palaces in the First Palace period, fell out of use (except at Malia) during the second; the grain was now kept inside the buildings within large storage jars. This means that grain was no longer easily accessible to the town people.⁷ At the same time cult symbols, gems with religious scenes, and other luxury items were produced in large numbers; they give evidence of a greater preoccupation with pomp and ritual.

Large and well constructed mansions (often called villas) made their appearance during the Neopalatial period. The plans as well as the masonry and fresco decoration of these mansions imitated those of the palaces; yet they do not rival them since they are often situated in their immediate proximity. This proximity suggests cooperation, perhaps even delegation of control. All in all then, there is evidence for increase of palatial control and greater social stratification from the First to the Second Palace period, but there is also evidence for cooperation and harmonious coexistence between palaces and towns. It is certainly no accident that the palaces were unfortified and that in front of them were large courts where the populace gathered.

In Search of Minoan Temples

The quality of the art and architecture of Minoan Crete shows that it was a major and sophisticated civilization like Egypt and the Near East. Yet the "high cultures" of the Orient possessed one feature which is absent from Minoan Crete: temples. Monumental temples are a common feature of urban cultures from the Far East to Classical Greece, including Egypt, Syria, Palestine, and the Hittite regions,⁸ which are geographically close to Crete and flourished contemporaneously with it.

And yet, evidence of religious activity abounds in Crete. Firstly, there exist nature sanctuaries on mountaintops and in caves as well as in the countryside. Secondly, there are small urban shrines incorporated within the mansions of chieftains' houses. Cult implements of various types are practically ubiquitous. Seal-rings and seal-stones are engraved with religious scenes. But large, monumental temples are missing.

This seeming paradox has led one scholar to suggest that urban shrines were not important in Minoan Crete,¹⁰ and that religious activity was, for the most part, confined to "house cults."¹¹ Thus, a strange picture emerges. On the one hand, there exist monumental palaces and mansions; on the other, modest, if not outright poorly constructed, town shrines. But how to fit the ostentatious cult paraphernalia (obviously manufactured for a social elite) into this model? And could a highly urbanized culture have dispensed with monumental sacred architecture?¹²

The answer to the riddle may, in fact, be very simple. We may have missed Minoan temples, or functionally equivalent structures, because of conceptual biases. It may be that what have been termed "palaces" are, in reality, the

monumental sacred buildings that we are looking for.

Toward a New Definition of the Minoan Palaces

The term *palace* was chosen at the turn of the century by Sir Arthur Evans, the excavator of the palace of Knossos. Evans was a man of both vision and intuition, but he was also very much a product of Victorian England. His own culture had a strong tradition of kingship and refined palaces. When Evans found the huge building at Knossos, he unquestioningly assumed that it was a palace, a residence for the king and a queen. He thus identified a throne room, residential quarters, a queen's bathroom, even a queen's toilet. His way of thinking and his terminology have been imprinted and when the other palaces were excavated, architecturally similar areas were given the same designations.¹³ Only rarely have these identifications been questioned.¹⁴ Yet, the "residential quarters" cannot be proven to be that; on the contrary, the architectural arrangements are not well suited for domestic or private life (see chapter 4); the upper stories are actually more appropriate. Further, the wall-paintings and the finds do not support this view since their iconography reflects anything but domestic life (see below).

A king must have a throne room, but only Knossos has yielded one, and recent research has thrown doubt on the assumption that it was meant for a king.¹⁵

Thus, the two most characteristic features of a conventional palace, the residential wing and the throne room, can be questioned. Although Evans's personal vision may have distorted the evidence somewhat, he was not oblivious

to the abundance of religious iconography in the frescoes, nor did it escape his attention that there were many shrines and cult objects spread all over the palace. "The cumulative results of the exploration of the great building at Knossos have served more and more to bring out the fact that it was interpenetrated with religious elements."¹⁶ Evans's king was therefore not a secular figure, but a priest-king in a theocratic society.

I shall argue that the palaces were primarily cult centers, although they had important administrative and economic functions as well. The combination is hardly novel; it is attested in the temples of the Near East. Thus, a religious center which is also the focus of the economy and administration of the community is not difficult to envision. On the contrary, it is compatible with the socioeconomic organizational basis of Bronze Age societies.¹⁷

Architectural Description of the Palaces

Introduction

The term *palace* will be retained here for reasons of convenience, although my purpose is to show that the architectural design alone betokens sacred rather than secular architecture.

Let us look at the geographical situation first. The four excavated palaces are spread over the island, although all are in central and eastern Crete. Their position was certainly dictated by economic factors.¹⁸ Knossos and Phaistos controlled the north and south coasts of the island, while Zakros, situated in the easternmost part of Crete, and possessing a good harbor, was in a very convenient location for trade with Syria. Each palace seems to have had control over its

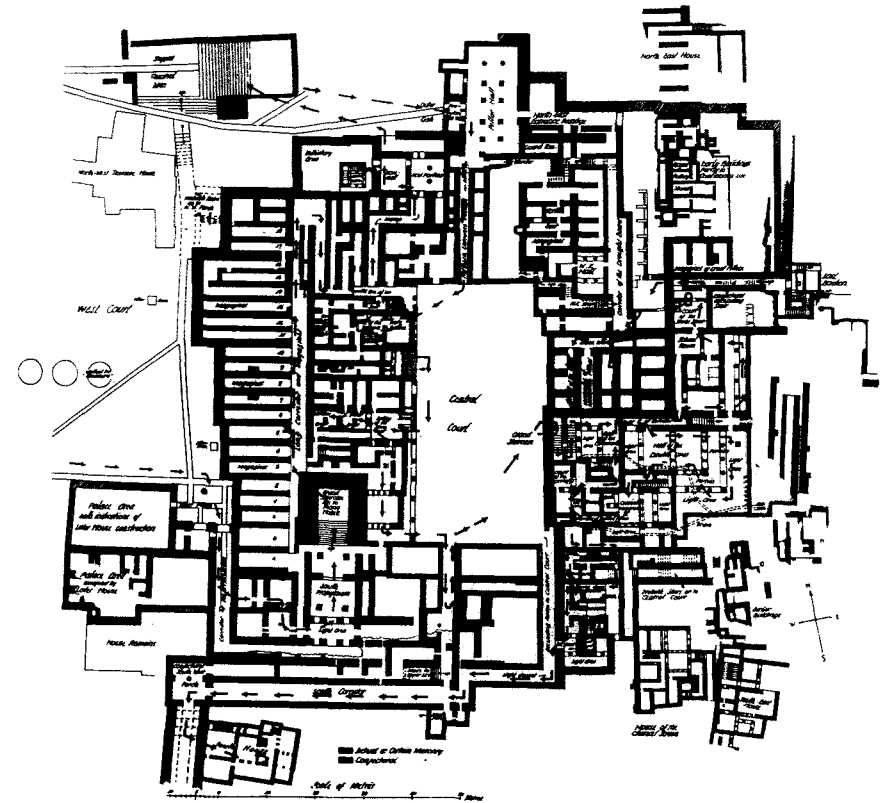


Fig. 34. Palace of Knossos, plan

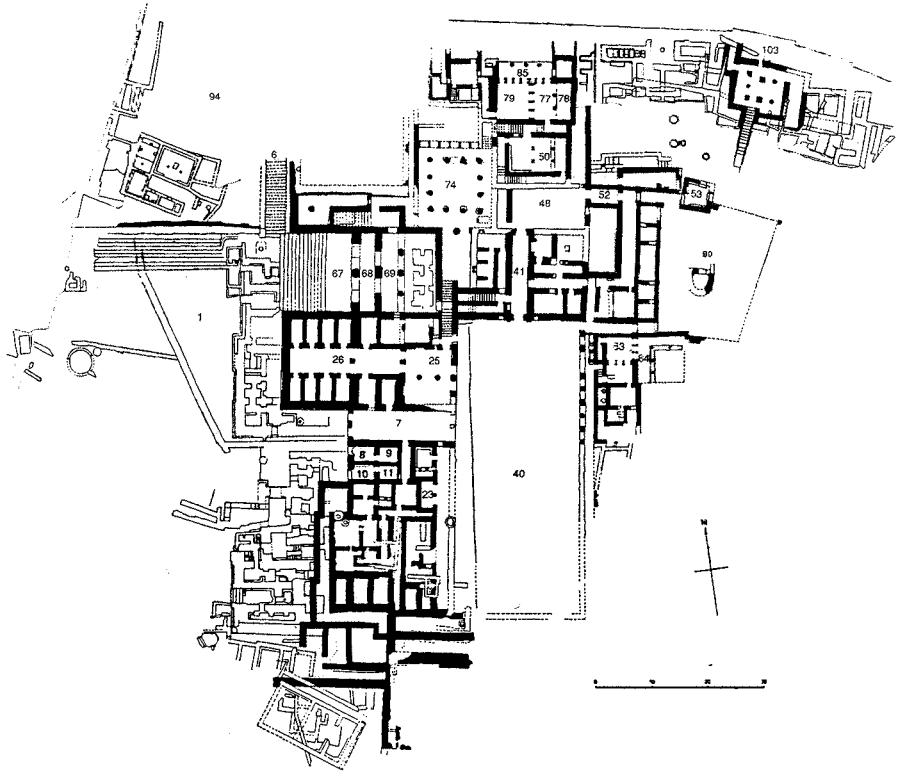
own region, the divisions being encouraged if not dictated by the nature of the terrain. Mountain ranges and plains create natural boundaries which tend to foster regionalism rather than strict unification. Given this regionalism and apparent independence of the palaces,¹⁹ it is surprising to find that there is a great degree of uniformity in architectural expression (figs. 34-37).²⁰

It is this uniformity which I would like to stress because it cannot be random. Nor can it be explained as "fashion," a

concept which in the ancient world cannot be separated from ideology. Thus, similarity of architectural design implies some level of unified ideology among the upper classes. The common features of the four palaces will be explored next.

Orientation

All palaces have a consistent orientation roughly corresponding to the four cardinal points of the compass. This is neither self-evident nor insignificant



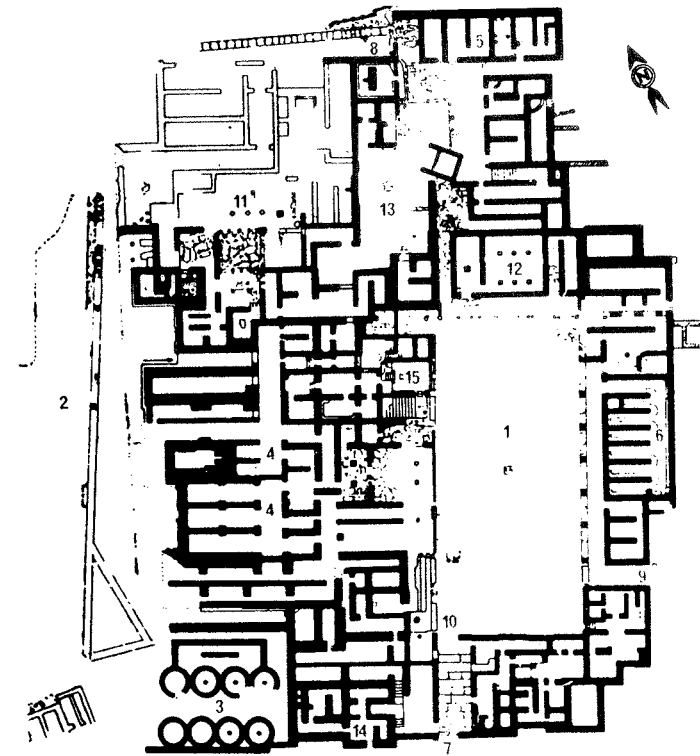
1. Grandstand and causeway of old palace
- 25-26. Magazines and anteroom
- 8-11. Dining shrines(?) of new palace
23. Room with bench (dining shrine?)
- 67-69. Grand propylaeum of new palace, replacing grandstand of old palace
40. Central court
41. Corridor leading to north section
48. Court
- 63-64. Pier-and-door rooms leading to adyton (situated directly south)
64. Court
- 77-79, 85. Pier-and-door systems leading to adyton (situated directly west)
90. Industrial installations

Fig. 35. Palace of Phaistos, plan

since they were built on different types of terrain. Had orientation been unimportant, one would have expected the architectural layout to have been dictated by practical considerations. Is it an

accident that it is precisely in sacred architecture that orientation plays a major symbolic role?

Sacred buildings are carefully designed in relation to the stars, as they



1. Central Court
2. Western Court
3. Granary
4. W. Stores
5. N. E. Stores
6. E. Stores
7. South entrance
8. North entrance
9. S. E. entrance
10. Altar
11. Gates
12. Columnar hall
13. Hall of the Tower
14. Shrine
15. Lodge

Fig. 36. Palace of Malia, plan

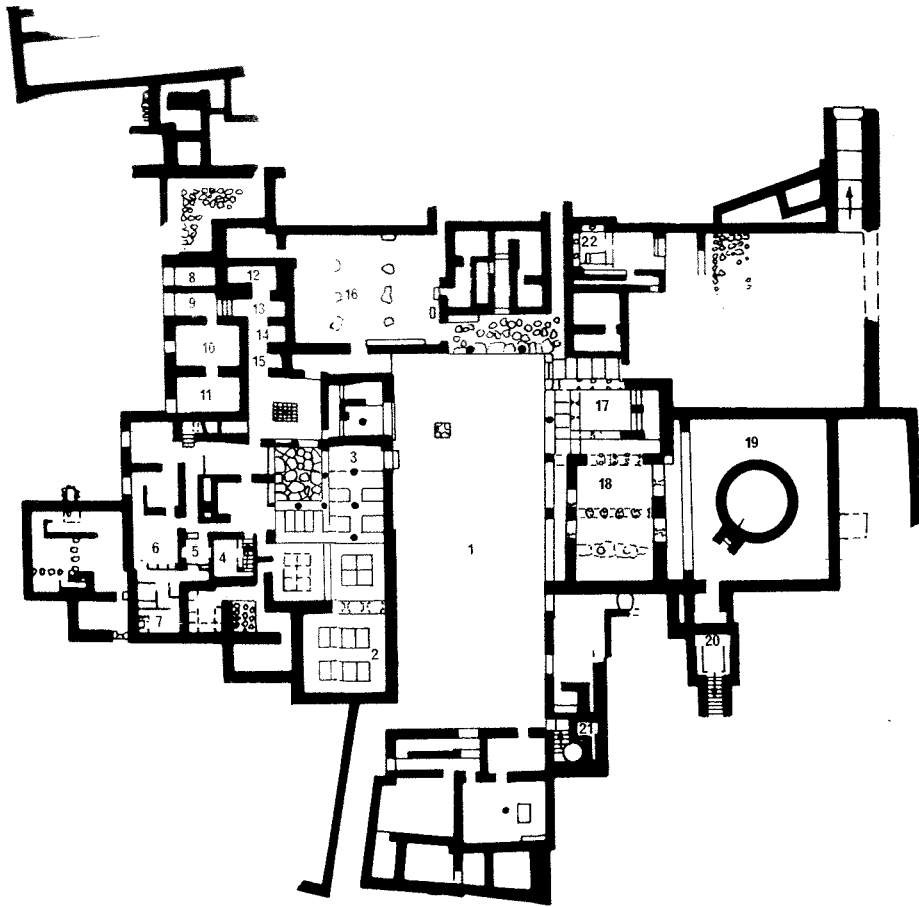
claim to reflect a cosmological image.²¹ Examples abound: suffice it to mention Egyptian pyramids and temples, Greek temples, and Christian churches.²²

Central Courts

The most salient feature of the Minoan palaces, already in the First Palace pe-

riod, are the central courts. Rectangular in shape and, in most cases, paved, they have approximately the same dimensions in the three major palaces; only at Zakros is the central court considerably smaller.

What was its function? The most obvious explanation is that it was the organizing nucleus. At once dividing and



- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Central court | 8-15. Magazines |
| 2. Banquet hall | 16. Kitchen |
| 3. Ceremonial hall | 17-18. East ceremonial quarters |
| 4. Adyton | 19. Hall of the Cistern |
| 5. Central shrine | 20. Spring Chamber |
| 6. Archive room | 21. Underground well |
| 7. Treasury | 22. Adyton |

Fig. 37. Palace of Zakros, plan

uniting the palace."²³ Because of this inherent practicality, central courts are features also of Oriental palaces and temples, not to mention private houses throughout the Mediterranean, where

the climate invites outdoor activities. It may thus be argued that it suffices to confine ourselves to a utilitarian explanation. The problem is that two features remain unexplained: adherence to the

same orientation and the uniformity of dimensions. The latter is all the more surprising given the substantial difference in size of the palaces. Malia is much smaller than Knossos, but their courts are approximately the same.

J. W. Graham, an eminent scholar of Minoan architecture, suggested a solution. The courts, he argued, were constructed for a special purpose: to create appropriate arenas for the performance of bull-leaping, an activity that is often depicted on wall paintings, rings and seals.²⁴ Although this suggestion has found favor,²⁵ it is untenable for several reasons. First, paved courts are totally unsuitable for running bulls, which would slip hopelessly on the paving. For exactly this reason Spanish and Portuguese bullfight arenas are always covered with sand. Second, the rectangular shape of the court is not ideal for maneuvers—which might be decisive for the life of the acrobats. Finally there is the problem of where the spectators would stand. Graham thought he had solved the problem by suggesting that some spectators would be watching from the galleries and windows of the upper stories, while others would be standing at court level protected by wooden railings.²⁶ I doubt that wooden railings would have offered enough protection against powerful animals running at high speed. In addition, if Graham were right, only a few spectators would have been accommodated. We must then postulate that only a privileged elite would have been able to participate and that the majority of the town people would have been excluded from one of the most emotionally charged events of the Minoan festive calendar. This is, of course, possible but unlikely.

The most fundamental objection to Graham's theory, however, has yet to be formulated. It fails to explain the standardization of the orientation of the courts. Certainly one needs a large

arena for running bulls, but the orientation does not have to be fixed, unless there is some symbolic meaning involved.

My suggestion is that the uniformity of the central courts was dictated by not practical but ideological considerations. The path leads us to sacred architecture once more.²⁷ M. Eliade has observed that in non-industrial, non-highly secularized societies, the "center" or the central edifice of a town or village is considered sacred and represents an *imago mundi*. "Just as the universe unfolds from a center and stretches out towards the four cardinal points, the village comes into existence around an intersection. . . . A square constructed from a central point is an *imago mundi*."²⁸

The central court of the Minoan palace, orientated to the cardinal points, could be just such a center, a nucleus around which the whole palace was organized.²⁹ This hypothesis does not, of course, deny the practical side of central courts. Rather, it seeks to reconcile function with symbol. Let us take an example: for the Egyptians the columns of their temples had a specific symbolic meaning. Yet they were also indispensable architectural elements for supporting the roof. Is it not likely that the symbolic aspect of the Minoan central courts of the palaces arose out of their inherent practicality as organizing nuclei?

There is also some factual evidence in favor of this hypothesis. It is generally admitted, even by those who are reluctant to see much religious activity in the so-called palaces, that a series of shrines existed along the west facade of the central courts. Already Evans noted that the entire west wing of the palace of Knossos had a sacred character.³⁰ Several shrines have been identified at the west wings of the palaces at Phaistos and Malia.³¹ The most impressive evidence comes from the palace of Zakros, where

the west wing was found virtually un-plundered. The excavator, N. Platon, recovered a large number of cult vessels, cult implements, and other paraphernalia which verified Evans's hypothesis about the sacred character of these wings.³²

Although the presence of shrines is most evident in the west wings, the east sectors also furnished proof of ceremonial areas. Evans alerted attention to the much destroyed but monumental East Hall, situated on the east side of the central court at the palace of Knossos, for example.³³

In short, the central courts are framed by shrines and ceremonial rooms so that the archaeological evidence supports, rather than invalidates, the hypothesis that the architectural design of the Minoan palaces was dictated by symbolic considerations.

West Courts

All palaces possess large, paved courts, adjacent to their west facade. It is certain that this feature was present already in the first palaces and was retained in the second ones. The main characteristic of west courts is that they were open to the town, thus constituting an interface between the unfortified palace and the settlement.³⁴ The size indicates that they were designed for public gatherings, while their position, between palace and town, shows that they were eminently suitable for interaction between the palace officials and the populace.³⁵

More light can be thrown on the function of the west courts if we consider some of their architectural features which occur in almost all palaces.³⁶ In the Protopalatial period, large circular underground granaries were situated in their midst. It can hardly be doubted

that the grain stored there was put to a semi-public use, although it must have been under palatial control or "protection."³⁷

At Phaistos, Knossos, and Malia raised pathways, evidently designed for processions, traverse the west courts, bypassing the granaries.³⁸ It is not difficult to guess what the coupling of these two architectural units signify: the occasions on which the processions took place had something to do with the granaries. We may safely postulate a harvest or related agricultural festival.³⁹

That ceremonies, and perhaps even public festivals, took place in the west courts can also be argued because of the existence of sizable stone platforms with shallow steps leading up to them. Such platforms are well preserved at Phaistos and Knossos.⁴⁰ The platforms most likely served as stands for dignitaries, to see and be seen.⁴¹ It is interesting to note that the aforementioned pathways also connected the platforms with the palace entrances at both Knossos and Phaistos (fig. 38).

In the Neopalatial period, the granaries fell out of use, except at Malia, and grain storage was transferred inside the palace. Yet, the west courts continued to function. At Knossos, an impressive stone platform dominated the northern end of the west court; at Phaistos it was incorporated in the west facade of the palace itself.⁴²

The conclusion is that not only did the west courts serve as ceremonial meeting places, but that there was official interaction between the public and the palace officials both in the Protopalatial and in the Neopalatial periods. One occasion may have been harvest festival(s), but other types of ceremonial activity necessitating public display, such as renewal of authority, cannot be excluded.

What about the orientation of the west courts: does it have any significance? If

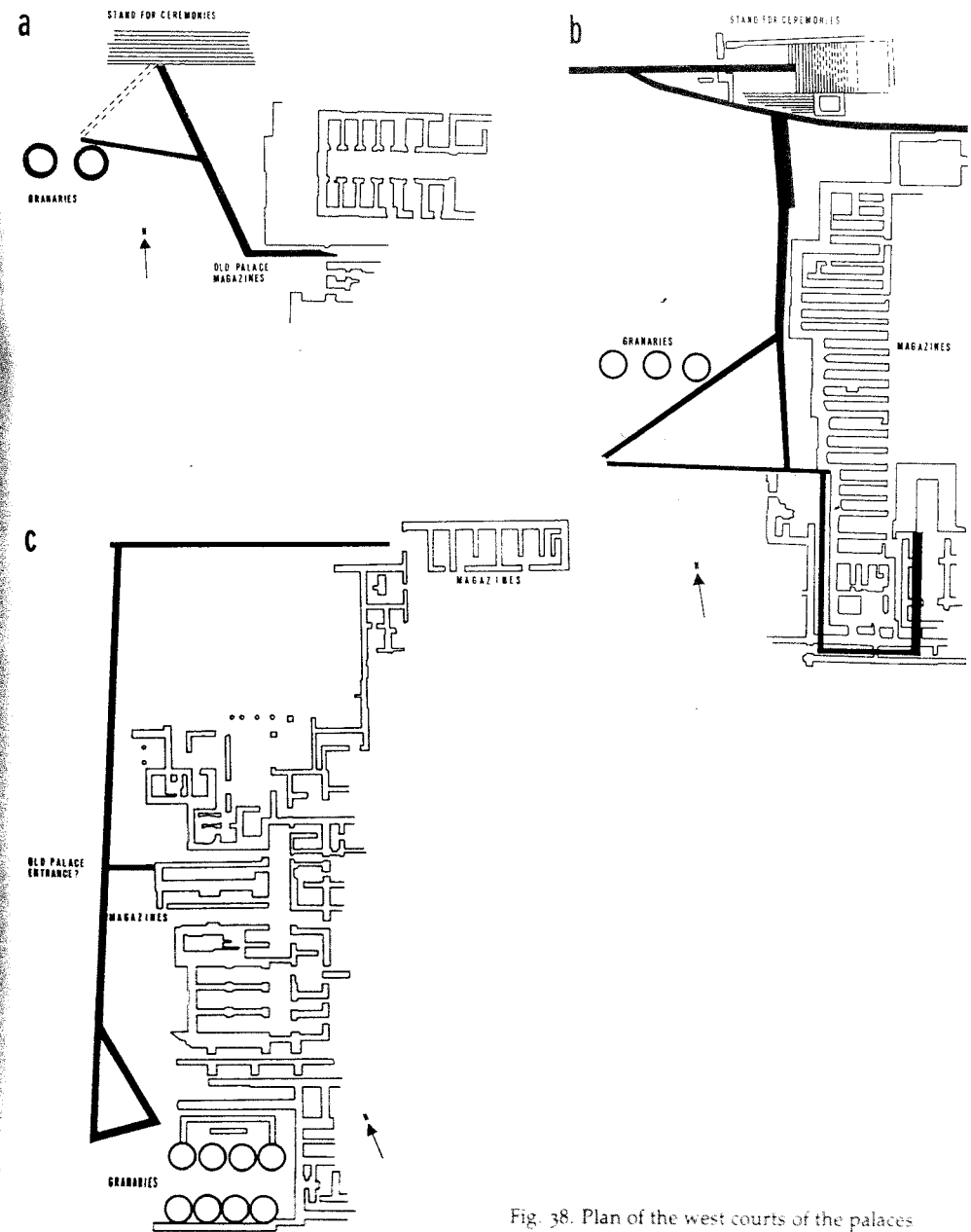


Fig. 38. Plan of the west courts of the palaces of a, Phaistos, b, Knossos, and c, Malia with raised pathways and granaries.

the central court represents a center, the west should be connected with the setting sun, i.e., death or the end of the cycle. The west is the realm of the dead in most cultures. Most striking is the designation of symbolic space in ancient Egypt, where the west banks of the Nile were allotted to the dead; even in a Christian church the west is related to death.⁴³ One cannot, of course, prove that the west had the same symbolic associations for the Minoans but, given how widespread the concept is, it is not unlikely. A mentality linking death and regeneration, storage and planting, can be plausibly conjectured.

There could thus have been a connection between the cult of the dead and the festivals of the west courts.⁴⁴ We have seen that death cult stresses regenerative aspects, that clay models showing the preparation of bread have been found at the tomb of Kamilarí (fig. 22). This would fit with a harvest festival and grain being stored in underground granaries. The buried grain would eventually sprout, proving that there is continuity of life, even in death.

At any rate, the religious and ceremonial nature of the west courts is reasonably well documented by the structures which they contained.⁴⁵

Storage Rooms

So far, I have tried to show that the design of the palaces was not a result of mere practical considerations, but that each spatial unit had a symbolic aspect. The next step is to demonstrate how various sectors of the palaces could have been integrated into a theocratic organization.

Let us look at some of the "secular" activities associated with the palaces. A sizable amount of the total area of the buildings was taken up by storage,⁴⁶ but it was mostly in the west wings that

the storage rooms (magazines) were situated.

It is obvious that the produce kept there was surplus.⁴⁷ It could have been used for feasting, as a relief in case of famine, as a payment for labor rendered, as trade barter, or as all of the above together.⁴⁸ Whatever the case may be, it attests to another important facet of the palaces which can be defined as economic.

Additional economic activities were associated with production and manufacture of luxury items. Concentration of tools, raw materials, and workshop installations show that the palaces were also "factories" where materials, sometimes imported from abroad, were worked,⁴⁹ or where agricultural produce was processed. The palace of Zakros, in particular, has furnished not only tools but the raw material itself. Ivory tusks, most probably imported from Syria, were awaiting their turn to be worked, before the palace was destroyed around 1450 B.C.⁵⁰ A plausible hypothesis is that the palaces maintained a fair control over imported items, although they do not seem to have monopolized trade completely.⁵¹

Administration, a necessary corollary to economy, is also attested by a large number of sealings and Linear A tablets.⁵² Disbursements of agricultural produce, receipts for tribute or labor rendered are among the activities that can be postulated.

It is important to lay out these facts because they complete the picture. What is more, modern scholarship has concentrated almost exclusively on the important economic role of the palaces and has marginalized if not entirely ignored the religious function. For many the palaces are industrial rather than cult centers.

This either/or is, of course, a modern attitude entirely. The role of the palaces

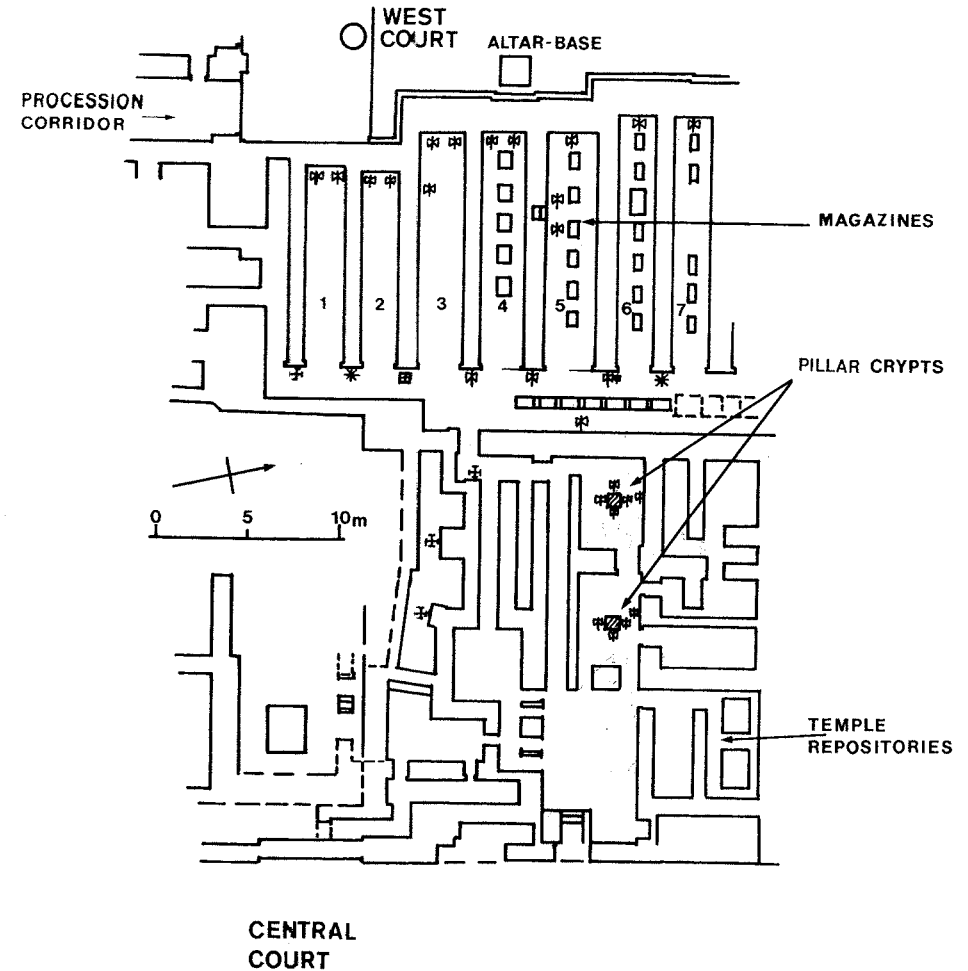


Fig. 39. Plan of storage room area in the west wing of the palace of Knossos with indications of double axe marks

in the economic sphere shows the practical side of affairs, but does not explain how the rulers legitimized their economic control and authority. The answer to the latter question emerges only when we observe that this space (using the word literally and figuratively) was also per-

meated by religious symbols and cult implements.

Starting with Knossos, the walls of the storage rooms in the west wing had sacred symbols incised on them, the most prominent of which were double axes (fig. 39). Evans wrote: "That [stor-

age] was specially placed under religious guardianship is shown, not only by the recurrence of the sacred symbol on the jambs of the Magazines—but by the discovery . . . of one of the stepped pyramidal sockets in which the heft of the Double Axe had been originally inserted.⁵³ Most important is the direct communication of the magazines at Knossos with shrines (pillar crypts)⁵⁴, the nature of which will be discussed in the next chapter. Suffice it to say that the pillars in the shrine-complex were incised with sacred symbols.⁵⁵

At the palace of Phaistos we meet the same pattern. Storage has an official character, as the excellent quality of the anteroom to the storage rooms shows. There, too, were pillars, while signs (commonly called mason's marks) were engraved on the walls of the storage rooms.⁵⁶ It is plausible that the purpose of such signs would be to impart a magico-religious meaning to utilitarian structures.

At the palace of Malia the magazines were incorporated in the west wing, similarly to Knossos. Striking here, too, is the connection with pillar crypt shrines with sacred symbols incised on the pillars.⁵⁷

At the palace of Zakros, the magazines were immediately adjacent to the shrines of the west wing; here ritual vases were found.⁵⁸ Prominent among the latter were rhyta (libation vessels) and jugs decorated with floral and seascape motifs; there was also a gilded rhyton with a relief representation (see chapter 5).⁵⁹

Association between storage and ritual activities can be observed also in the magazines of the mansions of Palatial Crete. At Hagia Triada, near Phaistos, the storage rooms contained stone rhyta for libations.⁶⁰ Close to them, there was a pillar crypt in which a bronze figurine of a votary was found.⁶¹

I believe that the cult paraphernalia was stored together with agricultural produce because ritual equipment was used during festivals in which the produce was ceremonially brought inside the palace. After all, the raised pathways (suggesting processions) lead to entrances close to the storage areas of the palaces.

As noted above, the association between economy and religion is the prevailing pattern in Near Eastern and Egyptian temples. By placing stored goods under the protection of the gods, the Minoans must have thought that their blessing was ensured.⁶²

Wall Paintings

I have saved the most important argument about the palaces being cult centers for last: the religious content of the wall paintings.

As is well known, the palaces and temples in the ancient Orient were decorated with sophisticated iconographical programs, in which the ideology of the ruling classes, be it religious or political, was developed.⁶³ In no case are we entitled to speak of art which is purely decorative and non-functional.

Wall painting constitutes the only expression of monumental pictorial art in Crete. It should thus be expected to give us insights into the ideology of the ruling class. And yet a systematic study of the thematic programs has rarely been undertaken.⁶⁴ The frescoes have been discussed as art pieces, but not as meaningful images, mirrors of a mentality, or even propaganda.

An important observation is that there exists *no ruler iconography*;⁶⁵ Evans's Priest-King fresco is heavily restored and undoubtedly a fiction.⁶⁶ In this respect Minoan Crete departs from the traditions of the Orient. We can be sure,

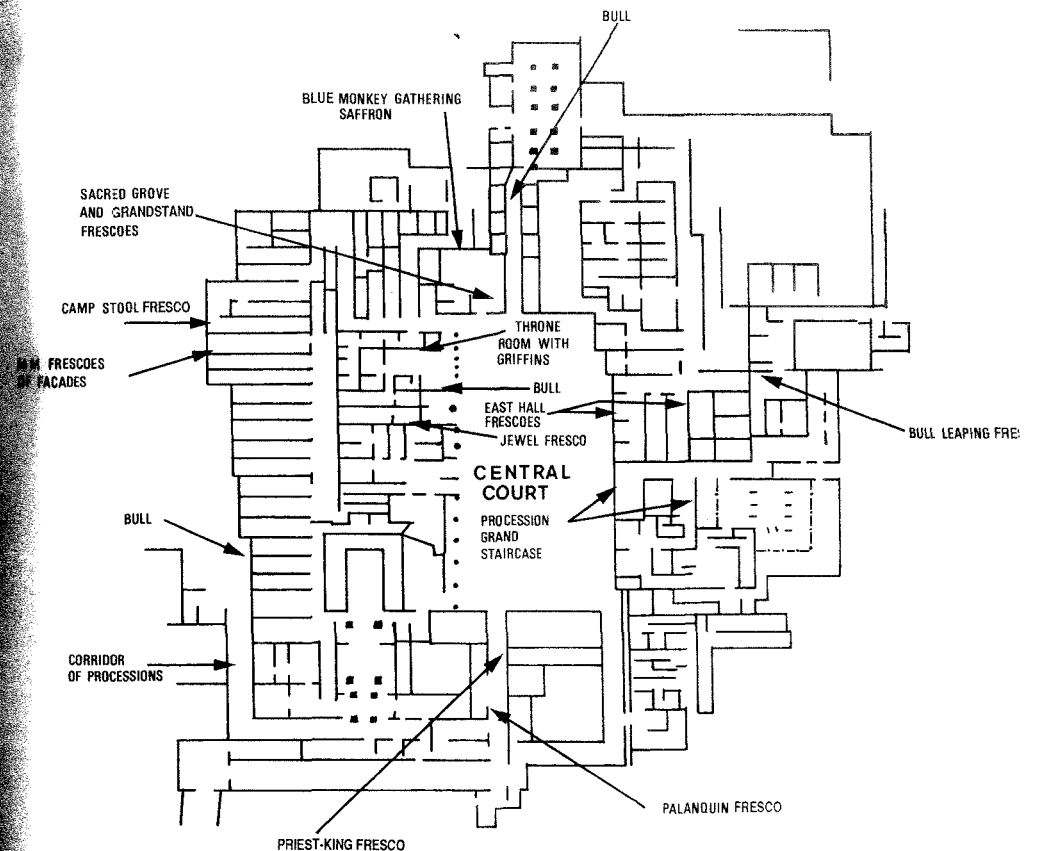


Fig. 40. Plan of the Knossos palace with indications of the major frescoes

nevertheless, that the official creeds found their expression even in the Minoan iconographical programs and it remains to explore them.⁶⁷

What I shall attempt to show is that the subjects of the frescoes from the palace of Knossos cluster around rituals, depictions of festivals, and scenes from nature with an emblematic or symbolic character. This has implications for the ways in which the ruling class projected itself.

Corridor of the Processions

A visitor approaching the Knossos palace from the west would enter the Corridor of the Processions, which derives its name from the frescoes decorating it (fig. 40). It was painted on both sides with life-size figures, most of them male, although some women were included (figs. 41-42). Note that the restorations by Evans and M. Cameron show the figures with raised arms in a posi-

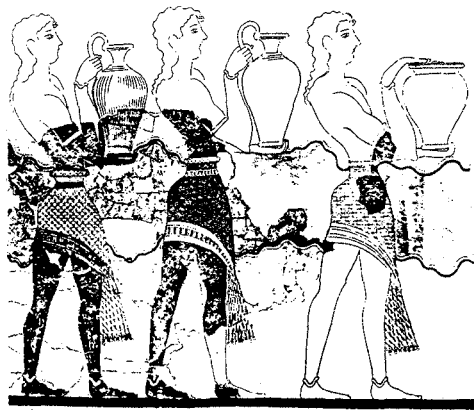


Fig. 41. Knossos. Corridor of the Processions, reconstruction after Evans



Fig. 42. Knossos. Corridor of the Processions, reconstruction after M. Cameron

tion of worship. However, the few fragments of arms that have survived depict the men as carrying vessels or, in one case, a garment; the restoration may thus be wrong on this point.

The figures wore different garments, some had kilts (fig. 41),⁶⁸ others long robes (fig. 42), and yet others wore animal-hide skirts. The differentiation in clothing suggests different status and age groups.⁶⁹

The procession was broken up into different units, some of which clustered around a recipient figure (fig. 41).⁷⁰ It is not unimportant that this central figure was a female, not a king as would have been the case in an Oriental palace or temple. Nevertheless, the procession has something of a tribute-bearing character and does not differ significantly in this respect from Oriental schemes. It is natural to assume that the goods were brought ceremonially into the palace to be deposited inside the storerooms. And

yet the depiction is about ritual: the female is symbolically receiving the cult vessels. Worship ceremony or preparation for a festival?

West Wing: Throne Room Fresco

From the Corridor of the Processions, the visitor would reach the west wing (fig. 40). The important female recipient may be: evidence again in the so-called throne room. This was accessible from the central court via an anteroom. Its focal point was a throne, the effect of which was enhanced by a fresco painted around it. It depicted a landscape with plants and two fabulous animals (griffins) anti-thetically placed. The restoration published by Evans and often reproduced is not quite accurate. M. Cameron drew attention to the fact that a palm tree, clearly visible on excavation photographs, was painted right next to the throne; the griffin was next to the

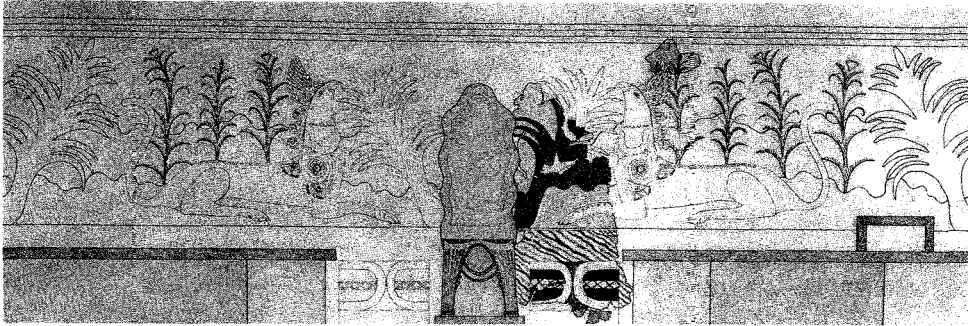


Fig. 43. Knossos. Throne room fresco, as restored by M. Cameron

palm.⁷¹ The corrected restoration (fig. 43) shows the throne flanked by palms and griffins.

Both the animals and the plants have symbolic connotations. The griffin is a composite monster, the iconography of which originated in the Near East.⁷² It combines the features of the two foremost predators in nature, the lion and the eagle. It is thus the aggressor par excellence,⁷³ but it is also an ideal guardian and companion of divinities.⁷⁴ Especially interesting in this context is the antithetical scheme, because it shows that the monsters act as guardians of the important person seated on the throne.

Although griffins can appear with male priests or gods in Minoan iconography,⁷⁵ only female divinities are flanked by them.

As to palms, they are sacred trees in the vicinity of which ritual activity occurs. Most importantly, sometimes a goddess is shown under a palm.⁷⁶

Finally the painted frieze beneath the griffin fresco consists of incurved altars, motifs with distinctly sacred associations.⁷⁷

The iconography of the fresco, then, is anything but secular. Instead of war imagery it presents us with a landscape which includes sacred trees and fantastic guardians. It is logical to conclude that

the power of the person seated on the throne was defined as religious, rather than secular. It has been suggested that the enthroned person was a woman, a high priestess impersonating the divinity.⁷⁸ The topic will be addressed again in chapter 4.

West Wing: Camp Stool Fresco

On the upper floor of the same wing, additional evidence of the important role of females in cult can be found. Several fragments, collectively known as the Camp Stool fresco, decorated a room which faced the west court.⁷⁹ The fresco fragments belonged to two or three friezes and each frieze included two zones, one on top of the other. Despite a brave restoration attempt by N. Platon,⁸⁰ the nature of the composition remains uncertain. What can be seen in the fragments is that two types of male figures were involved. Some were seated on camp stools facing each other (hence "Camp Stool" fresco), whereas others were standing (fig. 44). Most impressive of all the figures is a female who dominated one frieze. On account of her modern-looking makeup she is known as *La Parisienne* (fig. 45). She is larger than the males and, according to

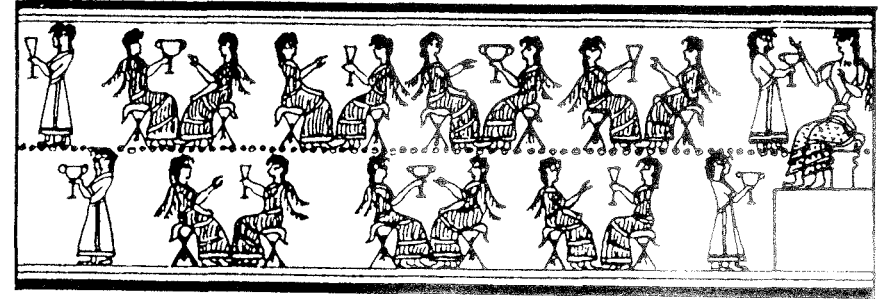


Fig. 44. Knossos. Fragment from the Camp Stool fresco, as reconstructed by M. Cameron



Fig. 45. Knossos. *La Parisienne* from the Camp Stool fresco.

M. Cameron, she took up the height of two zones, looming large at the left edge of the frieze. A fragment of a similarly dressed female led Cameron to the conclusion that there was a second *Parisienne* in a different panel, placed on another wall of the same room.⁸¹

The scene in each zoned panel can be described as follows. Standing male figures possibly supply wine to seated ones. The latter sit opposite each other and drink from chalices (fig. 46). On



Fig. 46. Knossos. Male seated figures from the Camp Stool fresco



Fig. 47. Oriental banqueting scene on an inlaid plaque from Ur

each frieze we can thus reconstruct a toasting ceremony conducted in the presence of females whose importance is indicated by their large size. The representation lacks narrative elements and has the repetitive character which typifies ritual action.

Depictions of toasting rituals or banqueting are known from the Near East (fig. 47) as well as the Mycenaean mainland.⁸² What is distinctive about our fresco are the women in the scene who are not mere banqueters but preside over the ceremony. It is thus more than likely that they represent either the goddess or her impersonator. In fact, a plausible interpretation of the friezes is that the deity is invited to the feast; parallels are known from the Near East and possibly the Mycenaean mainland.⁸³

West Wing: Jewel Fresco

A fresco fragment in relief, found in the same general area,⁸⁴ is known as the Jewel fresco (fig. 48). Although it is far too small to permit any safe reconstruction, it is so unusual that it lends itself to some speculation. It shows a man's finger and thumb holding one end of a necklace adorning a woman's neck. The

necklace is composed of gold beads and pendants in the shape of male heads with curly hair and gold earrings. The heads have a negroid appearance, but this is a superficial impression conditioned by our cultural perceptual filters. As I have shown elsewhere, both curly hair and earrings are not unusual among males in Minoan iconography.⁸⁵ Earrings in particular are marks of high status, not barbarian appearance.

What are we to make of the scene? Evans and, following him, M. Cameron suggested a prelude to sacred marriage, a disrobing of the woman.⁸⁶ If that is so, the parallels with Near Eastern rituals are indeed striking. One could, of course, suggest that the subject of the painting was simply the costuming of a high priestess. But the fact that the adornment is done by a male, to judge from the dark color of the hand, does hint at an interaction of a sexual nature. The necklace with male head pendants perhaps designates the goddess's domain; perhaps it confers authority to her.

Keeping in mind that there are serious problems with the dating of the frescoes (note that most of the above come from the latest stages of the palace's life around 1400 BC), the decorative scheme of the west wing seems to have revolved around women and male/female interac-



Fig. 48. Knossos. Jewel fresco, as restored by M. Cameron

tion. At any rate, the ritual role of a woman or group of women is just about certain.

West Wing: Bull and Architectural Facades

Another group of fresco fragments from the same wing are apparently earlier in date (MM IIIB, mid-sixteenth century BC). These had fallen from above inside the cists of the thirteenth magazine.⁹⁷ They depict crowds of spectators, the head of a bull, and architectural facades. Since the buildings are adorned with sacred symbols (there are horns of consecration and double axes stuck into the capitals of the columns), the setting is obviously religious. The spectators could have been watching bull leaping. As for the facades with sacred symbols, they plausibly represent the palace: one more reason to think that the latter was considered a religious building.

North Wing: Sacred Grove and Grandstand Frescoes

We move to the north wing. A group of friezes adorned a small shrine, as Evans called it, opening to the central court. A festival, or a series of festivals, was the subject here, to judge by the large crowds that are present. The composition must have spread over three friezes which have survived only in fragments.⁸⁸ The two groups are commonly known as the Sacred Grove and the Grandstand frescoes.⁸⁹

In the Sacred Grove (see my tentative reconstruction, fig. 49) there is a large crowd of male and female spectators rendered in shorthand method as a multitude of heads. They are turned to the left. Below them, three pathways intersect. The latter are a marked feature of

the west courts of the palaces (see above) so that their presence on the painting is an important topographical feature identifying the setting as the west court of the palace of Knossos. On one of the walkways there is a procession of long-haired men wearing necklaces and dressed in short kilts. Their gestures are formal: one arm is bent, fist held close to the chest.⁹⁰

Further to the left, there are fragments of one or two olive trees.⁹¹ In the foreground there are walking women. They are clearly the protagonists in this festival. Their arms are stretched forward or toward each other. Their gestures can be said to express interaction, as opposed to the reverence and self-containment denoted by the gestures of the men. Evans and, following him, Fr. Matz thought the women were dancing,⁹² but this is not at all self-evident. The movements of the females seem poised; the tresses of their hair rest on their shoulders. Given the conventions of Minoan art, this indicates calm, not rapid motion. The group moves to the left, the same direction as the male procession. Note also that the heads of most of the spectators in the crowd are turned to the left. This is certainly where the now missing focal point of the scene was. This focal point is fortunately identifiable, although Evans and Gilliéron missed it in their restoration. It is a building which can be plausibly restored as a shrine.⁹³ The action then seems to have centered around this shrine which may have been incorporated in the palace itself since the festival takes place in the west court.

The event depicted here was obviously a public festival with two distinct processions of men and women; the sexes are segregated and women seem to be the protagonists.

A few fragments, executed in the same style, were found in the same de-

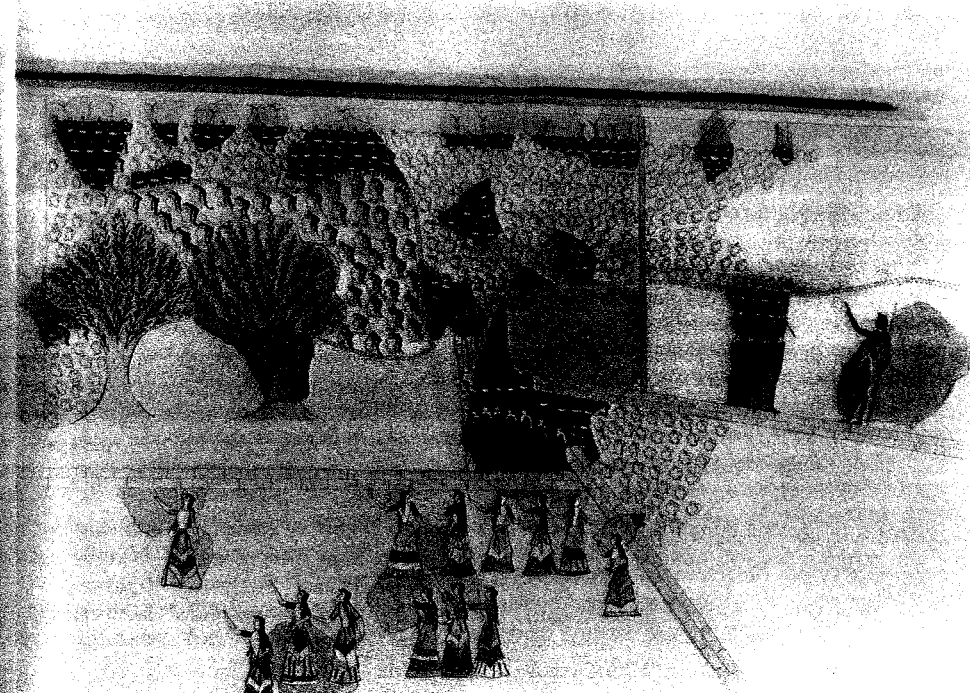


Fig. 49. Sacred Grove fresco. Simplified and slightly altered restoration from that of Evans by N. Marinatos and L. Papageorgiou

posit, but Evans did not think they belonged to the decorative scheme of the Sacred Grove because their subject seemed different. One piece depicts a long-haired young man, dressed in a kilt, holding a spear. Two more fragments show men with raised arms holding javelins (fig. 50).⁹⁴ Evans thought that the theme here was a beleaguered city because the men are armed. Yet, the fragments were found in the same heap and they can be easily connected with the festival theme. The men, in their role as warriors, would have been the protagonists in another section of the frieze. Parade of arms in the context of state

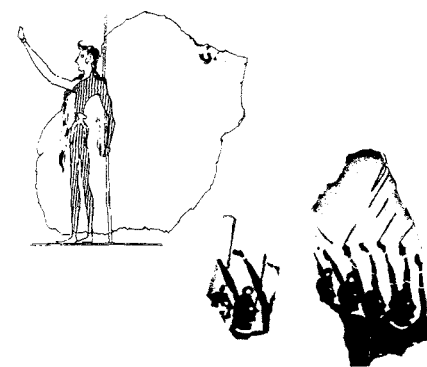


Fig. 50. Knossos. Men with javelins from area of Sacred Grove fresco

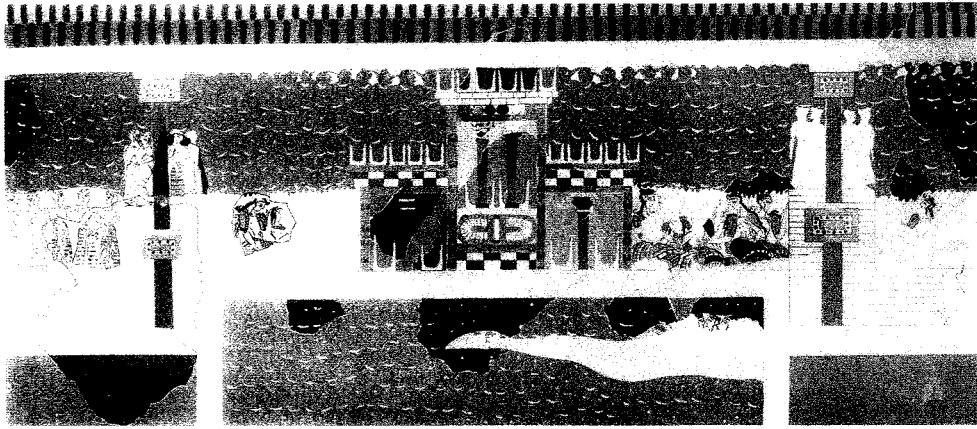


Fig. 51. Knossos. Grandstand fresco:

festivals is not unusual as we know from other cultures, notably Classical Greece.⁹⁵

Another set of fragments from the same area are known as the Temple or Grandstand fresco (fig. 51).⁹⁶ They must have belonged to a third frieze in the same room, to judge from the similarity of the style. Here again the composition is too fragmentary to permit a safe reconstruction and the one published by Evans is over-restored and misleading in certain respects. The main features are nevertheless clear. Once more there is a crowd of spectators. In the background are elaborate architectural facades, ornamented with sacred symbols. Groups of women are shown in prominent positions.

The crowds can be seen both on the upper and the lower sections of the composition. In the lower section they are enclosed in a rectangle, which has led to the supposition that the central court of the palace is represented here, seen from above.⁹⁷ The architectural facades with the sacred horns are situated directly above the court. Evans and Gilliéron restored them as a tripartite shrine; one suspects that this restoration has

regularized the composition and has overlooked some difficulties.⁹⁸ It is arguable that here also the palace is represented by the iconographical formula that we misleadingly call tripartite shrine.

The most unusual feature of this frieze is the platforms. They are traversed by horizontal lines, which probably denote steps, and are flanked by towers, in front of which are pillars. It is difficult to identify these structures, but it is tempting to connect them with the stone platform at the north end of the west court at the palace of Knossos (see above).⁹⁹ Some women are standing, others are seated.

If one looks at the details (fig. 52), noteworthy are the very long forelocks of the woman in the center which terminate in a netting.¹⁰⁰ It is interesting that the second woman from the left has hanging breasts (Evans designated her as a mother),¹⁰¹ whereas the breasts of the others are rendered just by nipples. Differentiation of breasts and hairstyles, especially forelocks, are visual signs designating age.¹⁰² I would therefore suggest that the seated women represent distinct age groups.

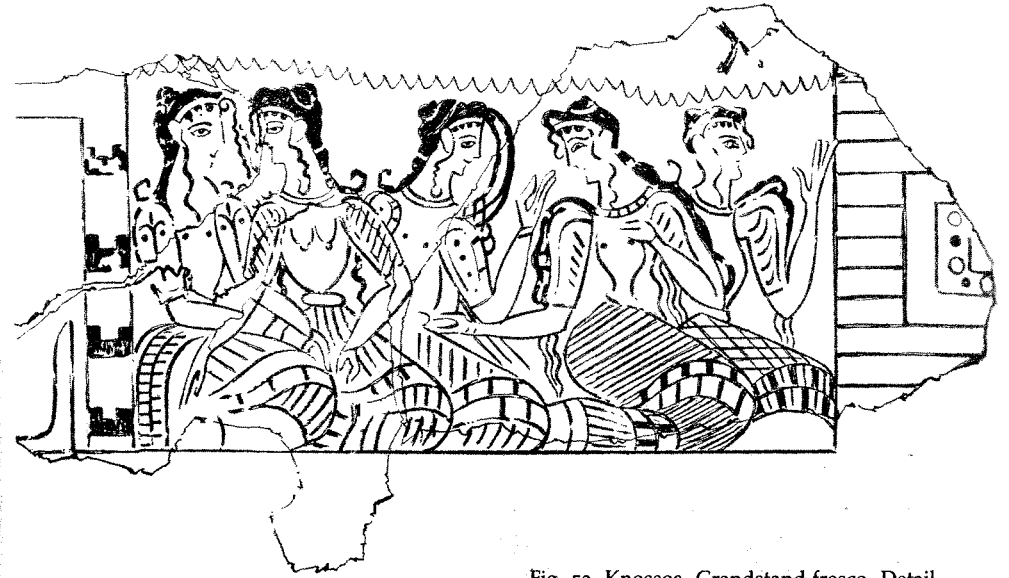


Fig. 52. Knossos. Grandstand fresco. Detail

Despite our uncertainty about how the elements described above fit into one coherent scene, it can be established beyond reasonable doubt that another phase of the festival is depicted here. It is possibly located in the central court of the palace of Knossos and attended by large crowds. Most importantly, women only are on the stands although men are predominant in the gathering. The women are obviously on display: they are not only watching, but they are seen as well. In this collection of womenfolk, I see the "harem" of the palace. By this term I do not want to suggest royal concubines; rather, I am using the word in its broadest sense to designate the noble women of the palace, members of the ruling family. They would have been of various ages and undoubtedly had powerful positions derived from their involvement in, and control of, certain rituals. This reconstruction of the social dimension is inspired by Egyptian and Near Eastern models, especially from

the records of the palace of Mari on the Euphrates.¹⁰³

What conclusions can be drawn about these friezes? We have seen that they adorned a small shrine room on the north side of the central court. The theme was a series of festivals that took place in connection with the palace. A central role was played by women, but men were featured as well in their capacity as warriors. That the small shrine had some connection with the preparations for the festival is very likely. What is clear is that the palace played a central role in the organization of public festivals and that the cultic role of women was accentuated. It is worth noting here that the texts from the palace of Mari reveal that a female divinity (*la Dame du palais*) was primary.¹⁰⁴

North Wing: The NW Fresco Heap

Some 15 meters to the north of this shrine, Evans discovered another group,

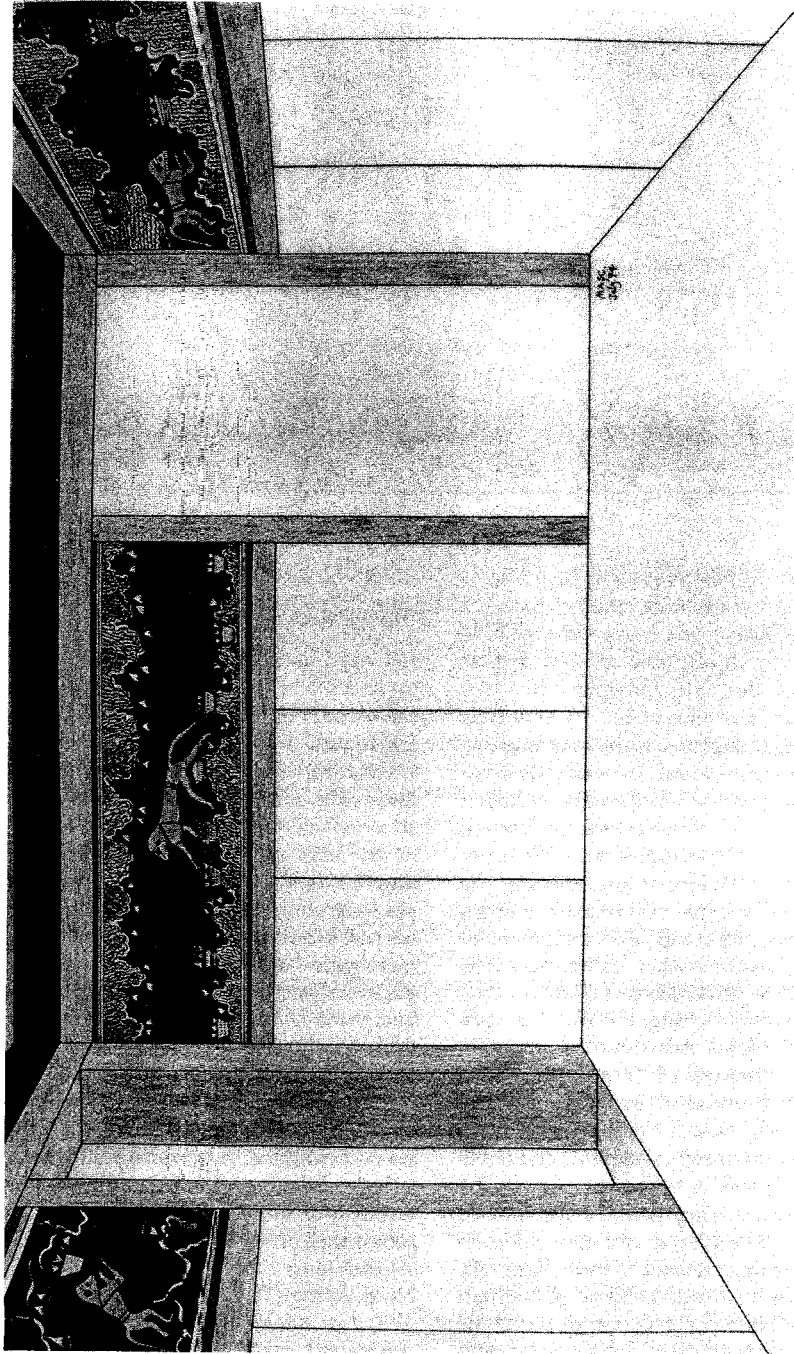


Fig. 53. Knossos. Blue Monkey fresco panels, as reconstructed by M. Cameron



Fig. 54. Knossos. Blue Monkey fresco. Detail

which is simply labeled the "NW Fresco Heap."¹⁰⁵ Unfortunately we have no context and the representations on the pieces are unclear. They do seem to depict patterns on female garments, however. The most interesting of them shows bulls' heads flanked by sphinxes; there are also couchant griffins. The only, but not unimportant, conclusion that can be drawn from this is that dresses were adorned with sacred animals and symbols. Such a garment could only have been worn by a priestess of high status or a goddess.

North Wing: The Blue Monkey Fresco

From the area of the Grandstand and Sacred Grove frescoes came another set of friezes, perhaps belonging to an early phase of the life of the palace (fig. 53).¹⁰⁶ They depict blue figures in a dreamy

landscape where large crocuses and projecting rocks predominate. The figures are picking the plants and placing them in a basket. Evans thought of them as blue boys and restored one as such. Later, however, it was shown conclusively by N. Platon that it was a monkey (fig. 54).¹⁰⁷ The discovery of Thera paintings has confirmed Platon's restoration. One can see there that monkeys play an important role in Minoan iconography of ritual, especially as gatherers of plants and servants of the deity.¹⁰⁸ The artistic effect of the blue monkey friezes has been captured in the restoration by M. Cameron.

East Wing: East Hall Frescoes

The east wing will now be explored. Opening to the central court was one of the most monumental halls of the entire

palace, now unfortunately totally destroyed, the East Hall.¹⁰⁹ Its religious character is evident from the large horns of consecration found near by. The rich finds and the exceptional iconographic decoration in relief frescoes added to the splendor.¹¹⁰ The East Hall, like the rest of the palace, underwent successive remodelings and transformations. For this reason, not all the fresco fragments necessarily existed contemporaneously on the walls. In the ensuing description I shall discuss them in the chronological order suggested by other scholars, although I am not convinced that such fine chronological distinctions are possible on the basis of style alone.¹¹¹

During MM III (sixteenth century BC) the relief frescoes that predominated depicted bulls. Several fragments of tails and hooves as well as one horn have survived. There was at least one woman, but her activity is uncertain. In a different heap there were found fragments depicting ladies, one holding a necklace composed of flower pendants. The fragments have been over-restored and resulted in an imaginative composition of doubtful validity known as the Ladies in Blue.¹¹² They are not in relief; it is thus plausible that they came from another room and did not belong to the same decorative scheme as the reliefs.

In LM IA or IB (1500/1450 BC) the East Hall was remodeled and redecorated with another set of stucco reliefs. Fragments of bulls are present again, but fewer this time in relation to the human figures. The latter are both male and female. The male limbs are strongly modeled with an emphasis on the muscles. This gave Evans the idea that agonistic scenes were depicted.¹¹³ However, emphasis on the muscles is not unusual in Minoan reliefs, even when the men are static. Consequently, there is no compelling reason to assume contests; the men may have had formal stances. The most

telling fragment depicts a man holding a bull's horn.¹¹⁴ On the basis of this the hypothesis might be ventured that the theme in the East Hall centered around ceremonies involving bull sacrifices. This also concurs with a discovery made more recently: a fragment depicting part of a "horn crown."¹¹⁵ The crown is a sacred object depicted in a series of seals mostly above the head of a goddess (figs. 113; 134). It consists of horns of bulls tied together.¹¹⁶

Finally, there were fragments of several griffins.¹¹⁷

Although the scenes in the East Hall cannot be reconstructed, the iconographical elements reveal a certain pattern. The existence of the bulls, the carrying of the horn by a man, and the horn crown all imply a ceremony of sacrifice conducted with many participants, male and female. The griffins are emblematic, affirming the sanctity of the room. We cannot exclude the possibility that they may have flanked a goddess. Noteworthy is the fact that the emblems of the decorative program of the East Hall are similar to those on the dress of a goddess or priestess from the NW Fresco Heap discussed above. There a bucranium (bull's head) was depicted on which the horns were combined with an actual horn crown. On the same garment also are antithetical griffins and sphinxes.

In summary, then, the East Hall seems to have had some connection with bulls and possibly sacrificial ritual.

East Wing: The Frescoes from the So-Called Domestic Quarter

We shall now examine the area Evans named the domestic quarter. His vision is crystallized in the reconstruction

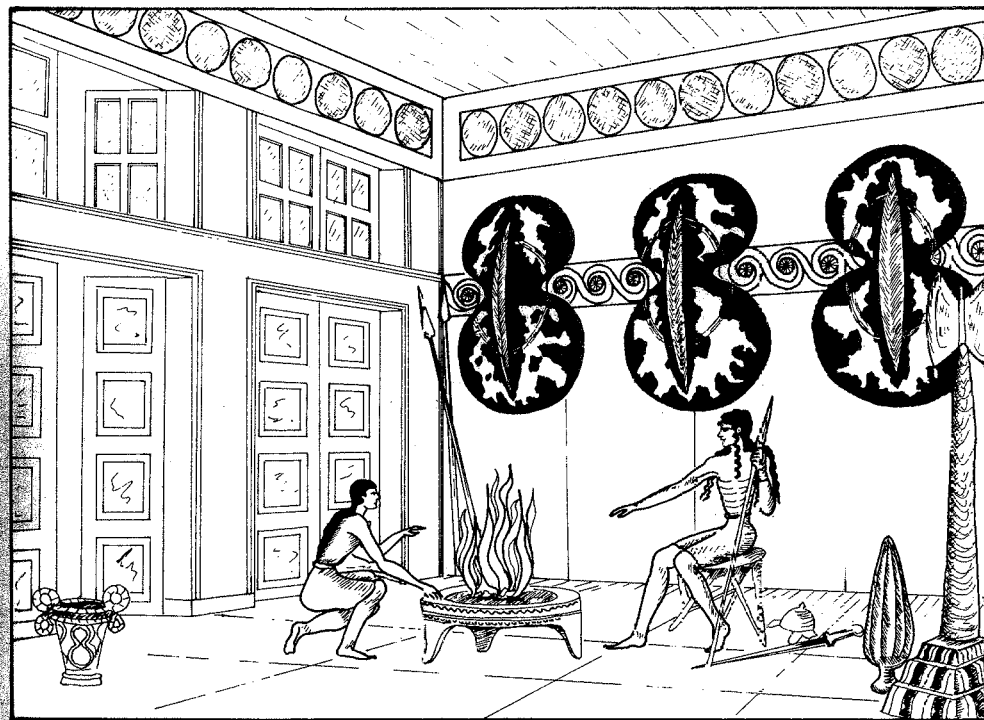


Fig. 55. Knossos: reconstruction by Evans of the King's Hall in the so-called domestic quarters

(fig. 55) showing elegant Minoan gentlemen warming themselves in the so-called King's Hall. As we shall see, the analysis of the iconography from this area does not support the theory of domestic quarter.

The paintings, which may give some clues about the true function of this area, were situated mainly on the upper stories. Before we get to them, the usual note of caution must be added: the frescoes originated in different phases of the decorative scheme of the palace and did not necessarily coexist.¹¹⁸ Most of them seem to date between 1450 and 1375. Assuming, however, that there was an essential continuity of function

in the palace until the "reoccupation" (either by squatters of Mycenaeans after 1375), the same general themes may have recurred.

Let us start with the main access to the so-called domestic quarter: the Grand Staircase.¹¹⁹ It joined the central court with the multistory wing constructed on the slope below it. Note that at least one story rose above the level of the central court.

According to M. Cameron, the Grand Staircase was decorated with frescoes depicting an ascending procession of men; we do not know what these men were carrying although Cameron thought that some were holding lotus



Fig. 56. Knossos: Grand Staircase fresco, as reconstructed by M. Cameron

flowers (fig. 56).¹²⁰ I am not certain whether Cameron's reconstruction is correct, but if it is, the scene on the stairway in all likelihood mirrored actual processions which connected the central court with the quarters below. In some ways it may have repeated the major processional scheme of the west entrance corridor.

The well of the same Grand Staircase, the loggia, as it was named by Evans, was painted with large eight-shaped shields made of ox hide. Evans reasonably argued that the paintings reflected the practice of actual shields hung on the wall;¹²¹ he also spoke of a "martial parade,"¹²² associating the shield with military power. And yet he was not oblivious to the fact that, in Minoan iconography, this type of shield appears in cultic contexts; he thus admitted that some religious associations were present.¹²³

As I have shown elsewhere, it is evident from scenes on seal-rings and sealings that the eight-shaped shield was used in hunting. It also played a role in religious ceremonies, where it served as one of the paraphernalia of the cult.¹²⁴ The link between the two usages must be ceremonial hunting, often practiced in ancient societies. Nor should one forget that the shield can be magical since its main function is to protect against enemies or charging wild animals. One more detail: because eight-shaped shields were made of ox hide, an association with bulls and bull hunting lies close at hand. It is further possible that the shield played the role of hunting trophy, a new one being made from slain bulls each time a festival was enacted.¹²⁵

This digression was necessary in order to alert attention to the multivalent associations that this particular type of

shield would have evoked. To suggest military ideology is surely reductionist.

On the Upper Hall of the Double Axes (for the architectural description and plans of this wing, see chapter 4) a piece of fresco was found *in situ*. It showed a bull's forefoot set on a ground with upstanding shoots of vegetation.¹²⁶ Thus bull iconography is here again in evidence.

It is interesting to note in this context that the famous Bull Leaper Frescoes came from the domestic quarter and the area immediately to the north, having fallen from the upper stories. They originated in two distinct areas and represent two different groups.

The first group belongs to the miniature class and was part of a deposit situated below the service stairway that connected the so-called Queen's Megaron, on the ground floor, with the story above. The deposit was found beneath the staircase of the story; there is thus little doubt that the frescoes belong to the upper floor.¹²⁷

In the same deposit were found ivory figurines of male bull leapers and a bull's head of faience in the same scale as the leapers. The fresco fragments depict the horn and ear of a bull. Important for the identification of the location of the scene is another fragment which shows the architectural facade of a shrine with a double axe; the neck of a bull is visible below.¹²⁸ Close by, but not within the same deposit, was found another fresco fragment which, according to Evans, belonged to the same group.¹²⁹ It depicted two acrobats in mid-air and the neck of a large bull. The question is what the fresco pieces were doing in a deposit. It is possible that they were not attached to the wall but were part of a plaque. Evans thought of the whole group, ivory acrobats and fresco, as a three-dimensional representation of bull leaping: "The various concomi-

tants, including not only the suspended acrobats but bulls executed in the round, suggest that we have to do with an actual miniature model of a Minoan arena in which the painted stucco representation of a shrine, marked by the sacred symbol of the Goddess, may have taken its place, as on the fresco, beside the Grand Stands."¹³⁰

The second group of fragments with bull leaping scenes came from the Court of the Stone Spout just behind (east of) the East Hall, having fallen from above.¹³¹ They are the famous Bull Leaper frescoes. It is clear from the fragments that several panels were involved, constituting a frieze set above dadoes. One panel could be safely restored from the fragments, and it is the one often depicted and most widely known (fig. 57). From the remaining fragments Cameron reconstructed the rest of the frieze consisting of four panels (fig. 58). Each one of them shows acrobats jumping over the bull, landing behind it, or grappling with its horns. The concentration of bull leaping scenes in this part of the palace invites a question: was Knossos a kind of center for training bull leapers or is it a mere accident of preservation that such scenes have not survived in the other palaces? The question has to remain open.¹³²

Some more frescoes came from the upper stories of that area. From the light well of the Queen's Megaron came the torso of a woman.¹³³ She is dressed in the typical Minoan jacket with a deep décolletage which leaves the breasts exposed. Her hair is flying, a convention which indicates rapid movement. For this reason Evans assumed she was a dancing lady, but recently, Niemeier has reconstructed her as a deity descending from the sky in rapid movement.¹³⁴ Unfortunately, there is too little left of this fresco to permit any safe restoration, but the different possible reconstructions

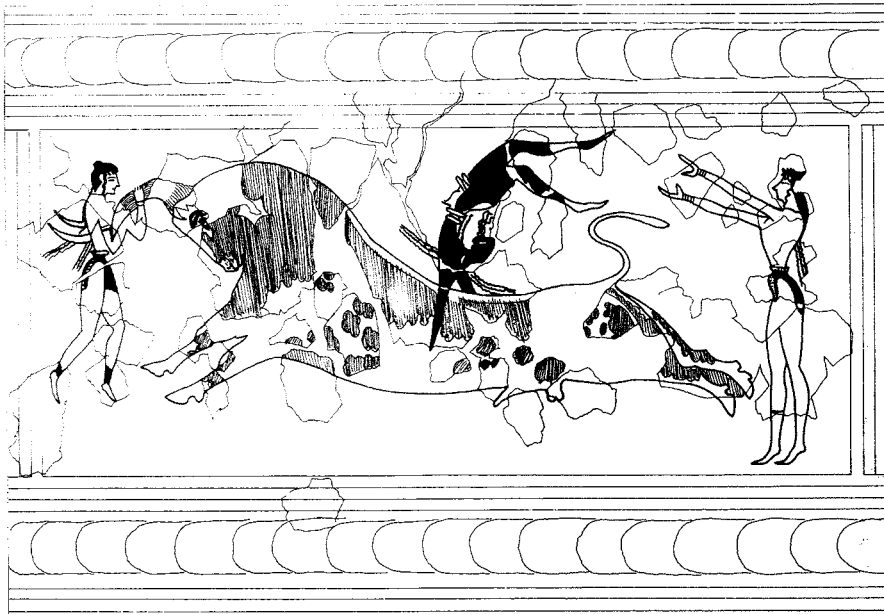


Fig. 57. Knossos. Bull Leaper fresco

show that Evans's hypothesis of a dancing girl may have been dictated by his ideas of what type of decoration would have been appropriate for a queen's hall rather than factual evidence.

Similar considerations may have prompted another restoration: the Dolphin fresco.¹³⁵ The fragments show large dolphins swimming amidst smaller fry and sponges. Evans assumed it was above the main entrance of the Queen's Megaron; such decoration would have been appropriate for a queen.¹³⁶ Yet, as has become evident by more recent research, the fresco came from the upper story. Moreover, it has been shown that it was not a wall painting but a floor in a room that was probably a shrine.¹³⁷ Minoan religion had a dimension that involved the sea; even the goddess is often associated with waters.¹³⁸ More about marine symbolism will be said in chapters 9 and 11.¹³⁹ We are thus constantly

led away from the private realm to the iconography of ritual.

The remaining pieces reported by Evans amount to negligible scraps, but should still be mentioned for the sake of completeness. A piece depicting a papyrus plant (or is it a bird?)¹⁴⁰ was found in the so-called Queen's Megaron;¹⁴¹ a fragment with a man's thigh and kilt was on the upper story of the King's Hall or, better termed, Hall of the Double Axes;¹⁴² a small fragment showing part of a garment (Evans thinks it was the loincloth of a processional figure) was retrieved from the Room of the Stone Bench, located above the so-called queen's apartments.¹⁴³

Despite the paucity and poor condition of the frescoes and the difficulties of chronology, it can be said that the bull seems to have played an important role in the iconography of the East wing, especially the area designated as domestic

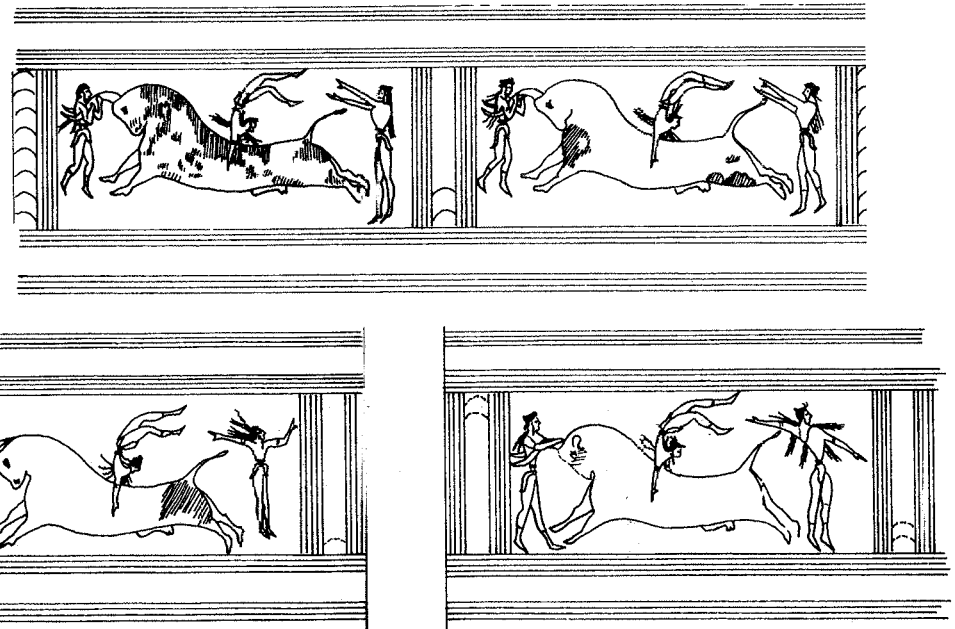


Fig. 58. Knossos. Bull Leaper fresco, as reconstructed by M. Cameron

quarters. Bulls have been in evidence in the pictorial program of the East Hall, in the bull fragment from the Upper Hall of the Double Axes, the ivory figurines of bull and bull leapers from the upper floor treasury, in the Bull Leaper frescoes and, finally, in the ox-hide shields of the loggias of the Grand Staircase. Further, the staircase itself may have had a ceremonial function if there was a procession depicted on its walls. None of this lends support to Evans's supposition that this section of the palace was the domestic or residential quarter.

The South Wing

Before considering the frescoes of the south wing, a few words must be said about the architecture of this area. Ac-

cess to the palace from the south was via a porch which joined up with the South-north corridor (fig. 40). The latter was a continuation of the Corridor of the Processions. It turned northwards at a right angle and is generally thought to have ended in the central court.¹⁴⁴ Evans ascribed a ceremonial character to it: "That this 'South-North Corridor,' representing the junction of the two passages leading from the Western and Southern entrance, fulfilled a special ceremonial and religious function may be inferred from a whole series of remains with which it was associated."¹⁴⁵ Evans then mentions a deposit of seal-impressions and frescoes with religious scenes found in the area.

The so-called Palanquin fresco was found in a basement west of the south-north corridor. Evans conjectured that

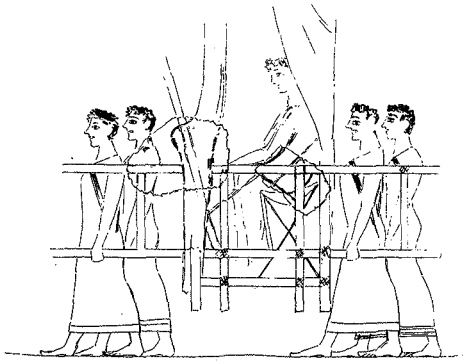


Fig. 59. Knossos. Palanquin fresco, as restored by Evans

the fragments had fallen from a shrine above in which the above-mentioned sealings probably were kept. If he is right, the shrine in question would have opened to the corridor and would have been used in connection with it. The figures on the surviving fresco fragments are in a small scale; therefore, the decorated wall surfaces cannot have been too large. This is in favor of Evans's reconstruction of a small shrine.

The Palanquin fresco consists of five pieces published by Evans¹⁴⁶ and some additional ones by Cameron.¹⁴⁷ The usual difficulty, resulting from the fragmentary condition of the composition, confronts us here also, but an attempt at a reconstruction of the scene will nevertheless be made.

The pieces depict men, clad in long robes which Evans identified as "sacerdotal."¹⁴⁸ Two of them are seated on folding stools reminiscent of the ones on the Camp Stool fresco.¹⁴⁹ On one of the seated figures a dagger is clearly visible, hanging from a sword sling. The dagger does not necessarily designate the man as a warrior; daggers in the Ae-

gean are simply markers of high status.¹⁵⁰ The long robe also suggests superior social position.

A peculiarity is that the seated men are behind wooden railings. In another fragment two more men are standing in front of a wooden structure (to judge by its yellow color) of which the column and entablature remain. Finally, there are remnants of male heads, some facing to the right, others to the left.¹⁵¹

Evans proposed an ingenious restoration for this incoherent set of fragments. Unfortunately, however, he ignored such pieces as could not be fitted in his reconstruction; they were published much later by Cameron. Evans's reconstruction (fig. 59) resulted in a palanquin carried by four men. Note that the second seated man (published by Cameron) is not incorporated in it, nor are the men standing in front of the wooden structure, nor the other male heads, some facing right, some left. These omissions show that there are serious problems with the reconstruction of the fragments as a palanquin.

Cameron proposed a different synthesis. In his opinion, the railings belonged to a shrine. Inside it sat sacerdotal personages possibly receiving a procession.¹⁵² I prefer the suggestion of Hood that the wooden railings and the construction belong neither to a shrine nor a palanquin, but to a wooden podium or stand.¹⁵³ A display stand would have been large enough to accommodate more than one seated official, and these officials would be on a higher level than the rest of the men.

In my sketch restoration (fig. 60), which is only a provisional suggestion, two personages are seated on folding stools inside the wooden stand. The male heads I interpret as a crowd surrounding the podium. Possibly, the officials are watching a procession or they are recipients of tribute.

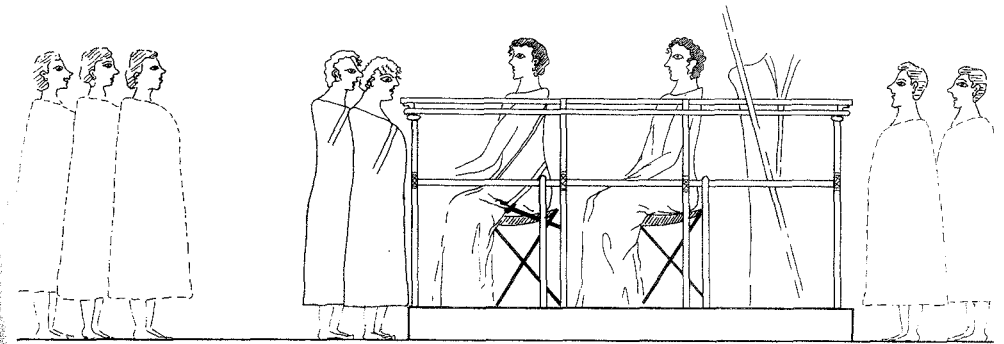


Fig. 60. Knossos. Palanquin fresco. Sketch restoration attempt by N. Marinatos and L. Papageorgiou

What can one deduce about Minoan ceremonies from this fresco? One safe conclusion, whether we accept my restoration or not, is that a stratified society is here reflected. Some men are seated while others are standing. This composition is a perfect pendant to the Grandstand fresco which has been discussed previously (fig. 51). It will be remembered that women were the protagonists there, whereas here only men take part. This leads to the thought that the role division and segregation of the sexes in ritual was complete, yet remained balanced. The predominance of women in ceremonial scenes is not as striking as one might think at first.

Finally, we might speculate about the role of the room which the fresco decorated. It is possible that it was the preparation room for officials receiving envoys who came to the palace. Alternatively, it may have been used as storage space for the equipment used in the ceremonies. But, most of all, it must have served the purpose of propagating palatial ideology to those visitors who, arriving through the south route, would look at the painting.

A final observation pertains to the nature of the composition. The figures of the men are so small that they can only be imagined as part of a frieze possibly set above windows or doors.

A relief painting of quite a different nature was found nearby: the famous Priest-King or Prince of the Lilies of Knossos. Evans reconstructed a majestic young priest-king (fig. 61).

The fragments were found in a basement, but Evans assumed that the composition decorated the south-north corridor above.¹⁵⁴ Although the location is far from certain,¹⁵⁵ what favors Evans's hypothesis is firstly the large size of the figure or figures, which are approximately life-size, and secondly the fact that they are in relief. It is unlikely that such a composition was concealed in a small room; the open corridor leading into the central court remains the most attractive supposition for its location. But is there sound foundation for the Priest-King restoration? It is actually very conjectural and arbitrary. Let us review the published fragments: (a) a torso with a lily necklace and a long lock of hair, arm folded, fist



Fig. 61. Knossos. Priest-King as restored by Evans

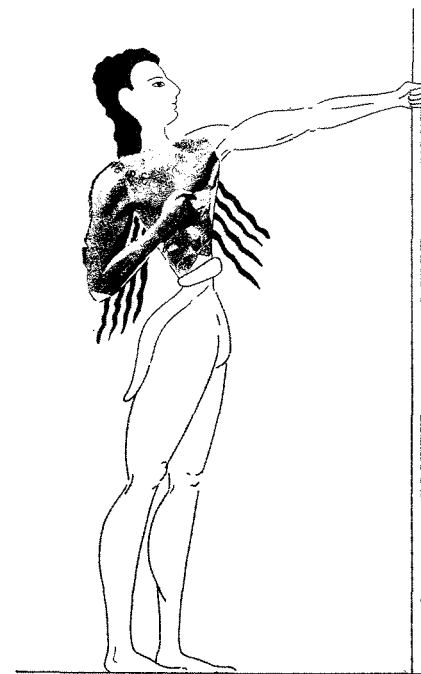


Fig. 62. Priest-King restored as a deity by Niemeier

clenched, band around the wrist;¹⁵⁶ (b) a lily crown with the upper part of an ear;¹⁵⁷ (c) a thigh with traces of a kilt;¹⁵⁸ (d) part of a leg;¹⁵⁹ (e) a stylized flower—iris or lily¹⁶⁰ and (f) a butterfly.¹⁶¹

The questions are many. Were there one or more figures? Were they male or female?¹⁶² Is the gesture of Evans's priest-king correctly restored? Head-dresses with lilies belong normally to priestesses or sphinxes; can we be sure that this one was worn by a man?

These problems have led scholars to question even the most basic concepts of Evans's reconstruction. J. Coulomb, for example, by studying the anatomical structure of the torso, arrived at the conclusion that the prince was a boxer.¹⁶³

Recently W.-D. Niemeier has proposed another ingenious solution in which the figure is a god with an extended arm holding a staff of authority, whereas the crown belongs to a guardian sphinx (fig. 62).¹⁶⁴ Both scholars agree that the griffin is unfounded and that the figure is male.

In my view, any restoration is risky and bound not to be definitive. Yet, there are certain elements which deserve more consideration than has hitherto been paid to them, and which do not favor Coulomb's boxer restoration. These are the lilies of the crown which surely must have a thematic link to the lily necklace of the man. Then, there is also the vegetation represented by the iris/lily flower and the butterfly. Although none of these are enough to put together a coherent picture, they do seem to have a common denominator: spring symbolism—that is, a period of renewal—suggested by the flowers and the presence of the butterfly. To that extent, Evans's figure, placed in a meadow abloom with flowers and populated by butterflies, may have hit part of the truth. His "prince," however, may have been a god, as Niemeier suggests.

The Iconography of the Entrance Systems

The frescoes of the palace entrances will be examined separately because it is likely that they express a consistent iconographical plan. This was certainly the case with palaces and temples in the Near East, where the gates and entrances were decorated with images denoting potency and had an emblematic character: lions, bulls, winged demons.¹⁶⁵

We start with the northern passage, which was probably the major entrance to the Knossos palace. The fragments that Evans discovered were scattered in

the area of the corridor leading from the north gate to the central court.¹⁶⁶ They were relief frescoes of large dimensions, making a monumental impression. Evans reasonably suggested that they decorated the sides of the corridor and conjectured two galleries on either side of it. Some reliefs were well preserved and showed the head of a charging bull, his mouth open. Fragments of hooves possibly suggest more bulls, while olive tree sprays show that the scenes took place out in nature. There also were limbs of humans, some white, some with a ruddy flesh tint, as Evans describes it.¹⁶⁷ Because of the nature setting, it is likely that bull hunting, rather than bull leaping, was depicted. Bull leaping scenes are never depicted in nature. Noteworthy is the large size of the charging bull and the direction of his movement northward. In other words, a visitor coming to the palace from this passage would have been confronted with a charging bull.

The iconography of the western entrance through the portico was not dissimilar.¹⁶⁸ *In situ* on the west wall of the portico was found the foreleg of a bull. Although the rest of the fresco has perished, enough remained for Evans to discern its contours, which show that the animal was in a charging position.¹⁶⁹ There is no evidence for the bull leapers, however, which the excavator has included in his restoration. I doubt that bull leaping was the subject of the fresco; I rather think that a solitary charging bull would have been more effective. It is interesting that, in this case also, the bull is facing outward, in the direction of an incoming visitor.¹⁷⁰

A bull was also depicted in the anteroom of the throne area, likewise facing outward. This bull has conceptual affinities with the prancing creatures (*lamassu*) in the throneroom of the palace of Mari on the Euphrates.¹⁷¹

We don't know anything about the position and context of the bulls of the East Hall, but they were in evidence there also. A pattern may be emerging: bulls were painted in areas that lead into important sections of the palace or inside the palace itself. The animals were positioned in an outward direction facing the spectator as he was coming in. The psychological effect must have been one of power, or even threat. It is therefore likely that the bulls, although not quite as fearful-looking as Near Eastern demons, had a kind of emblematic function in the decorative scheme of the palace.

Conclusions

The orientation of the palaces, the multiplicity of shrines and cult equipment they contained, the religious iconography of the frescoes, all point to one conclusion: they were centers of religious activity. In them resided a ruling elite who was in charge of religious, economic, and political matters. In short, the palaces are the missing temples, except that they were more than just temples, since they were the abode of the rulers.

It is true that, in the proposed scheme, one misses ostentatious living quarters;¹⁷² all important areas are re-assigned to ceremonial usage. Their absence, however, need mean neither that there were no rulers nor that the latter did not reside in the palaces. All it shows is that such quarters were not important enough to deserve specialized architectural design. Most probably the living space was in the upper floors which did not survive.

The rulers expressed their authority not through political or warrior imagery, as was the norm in the Near East and

Egypt, but through the manipulation and control of ritual.¹⁷³

This is evident from the analysis of the frescoes. They have also given some clues concerning the function of the different wings of the palace. The west wing has yielded most of the evidence for an important female, a priestess or goddess impersonator. The east wing, on the other hand, has the greatest concentration of bull leaping. The emblematic charging bull paintings, however, were reserved mostly for the entrances.

More puzzling is the missing ruler/priest iconography. No single person stands out enough to deserve the name priest-king or priestess-queen. On the other hand, groups of important personages, an elite, are evident in many scenes. Suffice it to mention the Grandstand and so-called Palanquin frescoes, depicting prominent women and men respectively.

Perhaps the peculiarity of the Minoan system, the combination of temple and palace in one unit, can be explained in the following manner. When certain families rose to power, they must have looked to the East for models of leadership. There palaces and temples coexisted. But as the texts from the palace of

Mari show, the palace had an important, if not *the* cultic role in the town.¹⁷⁴ The Minoans combined the dual system into one. Besides, religion, rather than control by force, must have fitted the Minoan temperament better. It could unify the population in a peaceful manner and lend credibility to the rulers.

As to the rise of the ruling classes, it seems to have been gradual. It may be that groups of important families, rather than one eminent individual, formed the basis of power.¹⁷⁵

One final question: how did the palace-temples function? As we have seen, the various shrines were grouped in different wings and especially around the central court. What their role was will be the subject of the next chapter; here it should only be mentioned that they had a certain autonomy. It is interesting to note that, for the Egyptians, the "temple" was depicted in art not as a unified building but as a *cluster of shrines*, each with its own ritual activities. This is how the temple of Karnak is rendered in the famous depiction of the Opet festival at Luxor.¹⁷⁶ It is tempting to suggest that the Minoans also viewed their "palaces" as a compact cluster of shrines and administrative units.

4

THE SHRINES
IN THE PALACES

Each palace, which I now have redefined as a cult center, contained not one but several shrines both on the ground floor and the upper stories. In seeking to understand the function of the shrines it will be important to ascertain their position relative to surrounding rooms or halls situated in the immediate vicinity on both the horizontal and vertical level. Further, questions of size and accessibility from open spaces are important. We want to know how many officiants could fit within a shrine at a given time, how accessible the shrine was to the public, and whether the procedures inside it were visible to a wider audience standing outside.

It is necessary to start with definitions, for it is not always easy to identify cult areas in the archaeological record. Granted that there are cult paraphernalia or sacred objects in a room, does this make it automatically a shrine, or can it be a storeroom where the paraphernalia of the cult were kept when not in use? The distinction should not be impossible to make; a storeroom can be expected to differ from a shrine. Therefore, architectural characteristics constitute a criterion

of primary importance and must be taken into account.¹ Some of the architectural characteristics we might expect in a shrine are: focal points, such as niches, platforms, and pillars;² communication or barrier devices to the outside, such as large doors (or large windows if the shrine is on the upper story);³ benches, repositories, or treasuries, which can be used for the placing or storage of cult objects;⁴ and finally, frescoes with religious iconography. These constitute important elements in the identification of sacred space.⁵

The identification and typology of shrines has been one of the major aims of scholars dealing with Minoan religion since the days of Sir Arthur Evans and Martin P. Nilsson.⁶ The most widespread and easily identifiable shrine types in both palaces and mansions are lustral basins, pillar crypts, and bench sanctuaries. This traditional classification is based on architectural features: all bench sanctuaries contain benches, all lustral basins have sunken floors, and all pillar crypts contain pillars. Even so, some of the terms reflect Evans's ideas of what took place in the

shrines. "Basin" implies water; "crypt" implies a dark basement chamber. The use of these designations has colored our way of thinking, but to what extent they are justified remains to be seen.

My aim here is not to survey and reclassify the architectural types of shrines for one more time, especially since there exist recent comprehensive works on the subject.⁷ While accepting the traditional classification as a base, I shall lay more emphasis on function than mere architectural typology in the hope that the ensuing categories will reflect ritual process.

The shrine complexes that will be discussed are: (1) *adyta* (conventionally known as lustral basins), (2) pillar crypts, (3) dining shrines, and (4) ceremonial display areas.

Adyta (Lustral Basins)

The shrine type that I call *adyton* is known as lustral basin in the archaeological jargon. It can be described as a rectangular room which is below floor level, its sunken floor giving the impression of a basin. It sometimes was lined with gypsum. It was entered by a staircase, which is usually L-shaped or dog-leg-shaped (fig. 63). Often the chamber had a parapet terminating in a pilaster and column.⁸

Sunken chambers were not confined to the palaces but occurred also in mansions throughout eastern and central Crete and one example even existed outside Crete, on the island of Thera.⁹ It is noteworthy, however, that lustral basins are not found in ordinary townhouses.¹⁰ Whatever their function, they were used only by the upper classes.

The term *lustral basin* originated with Evans.¹¹ He thought that the units

in question were used for cultic activities and specifically for lustrations.¹²

However, another idea of Evans found even more favor with scholars in later years: the bathroom theory. Curiously enough, Evans had designated some units of the same architectural type as baths at Knossos.¹³ Subsequently, the theory of cultic use receded in the background. When J. W. Graham published his *The Palaces of Crete* (1952), he suggested that the lustral basins were in reality bathrooms,¹⁴ although they could occasionally be used for cult.¹⁵ He was actually not the first to focus on sanitary facilities and bathrooms within the palaces. In 1959 N. Platon, an eminent Greek archaeologist, had written: "Many rooms characterized as lustral basins were in fact baths, since they are found especially in the principal living apartments; the form of the similar installations used for lustral purposes evolved directly from the bathrooms . . ." ¹⁶

One of the main arguments for the sunken chambers as bathrooms rests on the fact that they have sunken floors. These supposedly would ensure privacy for the bather and protection from drafts. An additional argument was the frequency of bathrooms in other civilized cultures. (Graham did not really discuss what the evidence is for actual bathrooms as opposed to ceremonial washrooms in Egypt and the Near East.)¹⁷ The bathrooms were thought to be part of the secular residential areas (already designated as such by Evans) where the kings and queens of the palaces lived, bathed, and used toilets. Thus, the chambers with sunken floors are discussed in Graham's chapter on the residential quarters of the royal family,¹⁸ although all the "facts"—a residential area, a royal family, and baths—are no more than assumptions that can be questioned.¹⁹ The reader will have

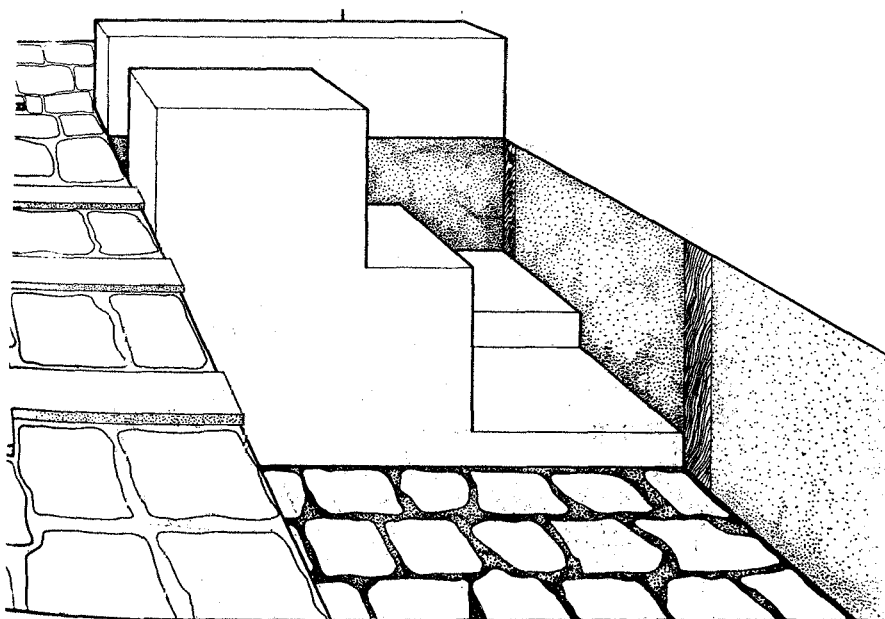


Fig. 63. Sketch of an adyton (traditionally called lustral basin)

noticed that the argument becomes fully circular, that there is never any definitive proof adduced either for the residential character of the wings or for the washroom function of the lustral basins. The frescoes and finds are not taken into serious consideration.

The bathroom theory has had a definitive impact,¹⁹ despite a major difficulty: none of the alleged bathrooms has a drain. Graham did not see this as a major obstacle: "Drains are not necessary, merely convenient. . . . A little water splashed from a tub could easily be sponged up."²⁰ However, the Minoans had well-developed drainage systems, which were often situated in the immediate vicinity of the units in question.²¹ If they took the trouble to construct special rooms with sunken floors lined with gypsum, why not add a drain? More ar-

guments will be presented later to show that the bathroom theory cannot be correct. For the moment let us look at another solution which can be designated as a theory of compromise.

Because the cultic associations of the lustral basins cannot be entirely ignored, many scholars have tried to combine the domestic and lustral usage.²² Even Graham conceded that a cultic function coexisted with the purely practical one. The units, he assumed, were normally used for bathing, but this bathing could have had a sacral character under specific circumstances and on special occasions. "Thus the household room could be at once 'bathroom' and 'lustral chamber.' In taking a bath one cleansed both the body and the soul."²³ The casual mixing of practical and religious activities is a clever solution to a

difficult dilemma, but it evades the real question concerning primary function. We shall see further on that the finds and architectural environment speak against it.

In this brief survey of scholarship one should not neglect to mention two Greek scholars, Sp. Marinatos and S. Alexiou, both of whom stressed the cultic as opposed to the secular nature of the sunken chambers.²⁴

Let us now return to Evans. It will be remembered that he thought of the sunken chambers in two ways, as bathrooms and as lustral basins. What was his evidence for a lustral ceremony? The idea came to him in connection with the excavation of one large such unit, situated in the northwest section of the palace.²⁵ It was one of the earlier specimens, and for this reason perhaps it had an unusually deep basin.²⁶ In the fill of the chamber and its environment many miniature vessels were found of the type that usually contain unguent or perfume. Since similar flasks were found also in other such units in Knossos,²⁷ Evans concluded that ceremonies of anointing and lustration were the rituals that could be connected with all such rooms (except when he designated them as bathrooms).²⁸

I shall start the investigation afresh by considering frescoes, finds, and architectural environment together.

Architecturally speaking, the units in question are evidently places of separation or seclusion from the surrounding space. When descending into them, one partly disappeared from view and reached a different level. It is better to avoid the term *basin*, which immediately conjures up images of water.

But what can be established about these places of separation from the archaeological context? We have seen that Evans stressed the unguent flasks that he found associated with some of the

units in the palace of Knossos. Now we are in a position to put more facts together.

Firstly, it seems to me that the iconology of the frescoes which adorned some of the units is important evidence regarding their function, especially in the few cases where there are figurative scenes as opposed to mere decorative borders.²⁹

From the sunken chamber of the South House, a mansion south of the palace of Knossos, came fragments depicting flowers, reeds, and a swallow.³⁰

In the sunken chamber in the north wing of the palace of Zakros a fresco was found practically *in situ*. The chamber included a ledge above which the painting was situated. The fresco depicted sacral horns with double axes between them, as well as peculiar leaf motifs.³¹ Since double axes and horns are among the most important symbols of Minoan religion, there can be little doubt that not only the painting, but the ledge as well, had a religious function. The ledge must have been a kind of deposition altar with the fresco forming an effective backdrop.

The best preserved sunken chamber and associated fresco comes from the island of Thera, which was under strong Minoan influence.³² There, the painting consists of two distinct compositions, one placed above the other, decorating two different stories. One painting was immediately above the sunken chamber; the other was on the upper story (figs. 132, 211-13). The upper-level painting depicted girls picking crocuses and a goddess flanked by two divine attendants: a monkey and a griffin. On the lower level there were two panels, one of which, on the East wall, depicted a shrine topped with sacred horns (see chapter 10). The religious iconology of all the paintings is quite evident.

One more fresco can perhaps be associated with sunken-floor chambers although indirectly: the one in the room with the throne at Knossos (fig. 43), although the primary focal point there was the throne itself.³³ The fresco depicts griffins in a landscape of reeds, papyrus, and other plants.

Finally, scraps of fragments with vegetation came from the area of the northern sunken chamber at the palace of Phaistos.³⁴

In two out of the five cases, Zakros and Thera, the paintings are clearly associated with ritual. Especially noteworthy in this context is the presence of sacred horns at both Zakros and Thera. Yet, the rituals that can be alluded to by the iconography do not seem to be connected with lustration. There exists no common theme, except that at both Zakros and Thera there are obvious cult symbols depicted. This would suggest an equation, or at least a close relationship, between the sunken chambers and shrines.

In the rest of the cases, vegetation appears consistently; even on the Zakros painting there are stylized plant motifs.³⁵ The association with plants is probably symbolic, implying renewal in nature; at any rate, it takes us far away from lustral baths and purification.

Secondly, it is important to investigate the finds whenever this is possible, because only few were found *in situ*. The unguent flasks which Evans reported at Knossos have already been mentioned. Many sunken chambers have yielded only cups.³⁶ From one in a mansion at Malia (Maison E) came a lamp, a dagger, and a stone offering table.³⁷ From the annex of another similar unit at House Za, Malia, came a rhyton.³⁸ Most important are the cult objects found in the sunken chamber 63d of the palace of Phaistos: nine bronze double axes, a bull's head rhyton, jugs decorated in flo-

ral style, two small pairs of horns of consecration, and other equipment.³⁹

Perhaps we should take into account the association of several units with treasuries or repositories. At the palace of Zakros, the sunken chamber XXIV of the west wing was close to the un plundered treasury XXV. Among the cult equipment found in this treasury were rhyta, chalices, double axes, maces, etc.⁴⁰

Treasuries, albeit plundered, can also be associated with the following sunken chambers: the one in the throne room complex, Knossos;⁴¹ the northwest one also at the palace of Knossos;⁴² and the one in House Za, Malia.⁴³

I have not systematically gone through all the finds associated with every sunken chamber,⁴⁴ since they have been reviewed by others.⁴⁵ I have, however, stressed the most characteristic items: an offering table, libation jugs, unguent flasks, cups, cult implements, and symbols. If we combine these with the evidence of the frescoes, the conclusion must be that the sunken chambers were a type of shrine. Further, it can be inferred that neither the finds nor the frescoes point to activities which are exclusively connected with lustration. It is more reasonable to visualize general ceremonies of offering (hence the offering table, cups, cult implements) with lustration as a possible variant. Evans, then, may have seen the correct pattern, but it was only partially valid. Note, however, that from lustration grew the idea of the use of water and finally bathing. We have seen that there is no evidence whatsoever to suggest extensive use of water; even the jugs that have been found are small and indicate anointing with oil rather than purification with water. And how would offering tables, double axes, or cups be used in a lustral chamber, not to mention a bathroom?

The identification of the sunken cham-

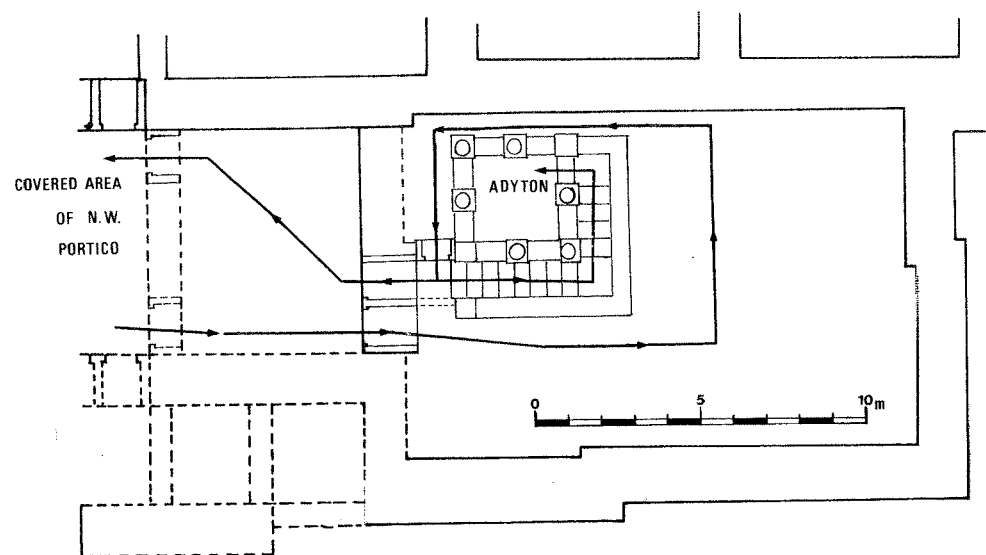


Fig. 64. Palace of Knossos, NW adyton. Simplified plan after Evans

bers as shrines where offerings were deposited necessitates a designation other than *lustral basins*. The sunken floor suggests that they were places of separation and seclusion from the normal environment. This means that a degree of privacy was sought. I therefore prefer the term *adyton*, a Greek word meaning "untreadable."⁴⁶ It is borrowed from the religious architecture of Classical Greece and is not totally appropriate when applied to another culture. However, it does designate an area of seclusion and to that extent it is convenient.

More can be said about adyta if we look at their architectural context. Let us return to the northwest adyton of the palace of Knossos and Evans (fig. 64). He made some important observations in connection with it. The adyton was accessible from the outside; the visitors could enter it directly and would not have to pass through the major north entrance. It was freestanding in a sepa-

rate court. Evans concluded that the whole complex was an initiatory area for votaries wishing to enter the palace. Heeven suggested a circulatory pattern for the path of the votaries (fig. 64). The position of this adyton within its larger architectural environment suggests that it was a focal point to which *direct participation was restricted*.

We shall return to the idea of initiation later. What must be pointed out for the moment is that the architectural environment of the adyta is such as to allow indirect participation. One group of participants could be passively watching the events.

One way to achieve this is by having a gallery in the upper story from which the spectators could look down into the adyton.⁴⁷ Such a gallery has been inferred for the adyton of the throne room at Knossos by Evans because of a stairway adjacent to the complex;⁴⁸ this reconstruction is *not certain*.⁴⁹ A stairway

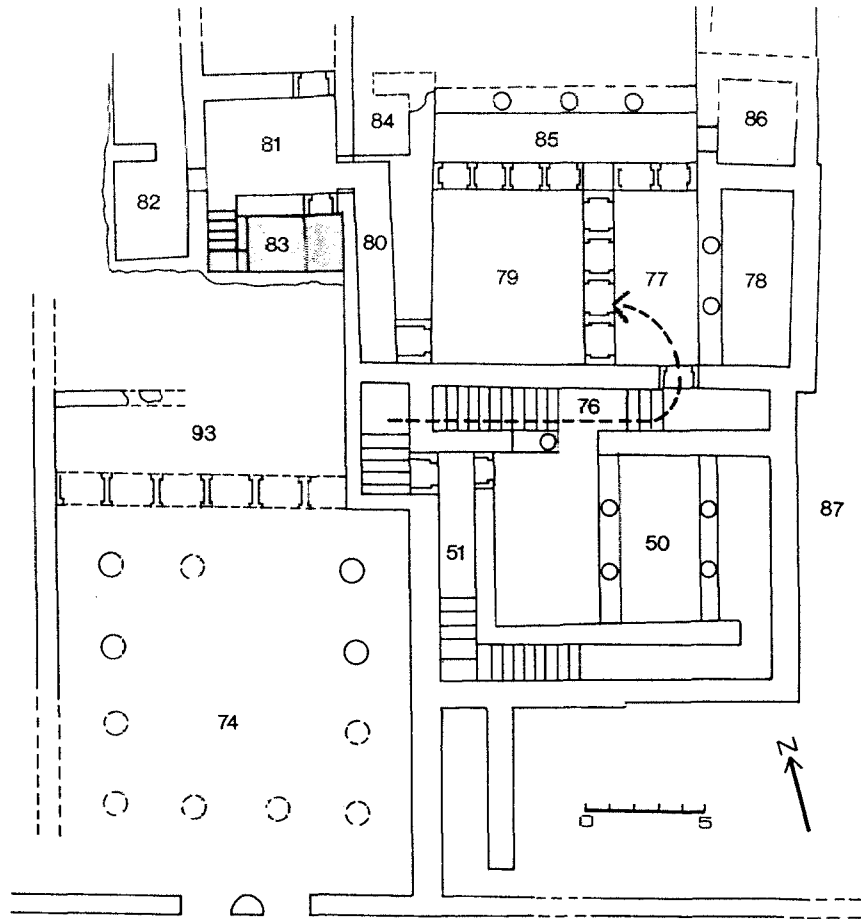


Fig. 65. Palace of Phaistos, N adyton. Simplified plan

is adjacent to the adyton complex at Phaistos (fig. 65). Here, too, there is uncertainty as to what the role of the upper story was. The traffic flow cannot be reconstructed since the north border of the palace has been completely destroyed⁵⁰ and we do not know whether there was a north entrance which would allow access to the adyton suite directly from the

outside. What we can do is simply point to the fact that this wing could be reached from an upper level through peristyle hall 74. One would have to descend through stairway 76, pass through 77 and 79, through corridor 80, anteroom 81, and reach the adyton (83). There is no conclusive evidence that the latter was roofed. Thus, if a visitor stood

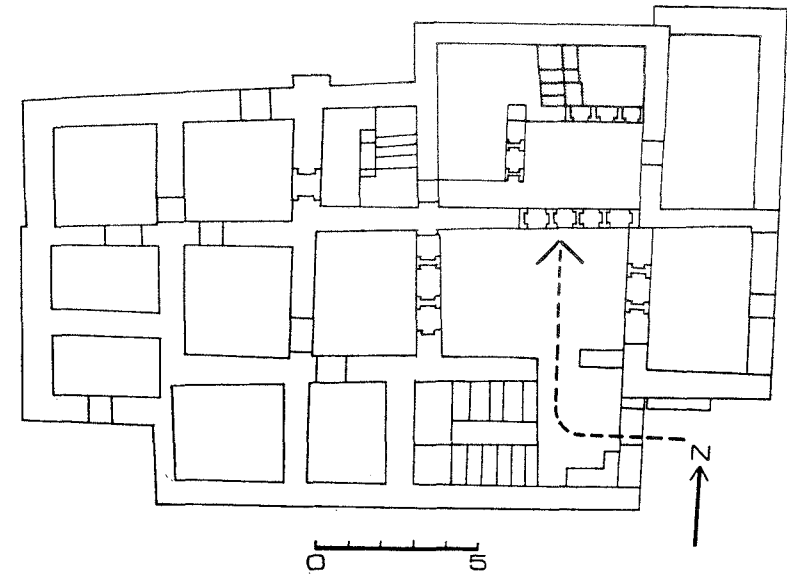


Fig. 66. Akrotiri, Thera. Adyton of Xeste 3

on the upper level within room 93, he could perhaps watch the events taking place inside it.

At Xeste 3, Thera, the adyton was situated in the north sector of the building (fig. 66). In direct connection with its anteroom was a stairway which led to the story above;⁵¹ it seems to have been especially designed to facilitate traffic with the upper story in this particular section of the building. The houses at Thera are much better preserved than those in Crete and therefore permit safer inferences. For our purpose it is important to note that the upper story of Xeste 3 duplicates exactly the arrangements of the ground floor; this would suggest analogous activities on both levels. A visitor, standing on the upper floor, could look down into the adyton if the latter was unroofed;⁵² here again a kind of loggia could have existed.

The traffic flow between two stories implies that the ritual was enacted on two different levels with both direct and indirect participation: some persons performed inside the adyton whereas others watched. It is also possible that successive phases were acted out on the different levels.

Admittedly, not all adyta have adjacent stairways; in fact the majority do not, as far as we know. Still, this does not invalidate the observations made above. The Minoans never developed so canonical a scheme in their architecture as to stifle all possibilities for innovation and adaptation to local needs. If indirect participation was the primary reason for the loggia on the upper story, then this need could have been served by other devices.⁵³

Let us now explore other ways of indirect participation. The earliest extant

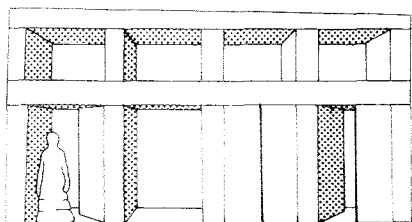


Fig. 67. Pier-and-door system

adyton at Malia, Quartier Mu,⁵⁴ had two windows, one overlooking a room with a fixed offering table, the other looking into its own anteroom. One can imagine that people stood on the outside and watched the procedures inside the adyton through these (otherwise inexplicable) windows. The adyton complex in the north wing of the palace of Zakros likewise had a window. More cases possibly could have been identified, had Minoan buildings been better preserved.⁵⁵ As things stand, we must be content to observe the pattern of the vertical traffic and indirect participation from the best preserved ones.

We now turn to other features of the architectural environment of the adyta. When these features are translated into traffic flow patterns, they once more suggest direct and indirect participation, as well as screening of the visitors. Firstly, most adyta have anterooms. Anterooms are interfaces between the focal point and the outside. They imply control of access to the focal point (in this case the adyton). They may also imply a waiting period between arrival and actual entering into the adyton.

Secondly, they are frequently associated with an extraordinary Minoan invention, the pier-and-door (*polythyron*), which can be considered a screen.

A pier-and-door system can be described as multiple door bays separated

by wooden piers (fig. 67).⁵⁶ The length of an entire room can be spanned by this device in which case a removable wall or screen is created. From a technical point of view, the construction of a pier-and-door cannot have been easy, especially when it is situated on the ground floor supporting the weight of the upper story or stories.⁵⁷ After the fall of most Minoan palaces, the system was practically abandoned,⁵⁸ so were the adyta. This means that the pier-and-door was intimately bound with the palace culture and its ideological expressions. Most importantly: the symbiotic relationship between adyton/pier-and-door is implied by the simultaneous disappearance of both.

Before this association of adyton with the pier-and-door construction is further explored, a few words about the prevalent theories attempting to explain its function are necessary. The most widely accepted idea is that it was invented in order to control weather conditions. Graham observed that there were light wells often located in its vicinity: "This pier-and-door partition, as we have called it, was a very popular feature of Cretan palace and house architecture, its purpose being perhaps partly to gain greater privacy for one part of the room, but probably it was chiefly a device to adapt the room to the extremes of Cretan weather."⁵⁹

A noteworthy fact is that pier-and-door arrangements are found, for the most part, in precisely those areas which Evans, Graham, and others considered residential. The explanation is thus congruent and dependent on the traditional view: since the pier-and-door is located within an area of domestic use, its function must make sense within this context. If, however, the adyta are not baths, as it has been argued above, but shrines, their presence in the "residential quarters" is baffling. The func-

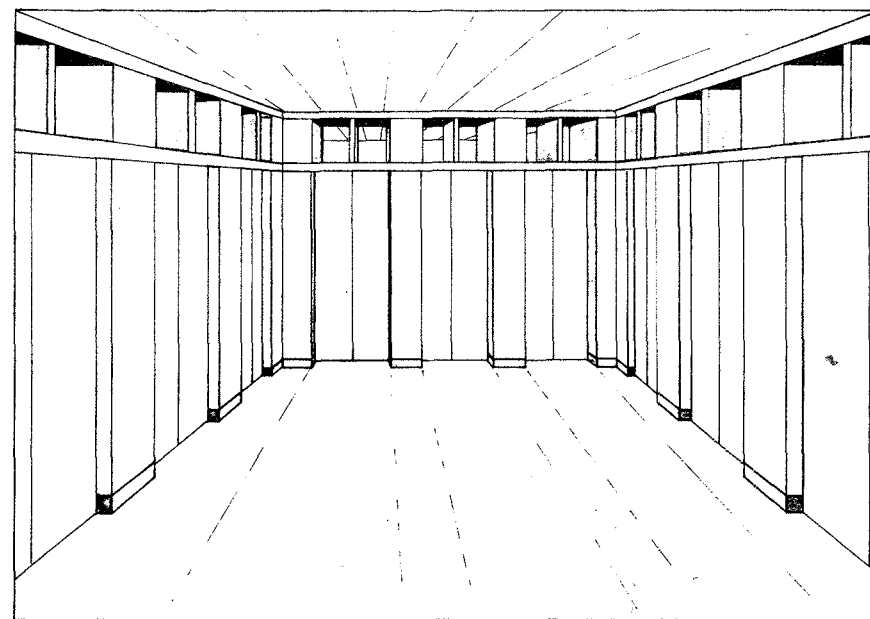


Fig. 68. Sketch of a pier-and-door box room

tion of the pier-and-door device is rather related to that of the adyta.

In many ways, Graham's observations are very much to the point and it may be worth looking closely at his reasoning. The removable screens, as the pier-and-door can be called, can indeed ensure privacy and control of light and air. If the doors are closed, there is darkness, so visual contact between adjacent areas is obstructed. If the doors are open, the opposite is the case. Still, the climate-control theory does not explain a simple fact: why not use windows if all you want to achieve is manipulation of light and air? The use of doors implies actual circulation of people. Thus, we have three possible functions here: control of light and air, control of visual access, and control of circulation.⁶⁰

To summarize: we can regard the pier-and-door as a removable screen between two adjacent rooms, and as a removable barrier between the visitor entering from the outside and what lies on the other side of the screen.

Sometimes the pier-and-door is not just a screen spanning the length of a room. A variant is when all three walls of a room are pier-and-door screens (fig. 68).⁶¹ In such a case, the room in question can be turned into either an open porch, if the doors are open, or into a dark, box-like space with minimal light. A visitor enclosed in such a box could easily be disoriented, since he or she would be surrounded by a series of identical doors. I hardly think that a room like this would make pleasant private living quarters; rather, its main

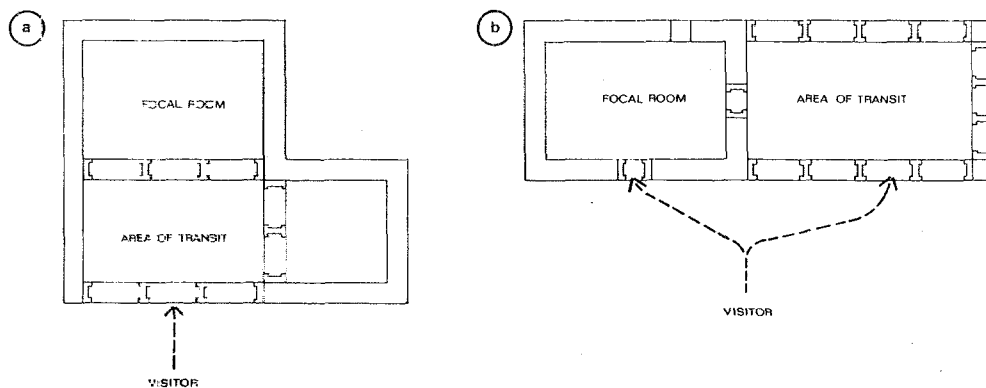


Fig. 69. Schematic plans showing how access to adyton could be achieved

property would be the manipulation of space and the dramatic contrasts that would be effected by the opening or closing of the doors. Note also that intricate paths of entrance and exit into the pier-and-door rooms could be arranged. All this has the ring of ritual, not of domestic life. But let us see what the relationship of the pier-and-door system with the adyta is.

It is a fact that most adyta are situated *beyond* a pier-and-door system, namely they can be reached if the visitor traverses either a single screen (figs. 64, 67) or, what is most often the case, a "box room" with many pier-and-door screens constituting its walls (figs. 65, 66, 68).

Consider the path of a visitor coming to the adyton of building Xeste 3 at Thera (fig. 66). He or she would have to traverse rooms 4 and 3a, both of which have pier-and-door partitions. Similarly, in the palace of Phaistos (fig. 65), the adyton (83) lies beyond box room 79. These are not the only examples, but they will suffice to illustrate the point.

Few adyta had access through another supplementary entrance. Fewer yet were not reachable through a pier-and-door.

Even there, however, pier-and-door systems may be present, being close to the adyton and forming a parallel system to it. Figure 69 shows in schematic fashion the two variants of the adyton/pier-and-door relationship. Variant (a) indicates that transit *must* be through a pier-and-door; variant (b) shows that the two units are related in not sequential but parallel fashion.

If the analysis given above is correct, the pier-and-door constitutes a passage—the anteroom to the real focal point, which is the adyton.⁶² From the perspective of the historian of religion it is an intermediate stage between those entering the unit and those fully admitted into the inner shrine. We may assume that the screens acted as barriers obstructing view and access to the adyton. We may also conjecture how it would have felt to have been enclosed in one of the box rooms. The interior would have been fairly dark and there would have been a disorienting effect resulting from the closed doors. If the doors opened, there would be a flood of light rushing in: the contrast would have been dramatic. "Dramatic" is the key term pointing to ceremonial usage be-

cause ritual makes use of drama; in fact, it is not effective without it.

In conclusion, entrance and admittance to the adyton was not a trivial affair. The visitors would have to be "screened"; some would have to be content to stand in the area of the shrine without actually entering it. This model accounts for both variants (a) and (b) shown in figure 69. The main difference would be that in (a) it would be necessary for everybody to pass through the pier-and-door before reaching the adyton, whereas in (b) the inner shrine could be reached directly by some, while others would be directed into the box room.

The above explains my choice of the word *adyton* for the type of shrine under discussion. The small size, the existence of the anteroom, the screening through a pier-and-door system and the loggias on the upper story for watching all suggest that the ritual enacted was both special and somewhat secretive, that it involved direct as well as indirect participation.

But what about the nature of the rituals enacted there? We have seen that ceremonies of offering by a restricted number of worshipers are just about certain, but this is a generalization which does not tell us much about the essence and purpose of the ritual. The pattern of successive admittance and indirect participation, however, fits particularly well one model: initiation. Indeed, Evans came to this conclusion himself when describing the northwest adyton at Knossos (fig. 64) and called the space adjacent to it an "initiatory area."⁶³ Further, the adyton in building Xeste 3 at Akrotiri, Thera, has furnished good proof of initiation rituals to be described in some detail in chapter 10.

Although the initiation model makes good sense out of the evidence, it is far from certain that all Minoan adyta were used for the same purpose. It is impor-

tant to observe the limitation of our knowledge until further excavations reveal more data. For the moment we must be content to observe the emerging pattern of successive admittance and elite participation connected with the Minoan adyta.

As noted above, adyta are found not only within palaces but in mansions as well. They are, however, strikingly absent from ordinary houses. This says something about the social and ideological/religious relationship between the rulers and the upper classes. This question will be discussed more extensively at the end of this chapter.

Pillar Crypts

The type of Minoan shrine known as the pillar crypt was so named by Evans. In the course of his excavations at the palace of Knossos he came across dark basement rooms containing central pillars on which signs (commonly referred to as mason's marks) were inscribed. He assumed that the pillar rooms were shrines and wrote in 1901: "There can, I venture to think, be little doubt that these chambers are shrines, probably belonging to the oldest part of the building, and the pillars thus marked with the signs of the God are in fact his aniconic images."⁶⁴ Evans's conclusions were not based on the data from the palace of Knossos alone; he also collected iconographical examples which seemed to him to prove a pillar cult and spiced the evidence with anthropological parallels randomly collected from various parts of the world.

Naturally enough, his methodology was questioned and rejected in later years. In 1954 there appeared a systematic, thorough, and methodologically sound article by N. Platon. He tried to prove that pillar crypts were indeed shrines by showing that the rooms in

question contained objects of cult and sometimes remnants of animal sacrifices. Moreover, there were some architectural features that were common to many pillar crypts.⁶⁵ They were dark rooms, always on the ground floor or basement. They often had adjacent sacristies and/or treasuries, or were connected to storage rooms. Frequently there was a columnar shrine immediately above them on the upper story.

I think that Platon proved his point: there really did exist in Minoan times a type of shrine characterized by pillar(s), although this by no means proves Evans's contention that the pillar was in itself worshiped. But there remained problems. Unlike adyta, the architectural typology of pillar crypts is not easily definable. Their size and form and even the number of pillars they contain varies. It has been rightly objected that a pillar can be merely functional: a structural device to support the upper rooms. Are we entitled to make every pillar room into a shrine? And how do we distinguish secular from sacred pillars? To illustrate the problem it will suffice to say that Platon identified and listed as many as 47 cases, whereas in a recent study doubts are expressed even about those pillar crypts which gave Evans the initial inspiration.⁶⁶

The truth must lie somewhere in the middle;⁶⁷ presumably, we should avoid regarding all pillar basement rooms as shrines unless there are good indications to do so. As for the vague architectural form of the pillar crypt, perhaps a fixed type was not important for the Minoan worshiper. He or she would have been able to distinguish a pillar shrine from a secular pillar room by certain cues. The most important of these, I should think, would be the presence of signs identifying the pillars as *focal points* within the complex. Such signs would be sacred symbols engraved on

the pillars; movable objects such as double axes, sacred horns, figurines, etc., placed *next* to the pillars; permanent installations such as vats or depressions adjacent to the pillars to serve as receptacles for liquid offerings. Finally, the Minoan visitor would have noted the existence of a stairway leading to an upper shrine, the significance of which will be discussed further on. Obviously what did *not* play a role was the number or position of the pillars since these vary; nor is the position of the doorway consistent.⁶⁸

In my analysis I shall concentrate on those cases where the pillar obviously constitutes the focal point of the room. My intention will be to clarify two points. What was the significance of the pillar crypts? What types of rituals went on in them?

Concerning the first point, there is one aspect which deserves discussion and which might prove to have far-reaching implications: the connection of some pillar rooms with tombs and funerary cult.

Most monumental communal tombs were *loci* for cult, as has been shown in chapter 2. The rituals were not all carried out inside the tombs themselves, but either in adjacent chambers or outside on paved platforms. One specialized type of room associated with the cult was the pillar crypt.

The circular tomb at Apesokari was in use during the period of the first palaces. Abutting it, in the front, was a rectangular building which served as an entrance. This structure contained a pillar room and, in front of it to the east, an alcove just by the entrance (figs. 14, 19). The latter contained a six-sided slab which is thought to have been an altar, and a stone concretion in the shape of a human. I dare suggest that it represented an ancestor. No burials were found in the pillar room or the alcove;

stone bowls and cup fragments⁶⁹ indicate offerings or a toasting ritual. Thus, the visitor approaching the tomb would first enter the narrow antechamber with the concretion and altar, pass through the pillar room, and finally reach the entrance of the tomb itself. The inclusion of the pillar room in this context points to cult practices connected with funerary ritual or cult of the dead.⁷⁰

A pillar room was adjacent to another circular tomb at Archanes: Tholos B (see also chapter 2). This time the pillar room had a separate entrance.⁷¹ The whole complex was built in the First Palace period, but buildings kept being added and were in use throughout Neopalatial times until the early Postpalatial period. A difference with the previous case is that here a stairway led to a room situated above the pillar room. The upper story is not preserved, but the finds from the fill show that it was frescoed, and that it contained bones of animals and humans, as well as precious objects, among which the most conspicuous is a gold ring depicting a goddess and a griffin. There were also clay and stone jars and cups.⁷² It is impossible to know exactly what went on in the upper chamber and what below in the pillar room, but it is reasonable to suppose that the cups and vessels betoken liquid offerings and toasting rituals, the animal bones sacrifices, and the human bones some form of secondary burial and treatment of the corpse.

A most magnificent building, not far from the palace of Knossos, is the Temple Tomb, as it was named by Evans.⁷³ This is a curious two-story complex of Neopalatial date, although it continued to be used also in Postpalatial times. Architecturally it has all the characteristics of an elaborately designed pillar crypt complex, but the discovery of bones within the pillar rooms indicates that it was used also as a tomb.

The building was oriented east-west, in itself a telling fact. To reach its interior (fig. 70), the visitor would enter through a narrow corridor. Turning at a right angle and moving westward, he or she would come to a small paved court and face an Egyptian-style gate (pylon) which led to a roofed inner hall. From the inner hall an outer crypt with two pillars could be reached; there were double axe signs engraved on the walls. Moving always westward, the visitor would come to a second crypt with one pillar. The latter was cut into the rock and was very dark. The pillar of this inner crypt was set within a sunken square of gypsum slabs. This detail is important because depressions around pillar bases usually suggest the pouring of libations. Thus, it seems certain that the pillar was the focal point in the room. The ceiling of this chamber was painted blue. Human bones were found in both crypts.

The upper floor was reachable via two staircases, one leading upstairs from the entrance passage, the other from a space adjacent to the first pillar crypt. Access to the upper story could thus be gained by two different groups: a wide circle of participants coming from the outside, on the one hand, and a more exclusive group, on the other, which would ascend via the stairs adjacent to the outer pillar crypt. Noteworthy is the fact that the door of the inner hall could be locked only from the inside, which means that the exclusive group could reach the upper story without having to pass through the more public court.⁷⁴

We have some clues about the nature of the upper story. Evans found a pair of sacred horns, as well as ritual vessels and flowerpots, and assumed that a shrine with two columns (corresponding to the two pillars of the crypt below) existed above the crypt.⁷⁵ The pattern is

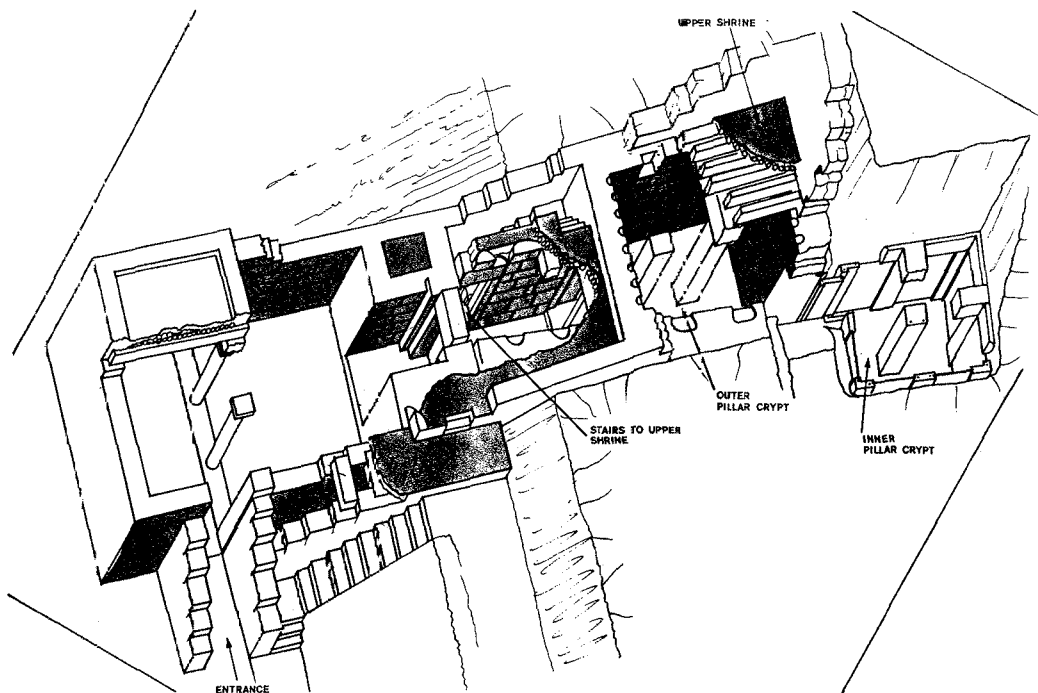


Fig. 70. Knossos. Temple Tomb, isometric drawing

similar to what we have seen at Archanes, Tholos B: pillar crypt and upper shrine constitute a unit which implies ritual action taking place on two levels.

One major problem that must be addressed is whether the Temple Tomb was a shrine, a tomb,⁷⁶ or both. Evans's designation "Temple Tomb" implies that he recognized both the sacred and sepulchral characters of the building, the latter being evident because of the presence of the human bones. Yet, these bones do not represent whole skeletons and clearly did not constitute primary burial, although secondary burial is a possibility. One set was found in the outer pillar crypt. They had been swept in a corner which was walled off to create a small enclosure. This walling was

built between the two pillars and the walls to the west and south of them. It is clear that this happened some time after the construction of the crypt, since the walling-in of the bones destroyed the original design.⁷⁷ Other bones, this time scattered, were found inside the west inner crypt. In the same chamber was also a deposit in a shallow pit containing pots, miniature vessels, incense burners, a gold ring, a bronze knife, etc. The pottery in the pit is Postpalatial and gives us a *terminus ante quem*. Evans assumed that the set was a funeral relic, the objects being burial gifts to the dead.

The hypothesis of the excavator can be summarized as follows. The bones in the first crypt belonged to people caught in an earthquake disaster which termi-

nated the first phase of use of the building. Judging from the pottery, he assumed that this must have happened around 1500. Then, the pillar crypts were reused. The bones were collected and walled in. Why, one wonders, since people in the Bronze Age normally cleared buildings of skeletons before reuse. Evans supplied an answer: "But in a building, itself fundamentally of a sepulchral character, there was not the same motive for removing the remains of those who might have met their death in a catastrophe of this nature. . . . We may infer . . . [that] devotees were gathered together at the actual moment of the overthrow in some memorial ceremony."⁷⁸ This is a plausible scenario but not a very likely one; it is more probable that the burials were somehow connected with the cult in the crypt or that they represent secondary burial in a ritual context.⁷⁹

Even if Evans's hypothesis⁸⁰ is exaggerated by dramatic elements, his main assumption that the building was originally a shrine which was later turned into a tomb may be correct. The question is whether the presence of human bones is evidence of burial, as most scholars seem to take for granted, or whether the skeletons can be interpreted in another way. It will be remembered that bones were found in the pillar crypt adjacent to Tholos B at Archanes, presumably fallen from the upper story. It is not likely that they represent burial, since it would be natural to bury people in the nearby tomb. We must rather infer that these bones were carried to the pillar room for treatment, most likely for secondary burial.⁸¹ In the Temple Tomb of Knossos the bones may either represent secondary burial or the primary burial of a very important person who deserved special treatment. Whatever the case may be, an important conclusion emerges: the cult in the pillar crypts of

the Temple Tomb with its upper shrine has some connection with funerary cult.

The character of the building as a shrine complex can be established on several grounds. The outer (eastern) pillar crypt had double axes engraved on the walls; the inner (western) crypt had the pillar as a focal point; there were ritual vessels especially on the upper story; there was an upper columnar shrine. All these characterize pillar crypts such as we find in the palaces and mansions.

Another building which may have been associated with funerary cult was excavated at Hagia Triada, close to a large tholos tomb. Chronologically it covers approximately the same period as the Temple Tomb.⁸² It contained a room with two pillars. Most of its walls have been destroyed by the washing away of the slope above, so that only scanty ruins remain. This building contained precious objects, among which were a dagger, a bronze mirror, beads, "goddess" figurines, a terracotta girl on a swing, a steatite sphinx (probably imported from Syria), a stone mace, miniature bulls' heads and lions, an alabaster monkey, cups and a conch shell for libations.⁸³ It also contained human bones.⁸⁴ The question therefore has been asked whether the room was a pillar crypt shrine, in which case the "goddess" figurines and libation equipment could be explained as votives, or a grave, in which case the objects would be burial gifts.⁸⁵ Recent excavations by V. La Rosa have clarified the issue somewhat. The bones seem to have been washed down from the level above. It is therefore most likely that originally the building with the pillars was a sacred building connected with funerary cult.⁸⁶ That there was cult activity can be shown by the objects typical of a shrine: libation utensils and rich votive offerings, "goddess" figurines.⁸⁷

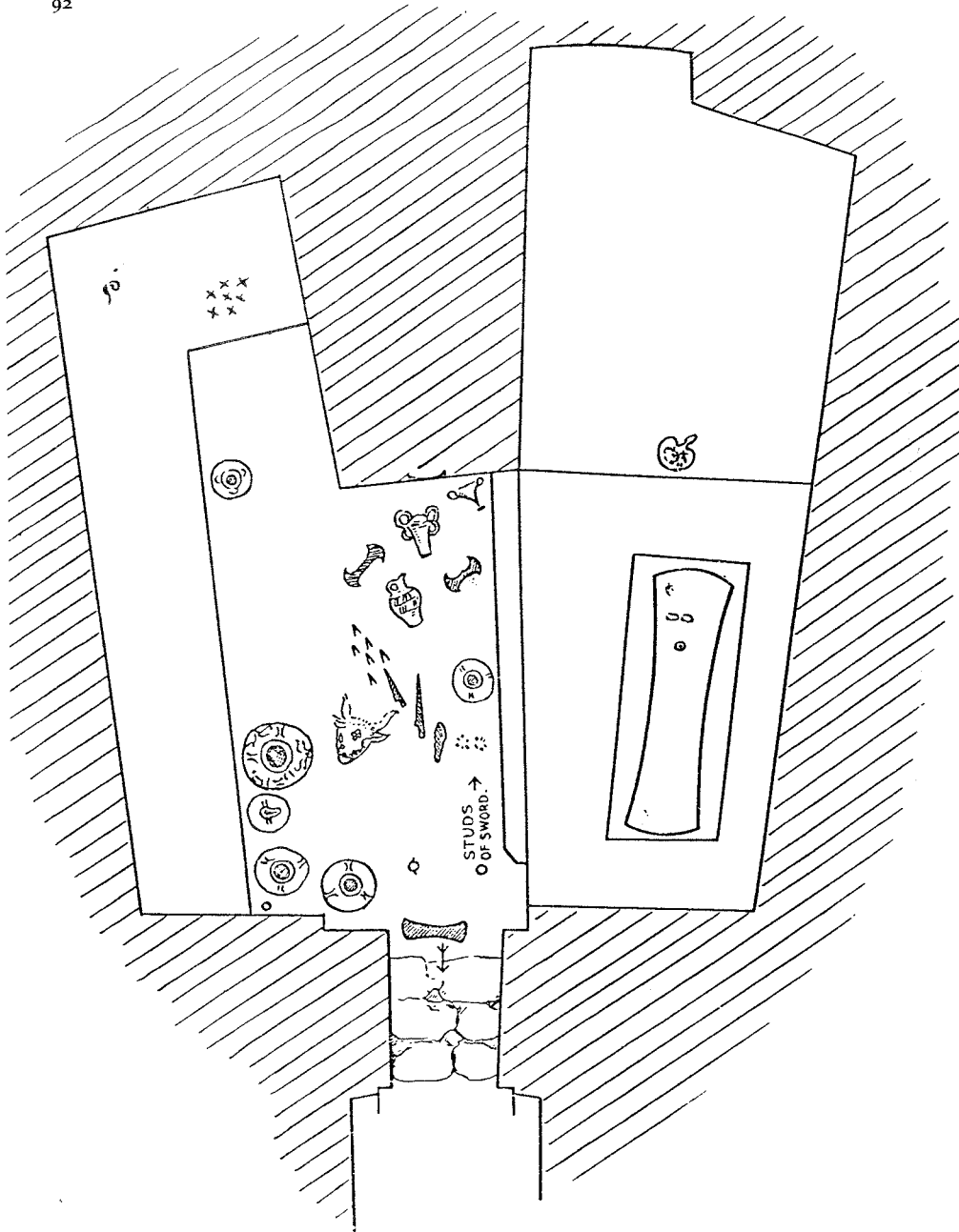


Fig. 71. Isopata, Tomb of the Double Axes, plan

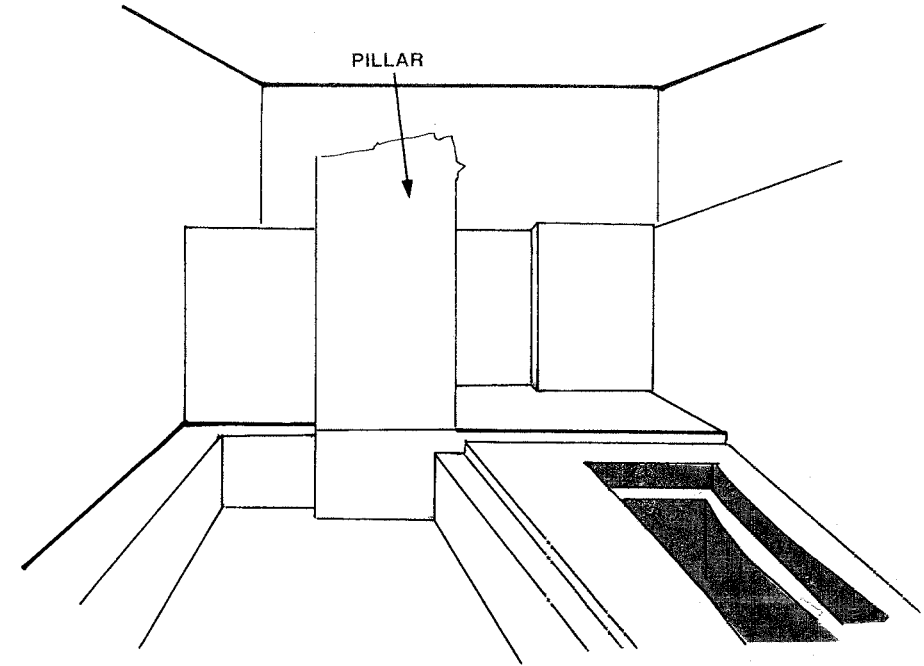


Fig. 72. Knossos. Tomb of the Double Axes with pillar as focal point. Isometric drawing

In the last example of this series a pillar is associated with an actual tomb, the Tomb of the Double Axes from the cemetery of Isopata near Knossos (fig. 71).⁸⁸ It had a most peculiar character, being a combination of tomb and shrine. The interior was divided into two wings by a projecting buttress formed out of the natural rock (fig. 72). On the face of the rock buttress, a half column was cut, thus creating the impression of an architectural facade. Note that the buttress/pillar was in the center of the chamber standing across the entrance, so that it would immediately catch the visitor's eye as a focal point. Benches run along the sides of the chamber. One solitary cist was situated to the right of the pillar and, as Evans said, it was probably intended for a single occupant. One fea-

ture of the cist was that it was shaped like a double axe. It was found empty: neither a human skeleton nor any object was found in it. Yet, on the floor there were many precious objects: ritual double axes, a functional axe, bronze knives, remnants of a bronze sword, arrows, a steatite rhyton (libation vessel) in the form of a bull's head, and other ritual vessels. Evans sensibly suggested that the objects would have been placed on the ledge and fell from there on the floor when the tomb was plundered. The combination of the ledge, the pillar, and the cult objects gives the impression of a sepulchral shrine. Why the cist was empty of bones remains a mystery: it is hardly likely that the tomb robbers had removed the human skeletons and left many precious objects behind! At any

rate, the Tomb of the Double Axes illustrates the connection of the pillar with funerary cult.

All the pillar crypts so far discussed are situated in cemeteries or are incorporated into tombs. Noteworthy is the early date of the funerary pillar crypts, most having originated in the Protopalatial period. This shows that the connection with the cult of the dead goes back to an early period.

But what about the crypts in the palaces and mansions? Can we assume that these also had the same function? Although human skeletons have not been found in any of them, a symbolic link with the cult of the dead can perhaps be established here also. Most pillar crypts were dark and evocative of tomb chambers. Possibly the western location of the crypts in the palaces of Knossos and Malia and the Temple Tomb has something to do with the west being the realm of the dead.⁸⁹ What, however, is most suggestive of the connection between the urban and funerary pillar crypts is an architectural feature common to the two groups: the existence of an upper shrine. This implies a similar, although perhaps not identical, structure in their rituals.

Let us briefly survey the characteristics of the urban pillar crypts. They originate in the Protopalatial period, but it is not until Neopalatial times that they become common.⁹⁰ It is worth stressing that they are confined to central and southern Crete and that the majority of the examples come from Knossos. The palace of Zakros, for example, has no pillar crypt, and I am doubtful that the palace at Phaistos had one.⁹¹ It is reasonable to assume that Knossos "set the fashion" and it is the Knossian examples that deserve the closest scrutiny.

Like *adyta*, pillar crypts are confined to palaces and mansions and are not found in ordinary houses. Unlike *adyta*,

they are not commonly associated with the pier-and-door system nor any device which implies a screening process. Anterooms may exist but they are not necessary.⁹² Annexes, sacristies, or treasuries may or may not exist.⁹³ None of these features, which have been carefully listed by Platon,⁹⁴ offer any clear insights about the nature of the cult. The existence of treasuries and prestige objects, however, does reveal something: not only did the votaries belong to the wealthier classes (which can be surmised also by the fact that crypts are incorporated into palaces and mansions), but that some of the crypts at least had their own supply of liquids and paraphernalia.

Let us pursue this further. It is interesting that the palatial crypts of Knossos and Malia were architecturally linked with the storage rooms of the west wing. Thus, there is no mere proximity, but a direct connection from pillar crypt to storage areas through special entrance passages. Moreover, the incised double axe signs on the pillars of the crypts at Knossos recur on the walls of the magazines. In the mansions also some crypts are connected with storage rooms.⁹⁵ It appears that the cult in the dark shrines was symbolically linked with the agricultural products kept in the storage jars. It is tempting to postulate a chthonic ritual involving grain in a death-regeneration cycle.

Some evidence about the rituals can be supplied by the finds and their position in relation to the pillars which, as has been repeatedly stated, constitute the focal point in the room.

One type of object which was frequently set next to the pillar is the double axe. This can be conjectured by the fact that stands have been found in several crypts in the South and Southeast Houses at Knossos, the Little Palace, House A at Tylissos and the Temple

Tomb at Knossos.⁹⁶ In none of these places was the actual axe found, only the base where it would have been inserted. On the other hand, double axes *in corpore* could have been kept in the adjacent treasuries that some crypts possessed. They would have been placed in the stand next to the pillar only during the times when the shrine was visited to mark the festive occasion.

In the Royal Villa there were receptacles close to the pillars in the form of rectangular depressions (fig. 73). These were especially common in Knossian crypts.⁹⁷ When there were no built-in depressions, vases could have served the same function.⁹⁸ All this suggests that the pouring of liquid offerings was one of the most common activities in the pillar crypts. The idea finds support in the numerous libation vessels (sometimes in the form of bulls or bulls' heads) and vases found within the crypts.⁹⁹ In chapter 2 we saw that libation rituals were predominant in the cult of the dead; surely the repetition here is not accidental.

Agricultural products probably were also deposited, given the proximity of the many crypts to the magazines. In addition to these modest offerings, expensive objects were certainly brought in by the votaries who inhabited the palaces and mansions; they would be kept in the adjacent treasuries. Such items, of course, often leave no trace in the archaeological record since they would have been stolen already in antiquity. A few have escaped the robbers, however, in the crypts of House A at Tylissos and of the mansion of Hagia Triada.¹⁰⁰ From the latter come female bronze adorants and a bronze wild goat. The figurines betoken the presence of the worshiper who thus leaves a mark of his or her identity behind, whereas the animal figurines refer to the fecundity of the flocks. Stone maces, typical insignia of

authority carried by priests or other high officials, were also found in some crypts.¹⁰¹

That animal sacrifices were conducted in association with the cult of the pillar crypts has already been stressed by Platon, who identified deposits of animal bones in the crypts of the west wings of the palaces of Knossos and Malia and House A at Tylissos.¹⁰²

Finally, from the presence of lamps, we can deduce that the cult, or at least some phases of it, took place in darkness. This is natural since the pillar crypts were dark rooms. Lamps can be plausibly connected with death rituals as they are found in tombs.¹⁰³

It is time now to relate the cult activities¹⁰⁴ to the architectural idiom of many crypts, namely the pillar crypt/upper shrine complex. The existence of the upper shrine is certain, not only because of adjacent stairways but also because precious objects frequently had fallen inside the crypts from above. For example, from the shrine above the pillar crypt in the west wing of the palace of Knossos had fallen marble and alabaster conical *rhyta*, a lioness-head *rhyton*, a conch shell *rhyton*, unguent vases, etc.¹⁰⁵ In the South House, Knossos, the upper shrine contained a pyramidal stand for the insertion of a double axe. It also had a hoard of silver vessels, pitchers, and bowls that were evidently meant as a set for pouring.¹⁰⁶ From the upper shrine of the Little Palace, Knossos, came two bull's-head *rhyta* and a pyramidal double axe stand.¹⁰⁷ It will be remembered that the shrine on the upper story of the Temple Tomb included miniature jugs.

Thus, most of the objects connected with upper shrines are utensils for holding and pouring liquids, just as in the crypts. The double axe stand from the upper shrine of the South House dupli-

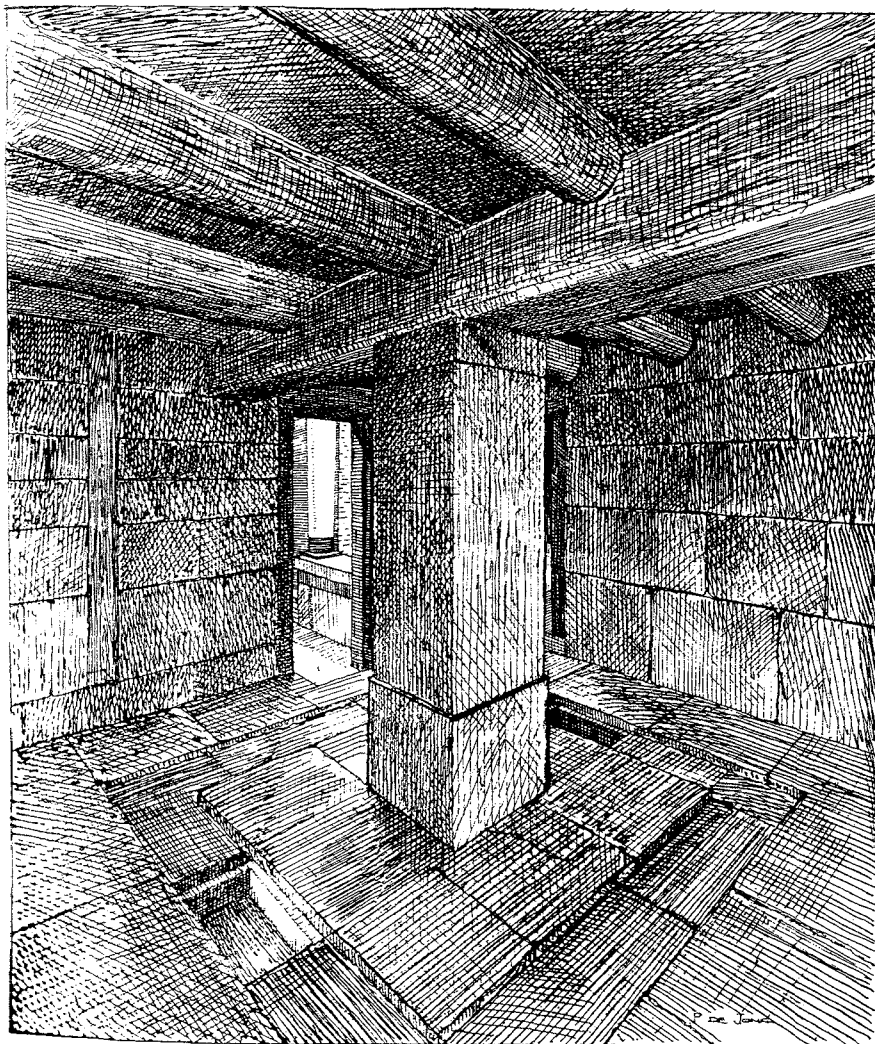


Fig. 73. Knossos. Royal Villa, pillar crypt

cates the one in the crypt below. All in all, then, it looks as if the pouring of libations was a common activity to pillar crypts and their upper shrines. Could it be that the rituals were identical on both

levels? We should be careful here of an archaeologist's methodological pitfall: all we have at our disposal are objects devoid of their symbolic reference. One and the same object can have multiva-

lent meanings depending on the context. In our case, the paraphernalia of the crypts and upper shrines, although similar, are not identical; no vats or similar receptacles have been postulated for the upper story. Most of all, the context differs, because it makes a big difference whether you stand inside a dark basement or in an upper room, presumably lit by windows. The cult practices could have been equivalent and yet antithetical. The upper and lower levels imply a polarity, perhaps even symbolic opposition. To explain this, a small digression outside the Minoan sphere is necessary.

That the human mind perceives the world in terms of antithetical pairs has been recognized since the seminal studies of Lévi-Strauss and the structuralist school.¹⁰⁸ But even without Lévi-Strauss the modern investigator of the past can hardly miss that one of the main preoccupations of ancient man was the antithesis between life and death. The close connection between death rituals and agriculture is, of course, to be explained partly by the fact that both the dead corpse and the seed are in the earth. But there is also an inherent opposition between sustenance (provided by earth products) and death. It is hardly an accident that chthonic gods of the underworld are also gods of fertility. On the other hand, celestial deities are perceived as antithetical to, and sometimes in combat with, chthonic gods.¹⁰⁹ And yet opposing pairs are united in ritual. A characteristic of Greek sanctuaries is the combination of the worship of a major celestial deity with a chthonic hero who can be the victim of the god. The god is worshiped at the altar, the hero at his tomb.¹¹⁰

Closer in time to the Minoans is a Near Eastern ritual described in one of the stories of the epic of *Gilgamesh*. The mother of the hero enters her chamber, takes a special herb, wears special

clothes, sprinkles water from a bowl on earth and dust. Then she goes up the stairs to the upper story and brings offerings of incense to the sun-god Shamash.¹¹¹ The sequence of the ritual action, carried out first downstairs and then upstairs, and the worship of the celestial god in the upper shrine seem to correspond to the postulated cult of the pillar crypts. Down below in the darkness of the crypts the offerings would be directed to chthonic powers or the dead, and could even be held at night.¹¹² But in the upper shrine, maybe in the light of day, the rituals would have symbolic references to regeneration. The possibility of a chthonic deity below and a celestial one above has to be considered although it cannot be proven.¹¹³

The hypothesis I have here outlined concerning the significance of the pillar crypts stresses ritual process. It not only explains the association of the latter with magazines and, possibly, agricultural offerings, but also provides a link with the cult of the dead of the Prepalatial era (see chapter 2). One issue remains to be addressed: the meaning of the pillar within the framework of that cult.

As has been stated above, Evans believed that the crucial element in crypts was the pillar itself, which was worshiped because it embodied a deity. Crypts were therefore shrines for an aniconic, baetylic cult. He based this hypothesis on the facts that pillars were incised with double axes and other signs and that free-standing columns appear on glyptic representations. In the latter, the column is often flanked by heraldic animals or is associated with a goddess. The notion of baetylic cults, which presupposes a "primitive" mentality, cannot be sustained today when we are aware that the distinction between the "primitive" mind and ours is not valid.¹¹⁴ It is true that pillars, stones, and other inanimate objects can serve as

centers around which cult practices are carried out, but this does not mean that they are in themselves worshipped. Such objects can be seen as markers designating a sacred spot on or around which the presence of the divinity can be felt more strongly. Thus, in the Old Testament, Jacob anoints a stone to mark the spot where he had the dream in which God revealed himself to him. The stone serves as a marker where God's temple will be built.¹¹⁵ Turning to the Greeks, the oval stone known as the *omphalos* at Delphi was thought to be the center of the world. It was also a focal point within the temple of Apollo without being considered an aniconic image of the god.

If the pillar or column in Minoan cult is sacred, this does not mean that it is the aniconic form of a deity, but rather that it provided a convenient focus for the carrying out of rituals. This, of course, need not imply that it was devoid of sacred associations. Pillars are important structural devices for support and this purely functional service can easily be elevated to the symbolic level. This was certainly the case with Egyptian temple columns,¹¹⁶ and Nilsson may well have hit the truth about the Minoans when he said that pillars may be sacred "in the sense that they either belong to a sanctuary or that they were imbued with sacred power to strengthen their structural function."¹¹⁷

Another function of pillars and columns was to mark the place where the deity would appear (see chapters 7, 8) and this explains why they are represented as sacred in the iconography. Be that as it may, the significance of the pillar crypts has to be sought in their original function, which is probably related to death cult. Their spread into the urban centers coincides with the gradual shift of ritual emphasis from the cemetery to the palace. As to the pillars in the dark chambers of the crypts, perhaps they were thought to have been the nec-

essary backbone for any kind of activity that went on above in the upper shrine in the light of day: no life without acceptance of death.

Dining Shrines

Of all the shrines in palaces and mansions, the dining shrine is the most widespread and certainly the earliest type to have appeared. While *adyta* and pillar crypts are most frequent in Neopalatial times, sacred dining rooms are known already from the Prepalatial settlement of Myrtos;¹¹⁸ by the First Palace period they became common. Eating in a group in the presence of the divinity is one of the most elementary kinds of communion with the supernatural and perhaps one of the simplest forms of worship devised by any society; even the early Christians worshiped God with nothing more elaborate than a communal meal.¹¹⁹ Not without reason has it been said that dining rooms are a distinctive and ubiquitous feature of cult centers in antiquity.¹²⁰ Their relative frequency during the period of the first palaces in Crete shows a basic form of cult less complicated, less diversified than what developed in the time of the second palaces.

What is termed a dining shrine here is a type of bench sanctuary¹²¹ because most, although not all, of the sacred eating rooms contained benches. The latter could be used for the seating of the participants and/or for the convenient placing of pottery and other equipment.

A typical example is the sanctuary complex in the first palace at Phaistos (fig. 74).¹²² It was a suite comprising four interconnected rooms, V, VI, VIII, and IX, facing the west court. An adjacent space VII had its own entrance from the west court, while an independent storage room X seems to have been con-

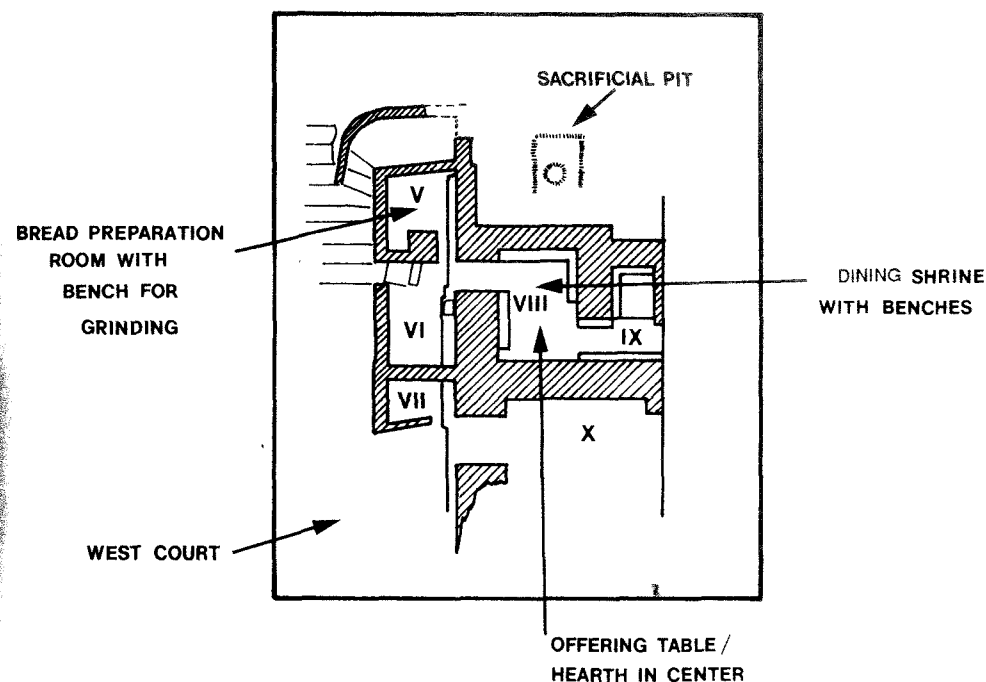


Fig. 74. Phaistos. Protopalatial dining shrine

nected with the complex. An open air hearth, with traces of burning and animal bones, was situated very close by.

Of the many rooms, one was the dining area proper (VIII) with a terracotta hearth in the center and benches along three of its walls. A conch shell rhyton, a circular offering table, an incised octagonal stone libation table, three stone bowls, a lamp, a bronze dagger blade, and pottery were among the equipment that constituted the apparatus of the shrine. Another room (V) had a mill installation, a water trough, and a drain; it obviously was designed for the preparation of bread. A jug and a libation table were found *in situ* on a bench in VI; more offering/libation tables were in the corridor between VIII and IX; more

grinding equipment, mortars, and pestles in IX and X. Also worth noting is the presence of red pigment, as well as stone palettes and pestles for pounding it. Whether the pigment was used for coloring objects¹²³ or for the application of paint on the bodies of the participants to mark the festive occasion¹²⁴ remains an open question.

The sanctuary complex can thus be said to have consisted of a main area and preparation rooms. The objects in it show that the principal activities were food preparation and the pouring of libations. The existence of the mill and the grinding equipment indicate preparation of bread, while the terracotta hearth inside VII and the outdoor one nearby show that meat was also eaten;

most probably a sacrificial meal was involved.¹²⁵

The architectural layout gives important clues about function as well. In its original phase, the sanctuary consisted of the main room VIII and a preparation room IX, which could be entered only from inside the palace. Later it expanded, apparently because more preparation space was needed. An entrance to the west court was added. The position of the new entrance suggests a route leading directly to the outdoor hearth, but the connection with the west court seems to be important as well. It will be remembered that granaries existed in the west courts of the palaces during the First Palace period, and it seems reasonable to connect the preparation of bread with the harvest festivals which took place around the granaries.

Despite its many rooms, the size of the sanctuary is small and suggests a limited number of participants. No more than twelve or fifteen people could be seated in the main dining room.¹²⁶ Because the shrine complex was entered from the palace (during one phase at least), the participants must have been palace officials. On the other hand, the connection with the west court reveals that the occasion was a public ceremony. The pattern is clearly one of dual participation with a selected elite inside the shrine and a wider public outside.

A second set of dining rooms with cultic character and adjacent preparation and storage rooms existed in the first palace of Phaistos. Situated in the lower west court¹²⁷ and having direct access from the outside, it belongs to the oldest phase of the first palace. It is thus even earlier than the aforementioned dining sanctuary complex, which indicates that the connection of the dining shrines with the west courts goes back to the earliest phases of the palace.¹²⁸ The finds show the same ritual pattern. Here

again we have hearths, cooking vessels, circular offering tables, libation tables, grinders, stone tools, lamps, and pottery. Worth mentioning among the pots are a fruit-stand and a bowl, both painted with very interesting iconography—two of the very few instances of depiction of cult from this early period (figs. 56, 119).

In the New Palace period, the dining shrine does not undergo major transformations. The new palace of Phaistos acquires another dining complex comprising four rooms (8–11), again opening to the west court but this time without any interior connection with the palace (fig. 35).¹²⁹ The main shrine (10) contained benches; a libation table was fixed on one bench. Female figurines indicate the deposition of votives; they represent women adorants for the most part, but one may be a goddess or a high priestess on account of an unusual skirt with barbotine (scale-like) projections. The other rooms of the complex were used for preparation and storage. A mortar and pestle, the presence of carbonized grain in the storage jars, and abundant pottery, especially 30 conical cups, suggest banqueting and the making of bread. Hearths are missing, but perhaps the meat was roasted outside in the court. An association with a harvest festival is plausible here also. As to the female figurines, we can make a connection with the model of bread making from Kamilari discussed in the previous chapter (fig. 22): the privilege of making bread seems to have been the province of women.¹³⁰

Another possible dining shrine at Phaistos (room 23)¹³¹ faces the central court. Benches run along the walls of the room and there is a broad door facing the court. Although no food preparation tools or pottery were found in it, it can be argued that it served a similar

function as the above shrines. In its midst still stands an oval limestone table with two large cupules. The unusual shape of this table and its central position in the room suggest that it was probably an offering stand. Food could have been placed either directly inside the cupules, or, what is more likely, inside pots which were set in the cupules.

The significance of the Neopalatial dining shrines at Phaistos is twofold. Firstly they show that dining in the palaces was designed for a small number of banqueters; and yet it seems that the participation of a wider public was somehow important, since the dining shrines open up to large courts. Secondly, the benches of room 23 running along the walls and the opening to the court are indicative of an element of display: the seated officials could see and be seen by those standing in the central court. Interestingly enough, the architectural pattern recurs at the nearby mansion of Hagia Triada which was almost certainly an administrative appendix of the palace of Phaistos. There, one of the major rooms (hall 3) opened to a court, and had similarly designed benches running along three walls and a very wide door facing an entrance court. Evidence of dining and consumption of liquids is supplied in the form of animal bones inside the drain and some twenty conical cups.¹³² The element of display could not be clearer here as the large door opens directly onto an open space allowing maximum visual contact between the seated members and the visitors who had been admitted inside the court of the mansion.

Another dining shrine of the Neopalatial period is attested at the palace of Malia (fig. 75). Situated in the south wing, it could be entered only from the outside and had no interior connection with the palace.¹³³ Four rooms formed the sanctuary complex, of which one

was the main shrine and the rest were used for preparation and storage. The principal room, XVIII₁, had only one bench which must have been for the placing of vessels rather than seating. Dining can be deduced from the presence of cooking vessels buried in a pit in the adjacent space, XVIII₂. Cult paraphernalia, such as an incurved altar, incense burners, tubular stands, and a pair of terracotta feet, show the sacred character of the complex. Of great importance is the proximity of the shrine to the granaries of the palace. A symbolic connection between the two may be postulated: the aforementioned incurved altar in the shrine had the signs of a star and cross engraved on either of its sides. The same symbols occur on two sides of one of the granary pillars. In the granaries the excavators found horns of bulls, which were probably thrown in to commemorate the sacrifice of the animals. Thus, here also a connection with grain/harvest can be made.

The palace of Zakros furnished evidence of a food-preparation room in its west wing.¹³⁴ The west wing was replete with cult equipment and vindicated Evans's theory that the west wings were the most sacred areas of the palaces. The room in question was furnished with benches and had a drain and a grinding stone. Our evidence for food preparation, especially the grinding of grain, is present here also. Pottery with double axe decoration and piriform rhyta confirm the sacred character of the grinding. The room cannot have been the dining area proper, but was used only for food preparation or simply for sacred bread; dining probably took place in banquet hall 2, which was close to the central court.

Only the palace of Knossos has not been mentioned. Yet, evidence of food consumption in a sacred context can be deduced here also from the finds in the

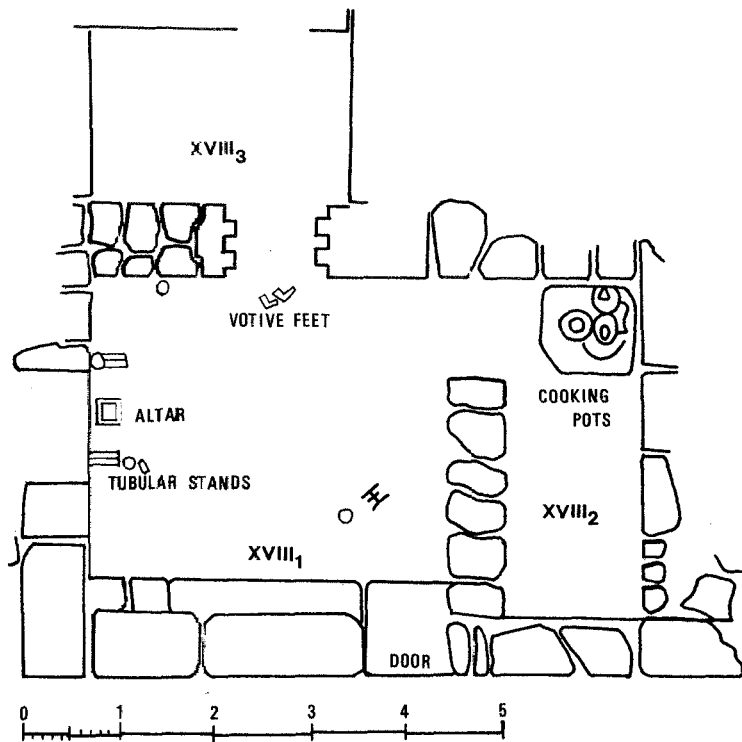


Fig. 75. Malia. Neopalatial shrine

throne room suite which will be treated in the next section.

One should also mention the theory of J. W. Graham, that all the Minoan palaces had large banquet halls on their upper stories.¹³⁵ This is a reasonable assumption although it cannot be conclusively proven. In any case, banquet halls are not the same as dining shrines as I have described them above. By the latter one is not to understand a monumental space with dining couches and fancy equipment, but rather modestly sized rooms for a few participants with adjacent preparation areas.

In discussing what kind of food was consumed, I have repeatedly stressed

the preparation of bread as it can be inferred from grinding equipment, troughs, and the like. Equally important must have been the eating of meat which, in ancient religions, invariably presupposes sacrifice. Indeed, animal bones are attested at various cult sites and the existence of hearths and cooking pots offers further evidence of the cooking of meat.

Animal sacrifice is amply documented in the iconography as well. Minoan sacrificial ritual would deserve a separate chapter in this work, especially since recent excavations have brought to light possible evidence of ritual cannibalism. However, since I have dealt with the

subject in a separate monograph, the reader is referred there.¹³⁶

What then was the principal function of the dining shrine in palaces and mansions? It seems that it was a link between the inside and the outside, the palace elite and the wider public. During the major festivals, one of which was certainly connected with harvest and which included the people from the adjacent town, food was ritually prepared and, possibly, modest distributions were made. But inside the shrine only a few could eat, symbolically communicating with those outside who were doing the same. In the communality of the feast, societal bonds were affirmed and sanctified, and yet the palace elite and the populace remained separated.

Ceremonial and Display Areas

Platforms

It certainly is striking that Minoan palatial architecture includes arrangements which were evidently designed for the display of one or more persons. The benches in the dining shrine facing the central court at Phaistos and in the mansion of Hagia Triada have already been mentioned in the previous section. Here I shall treat both shrine rooms and platforms/stands which may have served diverse purposes within the cult system but which all have a common denominator: they have an element of performance being designed for display.

Already in the First Palace period there existed the monumental stone platforms in the west courts of the palaces of Knossos and Phaistos. What happened on these stands and what the meaning of the display was is hard to tell, since we have no written evidence to elucidate the nature of the ceremonies. Still, some reasonable speculations

and outlining of possibilities might be ventured.¹³⁷ Assuming that the palace officials stood or were seated on top of the stone platforms, one possible scenario is tribute bearing: the townspeople would deliver token gifts to the palace officials during some major festivals. This would explain why the Knossos platform is the terminal point of a broad causeway which comes from the town. Even if tribute were not involved, the platforms would have provided a convenient point of interaction between palace officials and town representatives.

Another alternative is investiture and/or renewal of authority of the rulers or the ruling families. Such a ceremony would be an occasion for public show, and the people would have been invited to watch.

A third possibility is display of the harem of the palace during ceremonies in which they were the focus. By harem I mean the important womenfolk of the palace as defined in Oriental societies. The iconography of the so-called Grandstand fresco, which shows women of all ages standing or seated on platforms, prompts this suggestion (see chapter 3).¹³⁸ A fertility festival, in which women were the protagonists, could be the context for these festivities.

Perhaps none of the above possibilities hits the truth. Whatever the nature of the ceremonies involving the platforms, it is fairly clear that a wider public and an elite interacted with each other.

The west court of the palace of Knossos includes another structure which could have been used for display. A rectangular, low platform was situated across the middle of the west facade of the palace.¹³⁹ Evans thought that it was an altar,¹⁴⁰ but this is not certain, especially since the construction is rather low. It may well have been used as a display area for a symbol or even for a standing dignitary who officiated in cer-

emonies in the west court. Another similar but smaller platform was situated further south.

The Neopalatial mansion of Nirou Chani, close to Knossos, has a display area in its court.¹⁴¹ This can be described as a series of steps with a central projecting platform set against the back wall of the court. Horns of consecration show the religious character of the structure, which may have been equivalent to the stone platforms of the palaces described above.

The existence of these platforms of various sizes and types gives food for thought regarding Minoan cult. Performance and display must have been integral elements of certain rituals, suggesting that the Minoan elite used religion as a means of self-presentation and aggrandizement.

Balustrade Shrines

Under the designation of balustrade shrines three different rooms will be treated, all situated within mansions at Knossos. All date to the New Palace period and there are good reasons to believe that the entire buildings were devoted to ceremonies.¹⁴²

The common characteristic of these rooms is that their focal point is situated beyond a balustrade. This arrangement resembles very much that of a Christian church or Jewish temple, where the Holy of Holies is either separated by a screen or placed on a raised platform. It is for this reason that Evans called one of these buildings the House of the Chancel Screen.¹⁴³

The latter is a building that can be described as anything but residential, since it included, in addition to the balustrade room, an adyton and a pillar crypt. There were no living quarters. It was entered by a hall which gave access to all the aforementioned shrines. The focal point (the balustrade) was not situ-

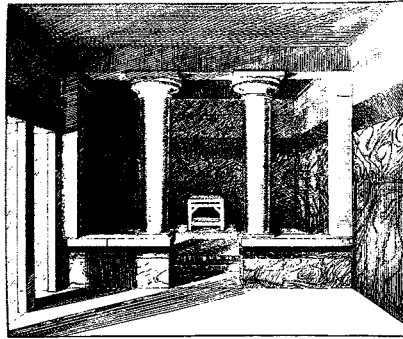


Fig. 76. Knossos. Balustrade shrine: House of the Chancel Screen

ated across the pier-and-door entrance, but at right angles to it; the visitor would thus have to turn to face it (bent-axis approach). Two steps led up from the balustrade to a stone dais where Evans rightly conjectured a seat of honor (fig. 76). No objects are reported, but it is clear that the architectural setup was meant to display a person of high status. The combination of a pillar crypt, an adyton, and balustrade hall shows that the House of the Chancel Screen was a ceremonial complex.

The second example has even clearer indications of cult. It was within the so-called Royal Villa,¹⁴⁴ a building situated very close to the palace of Knossos, most probably its appendix. It, too, contained a pillar crypt and, most probably, an adyton. Between the two shrines was the balustrade room, the balustrade being directly across from the main entrance (fig. 77). Two steps led to a niche where Evans conjectured a throne because of wooden remnants. A lamp was found on one of the steps. If Evans's conjecture is right, a person would be displayed in the niche. In front of him, or possibly her, a lamp would burn, evoking the image of a living deity.

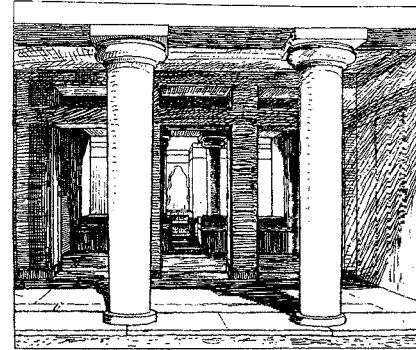


Fig. 77. Knossos. Balustrade shrine: Royal Villa

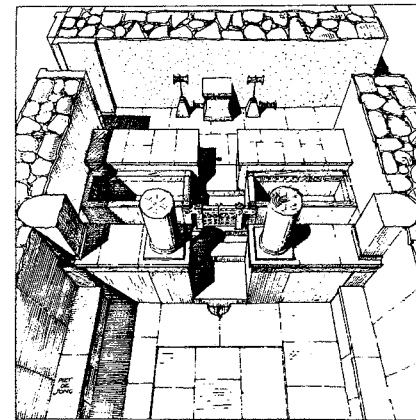


Fig. 78. Knossos. Balustrade shrine: House of the High Priest

The seated personage would have had direct access to both the adyton and the pillar crypt through two side doors. Was he or she in control of the ceremonies in these shrines also?

The final example comes from the House of the High Priest, as Evans called it (fig. 78). Only one room with a double balustrade survives; the rest of the building was destroyed.¹⁴⁵ The highest level in the room was a narrow plat-

form beyond the second balustrade. It had two side entrances which suggest that someone entered this level by a route other than that of the main door. The traffic pattern is not too different from that of the balustrade room of the Royal Villa with its two side doors. The traffic pattern is important. In both cases we are entitled to infer the presence of an officiating person who appears and disappears at will, without having to mingle with the participating group.

On the highest platform there was a hole for drainage of liquids. Can we infer libations?

Most revealing are the objects: an incurved altar and a pyramidal socket for a double axe. Evans restored them on the highest platform and added a second double axe stand for the sake of symmetry in his reconstruction, thus making the objects the focus of the room. However, the fact is that they were found on the floor below the balustrade. Why not conjecture a throne here also and on it a seated person, especially since the doors indicate that someone entered by a side entrance? The seated official would be surrounded by cult paraphernalia and symbols.

The balustrade shrines display uniform features. Apart from the architectural similarities of a clearly defined focal point, resembling that of a Christian church, all three buildings were situated at Knossos in close proximity to the palace; the first two are virtual appendixes of the latter. In the two first examples the case for a wooden throne in the architectural focal point is strong; the stone dais in the Chancel Screen House and the wooden remains in the Royal Villa both suggest it. Unless an empty throne stood there on which the divinity was imagined, we must confront the implication that a *live person* constituted the focal point. What then can we conclude about the function of this type of ceremonial setup?

That it was an integral part of the palace system cannot be doubted. What is more startling is that the officials, seated beyond the balustrades, would have had almost divine status; at least they seem to have received exceptional honors. This conclusion is dictated by the presence of cult objects placed in front of the seated person. In the Royal Villa there was a lamp; in the House of the High Priest a double axe and an incurved altar.

It has been suggested that these areas were *laci* where someone impersonated the deity in a ritual performance (enacted epiphany).¹⁴⁶ This is likely, although questions remain: was it really the god who was thought to be on the throne or simply a semi-divine king or queen whose cultic role was accentuated in these buildings? Was Evans right when he postulated a priest-king? The appearances of the Egyptian pharaohs in different shrines during festivals (especially the Heb-Sed)¹⁴⁷ furnish plausible parallels, but it would be methodologically unsound to transfer the notion of divine kingship from Egypt to Minoan Crete. Only one safe inference can be permitted: the image of the ruler was interwoven with the notion of cultic performance. The investigation of the throne room at Knossos lends further support to this idea.

The Throne Room Complex at Knossos and the Loggia at Malia

All the display areas so far discussed were situated *outside* the palaces, albeit in proximity to them. It could therefore be said that this argues against the hypothesis of divine kingship/queenship, or even of enacted deity impersonation by the resident of the palace. The ensuing discussion on the throne room at Knossos and the loggia at Malia will show, however, that display areas existed within the palaces. The framework

of display in a cultic context outlined above will throw new light on the function of these areas.

The throne room at Knossos has already been mentioned in connection with its fresco decoration (see chapter 3) and the adyton it contained. It was a large complex consisting of an anteroom; the throne room proper; the inner sanctuary, as Evans called it; and the service section, which included no less than six rooms (fig. 79). It is important to take all these units into account in order to understand the function of this area, the chronology and purpose of which have often been misunderstood.¹⁴⁸ It is commonly held, for example, that it was the throne room of the monarch¹⁴⁹ although the evidence for this hypothesis is very weak.

Let us first look at the basic layout in its Neopalatial form. From the central court, one entered the anteroom through a four-bay door; benches ran across its north and south walls. On the north wall, to the right, the bench was interrupted leaving an empty space. Today's visitor will see a stone dais and, on top of it, a wooden throne. Both are reconstructions by Evans,¹⁵⁰ who assumed that the anteroom repeated the arrangement of the room of the throne.

From the anteroom one proceeded to the throne room proper through a double door. It was similar to the anteroom in arrangement and dimensions, except that its southern section was taken up by an adyton. There are good reasons to believe that the latter was the principal and only element in the room in the first phase; the benches and throne were added later.¹⁵¹ A narrow corridor connected the area west of the adyton to storage and repository sections. This is not unexpected, since, as we have seen, repositories are often an accompanying feature of adyta. The cultic nature of the room thus seems certain.

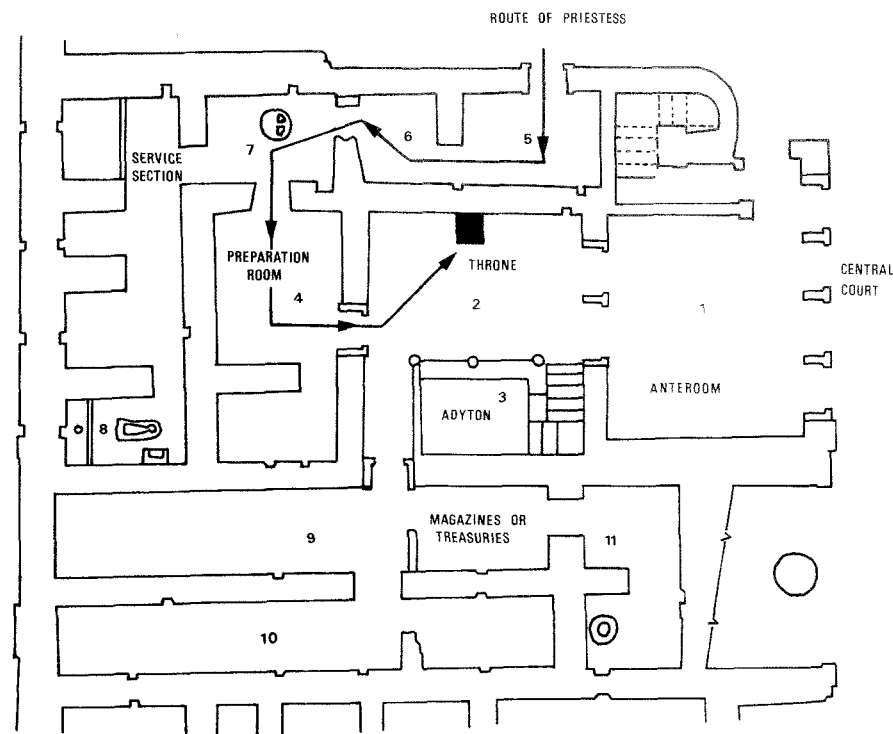


Fig. 79. Knossos. Throne room plan

The throne was, at some point, constructed across from the adyton and a fresco was painted around it.¹⁵² Later still, benches were added. The throne became now the primary focus surrounded by the fresco which integrated it in a riverine landscape and flanked it by palms and griffins (fig. 80). But the painting stressed yet another feature of the room: the door leading to the room Evans called the inner sanctuary,¹⁵³ because this door also was flanked by griffins. A symbolic link is established in this way between the throne and the door, of which more will be said later.

A few words must now be said about the service section. It is a suite of rooms, from which no movable finds were re-

ported. Some fixed structures, however, which can still be seen today, gave Evans the idea that it was a kitchen and service area.¹⁵⁴ There are plaster tables of varying heights and shapes; some have cupules. The service section contained also benches and two low stone seats. One gets the impression that cereals were ground (hence the low stone seats) and placed in the hollows of the plaster tables. The function of this suite, then, could have been preparation of food and offering of agricultural products,¹⁵⁵ some of which were consumed in the throne room.

As to the inner sanctuary, it contained a ledge, right across from the doorway; on it was found only a bangle. It

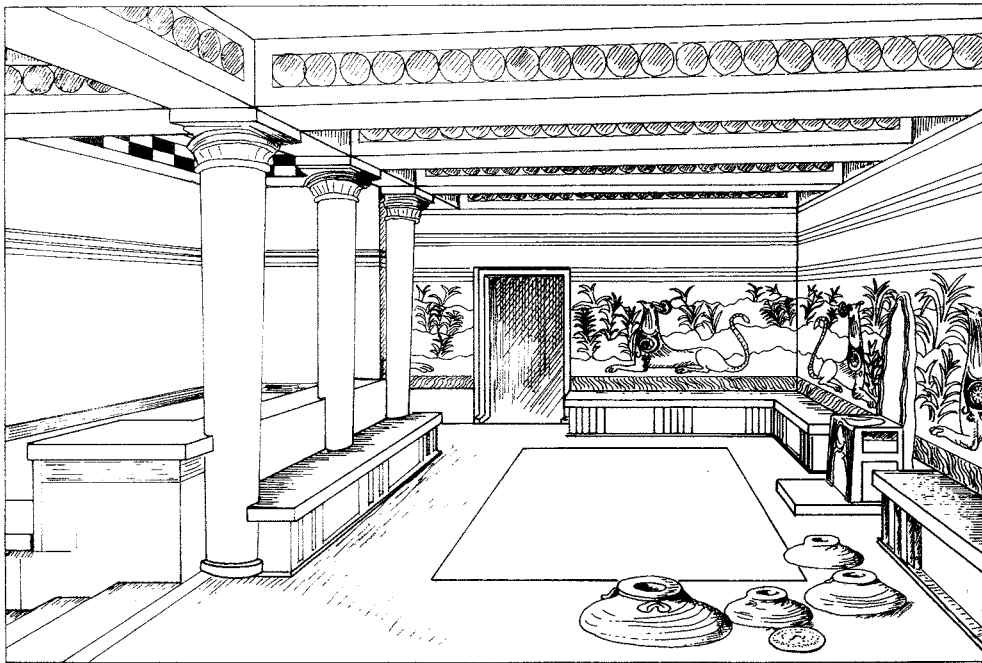


Fig. 80. Knossos. Reconstruction of the throne room with frescoes, door of appearance of the priestess and adyton at the left

would seem that it was a preparation room designed especially for dressing and ornamentation.¹⁵⁶

Now to the interpretation of the throne room. The idea that it had a purely secular use can be excluded since, in such a view, neither the adyton, nor the fresco, nor the service section would make any sense.¹⁵⁷ The alternative is that it was a ceremonial room, but if so, of what type? It may have been noted that it is a combination of three of the shrine types that have been discussed above, namely adyta, dining shrines, and display rooms. It includes an adyton with adjacent repositories, benches, and food preparation rooms, like most dining shrines, and a throne like the balustrade rooms. This

suggests a complex and composite cult practice to which we shall now turn.

It was H. Reusch who first interpreted the throne room as the locus of an epiphany cult (enacted deity impersonation) and, in a recent thorough study, W.-D. Niemeier has added further insights into the ritual process.¹⁵⁸ A priestess, dressed as a goddess, would be seated on the throne flanked by griffins. Niemeier has drawn attention to the fact that palms, such as are painted immediately next to the throne, can be associated with goddesses in Minoan iconography.¹⁵⁹ But Reusch did not consider the ritual process nor the dramatic aspect of the ritual. How and from where would this goddess impersonator come? Niemeier supplied an ingenious

answer. It is from the door of the so-called inner sanctuary, which was also flanked by painted griffins, that the priestess would make her appearance. The equivalence between throne and door is thus explained. The high priestess, acting as a goddess, would have made her preparation in the adjacent service section into which she would have entered surreptitiously, directly from the outside. Niemeier is undoubtedly right in stressing the importance of her costume and the whole procedure of her dressing. Sacred robes and costuming scenes are not uncommon in Aegean art, mostly on seals and sealings; they are also attested on a fresco from Thera.¹⁶⁰ A sacral dress seems to have been of paramount importance in Egyptian festivals, especially the Heb Sed.¹⁶¹ I think that the so-called inner sanctuary was the costuming room; hence the bangle, a remnant of the priestess's jewelry on the bench.

The enacted epiphany would be experienced primarily by a selected group seated on the benches. A larger crowd, gathered in the central court, could also participate indirectly. Food would have been consumed, offerings could have been deposited in the adyton. Some may have watched the events in the adyton from the upper story gallery.

As to the anteroom, the benches indicate that people were seated there, too. A simple explanation would be that they formed an outer circle, not fully admitted in the room of enacted epiphany.

The throne room was of paramount importance for the image of the Minoan female priesthood residing in the palaces. It is a highly specialized shrine which expresses the power of Knossian priestly families through their special connection with the Minoan goddess.

The loggia at Malia (fig. 81), situated on the plan in a similar position as the

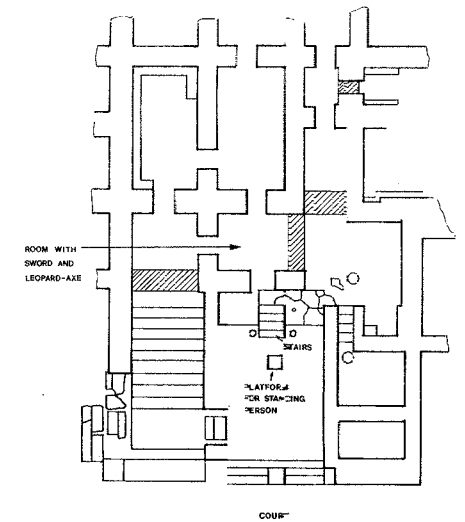


Fig. 81. Malia. Loggia

throne room at Knossos, gives evidence of similar, if not quite as splendid and elaborate, procedures.

It was a broad room which opened in its entire width to the central court.¹⁶² It was on a slightly raised level, and a short staircase of four steps led up to it. Visibility from the central court must have been maximal. In the back of the loggia there was a low stone base; further back still was another staircase flanked by two columns leading down to a suite of rooms in which were found a bronze armlet, a large bronze sword with a crystal pommel, and an axe head in the shape of a leopard.¹⁶³

It has been conjectured that this was another throne room (for the monarch at Malia) and that a throne was set up on the stone base.¹⁶⁴ But the base is too narrow for a throne;¹⁶⁵ only a standing person, who would be facing the court, could have been accommodated on the slab.

In fact the setup is ideal for a performance of the type envisaged for the Knossos throne room. The personage of high status would appear gradually to those gathered in the central court as he or she would be ascending the steps of the stairway in the back of the loggia. Then he or she would stand on the base, almost flanked by the columns of the stairway immediately behind. The rooms in the back would be preparatory for the ritual. The objects found by the excavators would be the *insignia dignitatis* which the personage would display.¹⁶⁶

The survey of the various types of display areas has shown the sacerdotal nature of the ruling class. The architectural and iconographical evidence converges to indicate the elevation of certain personages, some male, some female, who act in some ritual capacity as on the Grandstand and Palanquin frescoes discussed in the previous chapter.

Conclusions: The Social Dynamics of the Cult

Why call the palaces *cult centers* rather than *temples*? Although the word *temple* is sometimes used to denote any free-standing structure in which cult takes place, I think that terminology should be more carefully chosen, in so far as the designation of the building should also convey some information about the nature of the cult practices associated with it.

Temple, as opposed to *shrine*, has connotations of monumentality and is the abode of at least one central deity. But the Minoan palaces do not exhibit the unity of temple design such as exists in the Orient. What is missing is a focal chapel. Instead, the Minoan "palaces" comprise a multiplicity of small-scale shrines obviously designed for a small number of participants. Note also that

there has been no evidence for a central cult image either in the architectural setup or in the finds.¹⁶⁷ For these reasons, *cult center* seemed a more appropriate term. Thus, Minoan religious architecture shows a uniqueness which sets it apart from the mold of the Orient. But this is not as surprising as it might seem at first. The Near East had a longer history of urbanization than Minoan Crete; there was enough time for the temples and palaces to specialize in their functions and eventually separate.¹⁶⁸

The Minoan religious system, then, was centered around the cult centers which we conveniently but misleadingly call palaces. Their appearance around 2000 BC served as a unifying force, while the rulers must have legitimized their authority by monopolizing religion.

In the First Palace period (2000–1700) the cult was relatively simple. There was use of cult paraphernalia, such as the double axe, the bull, and the bull rhyton, as well as other types of libation vessels, offering tables, etc.¹⁶⁹ But the major ceremonies were not too complex, taking place in open areas such as the west courts of the palaces with the granaries as focal points, or within dining shrines which became widespread at this period. At the same time nature sanctuaries became popular, as we shall see in the next chapter.

By the Second Palace period (1650–1450), however, there was an increase in ritualization and pomp. More cult symbols appeared; seals and seal-rings were engraved with complicated religious scenes. In this way, the owners of the seals displayed not only wealth, but also their special connection with ritual administration.

The shrines became more diversified and specialized and the direct/indirect participation, testifying to increasing stratification in society, became more pronounced. The rulers and priests

were fused and authority was expressed primarily by means of religious symbols.

In order to administer their realm, the palaces had a clientele of subordinate administrators with priestly functions to whom they could delegate authority.

The delegates of the palace lived in large buildings with palatial features which I will henceforth refer to as mansions.¹⁷⁰ They are found everywhere in Crete, close to the palaces, in towns, even in the rural countryside. In imitating the architecture of the palaces,¹⁷¹ the mansions took over their functions as well: adyta, pillar crypts, and architectural display devices are found in mansions, but not in ordinary houses. The lords of the mansions were possibly relatives of the ruling family in the palace, or at least loyal clients. They duplicated the functions of the ruler-priests by enforcing collection of produce as tax (hence the storage rooms), and by ensuring orderly administration (hence sealings in mansions such as the ones at Sklavokambos and Hagia Triada).

Although these mansions were subservient to the palace, they testify to some degree of autonomy. They had their own storage rooms and, as some were located a good distance away from the palaces, they probably also had responsibility for local administration and trade. Minoan society does not seem to have been stifled by too much centralization.

That religion was the primary means of enforcing the authority of the rulers can be argued also on other grounds: whenever we find evidence of the Minoan rule outside Crete, we also find Minoan religious penetration. The settlement of Akrotiri on the nearby island of Thera has given ample proof of this, since the cult practices there are Minoanized.¹⁷²

The shrines in the palaces and mansions give us clues about cult practices and social dynamics. These will be further explored when we turn to town shrines and nature sanctuaries in the following chapter.

5

TOWN SHRINES
AND NATURE SANCTUARIES*Town Shrines*

"The gods were venerated under roofs built by human hands . . . small chambers in a house or palace," wrote M. P. Nilsson,¹ thus crystallizing a concept which had originated already with Evans and which is still pretty much accepted today:² the domestic shrine.

Although some attention has recently been paid to the public aspects of urban sanctuaries,³ the domestic shrine model, or the house-chapel, is what most people associate with cult practices of the Minoan religion; it is a concept that will die hard.

In the discussion of palatial shrines in the previous chapter, I have tried to show that they were anything but domestic. On the contrary, they had an official character and a dual clientele which consisted of a broader public (indirect participation) and a more restricted elite group.⁴ Thus, a division into shrines serving official and popular religion respectively seems more to the point than the traditional classification. This does not mean that domestic, household cults did not exist in Minoan Crete. Indeed, the excavations in the

towns of Gournia, Pseira, and Palaiakastro have brought to light much cult equipment from houses that could possibly be explained in this fashion⁵—but the way these private cults were carried out is as yet insufficiently understood.

Where did the common people in the towns collect for worship? I shall try to show that cult was practiced either in the extra-urban (nature) sanctuaries, or around the residences of the ruling elite. Some few examples of what we might call town shrines⁶ do exist, but they are few in number and seem to postdate the palaces.

In the Protopalatial period, there was a shrine in the town of Malia opening onto a street.⁷ Because it contained a hearth, it can be classified as a dining shrine, but its small dimensions show that it was not visited by large crowds. Not much is known about its immediate environment as yet, but it is possible that its clientele came from the town.⁸

A most interesting case is the Oval House at Chamaizi (fig. 82) in eastern Crete; it too dates from the Protopalatial period.⁹ As its name indicates, it is a building of a most unusual oval shape, built on top of a conical hill. Its position

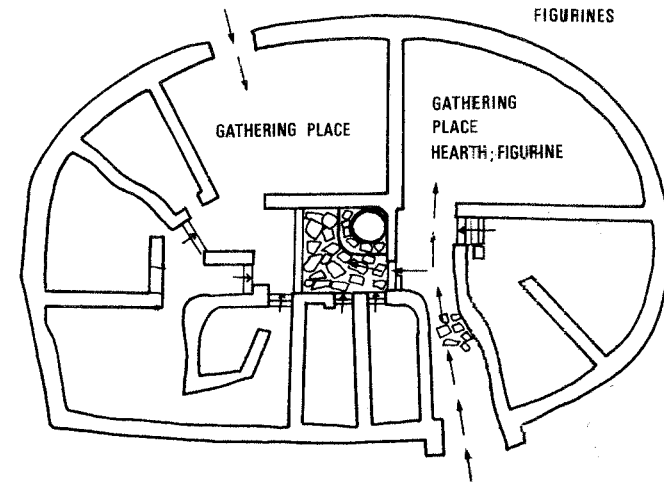


Fig. 82. Chamaizi. Oval House plan

atop the hill suggests that it was *the* eminent building in the area, possibly surrounded by mere farmhouses. The shape of the house as well as its plan is peculiar: a series of some 11 rooms arranged around an open-air paved court. In the middle of this court is a deep pit which has been variously interpreted as a votive pit (*bothros*) and a cistern. A drainage channel connected to it shows that the latter alternative is probably the correct one.¹⁰ The building is neatly divided into two sections, each with its own entrance. In the west wing were found cult implements and figurines which led some scholars to identify the Oval House as a shrine.

The cult material included scattered male and female figurines, rhyta, triton shell rhyta, a circular offering table, stone vases, and miniature jugs for aromatic oils or unguents. There were also fragments of storage jars and loom-weights. Much of the cult equipment had fallen from above, but there seems to have been a concentration within a spacious room of the west wing. Out-

side the building there was a second group of figurines.

It is certainly no accident that the main (south) entrance of the building led directly into the spacious room with the figurines and a hearth. It is reasonable to suppose that it was meant for public gatherings with eating as the main activity (hence the hearth). The smaller rooms could have been used as workshops and as residential quarters.

Now to the interpretation of the building. Some have seen a house, others a mountaintop sanctuary;¹¹ it is probably neither of the two. Although situated on top of a hill, it is not isolated enough to be a true extra-urban, nature sanctuary; moreover, its plan and concentration of industrial and cult equipment do not bfit the house of a commoner. The focal point of the building was, without doubt, the cistern. Situated in the center, it constitutes a symbolic nucleus accessible from both entrances and all the rooms. Thus, the oval shape could have been dictated by a concern to emphasize the cistern: everything literally was built

around it. I would venture the hypothesis that the building at Chamaizi was the residence of a high personage who, however, must have had important public duties: supplying the community with water in cases of emergency or feasting and organizing ritual activities, especially meals.¹²

Near Knossos, at the foot of the sacred mountain of Juktas and its peak sanctuary, was the flourishing and wealthy town of Archanes.¹³ Not too far away, at Anemospilia, a large Protopalatial building recently has been unearthed which could also have been the residence of a religious official. It has aroused great controversy, mostly because the excavators claimed to have found in it evidence of human sacrifice. They designated the building as a temple,¹⁴ although its features are not unusual enough to deserve this designation. The excavated section contains storage units with pithoi and cult equipment.¹⁵ Cooking pots and animal bones testify to dining activities.

The skeletons of four humans were found in the building. The excavators thought that three were earthquake victims, but that the fourth was sacrificed. The evidence for human sacrifice is far from being conclusive, however, and it is hard to imagine that such a ritual would have been conducted indoors, especially under danger of impending earthquakes.¹⁶ Most likely, all were killed when the building collapsed. I would suggest that the house probably belonged to a local nobleman, a dependent of the center at Archanes; he may also have been a priest at the nearby mountaintop sanctuary of Mount Juktas. Being in charge of religious administration, he would have had a supply of cult implements in his storage rooms.

In the same general area of Archanes, at Vathypetro, was another large rural building, dating to the Neopalatial period.¹⁷ It included spacious storage rooms and workshop areas, among

which the most spectacular for the visitor of today are the wine and olive presses. A special deposit of inverted cups, in a shrine close to the storerooms, testifies to a ceremony conducted for an unknown special occasion. Votive figurines, seal-stones, and luxury items were stored together with tools close to the magazines with pithoi.¹⁸ The building had an interior court, the backdrop of which consisted of a tripartite facade. If we accept this restoration,¹⁹ the court must have served as a gathering place for religious activities. We conclude that although industrial and storage units were very much in evidence, so were cult implements. All this goes to show that the lord of this house had economic as well as religious jurisdiction.

A building at Rousses, Viannou, in east-central Crete has been considered an independent shrine.²⁰ It consisted almost exclusively of storage and cult rooms. In the latter were found horns of consecration, libation tables, and inverted cups, as were found at Vathypetro. Hood notes: "The excessive number of storage vessels contrasting with the small size of the building and the lack of any evidence for an upper storey make it improbable that it would have been merely a house with a room used for domestic cult."²¹ Indeed, the profusion of cult paraphernalia indicates that there was a public aspect to the cult, whereas the storage vessels testify to administration, because someone must have been responsible for receiving and distributing the goods. Thus, rather than seeing a town shrine, as Hood does, I would suggest that the Rousses building was the residence for the "governor" of the district who was responsible for the storage and distribution of the agricultural produce and who officiated in the cult.

Another rural building was in the Mesara plain near Gortyn, at Kannia. It has been thought of as a villa (*villa rurale*), or

a shrine.²² Most of the space was taken up by storage, but as the eastern section included a number of cult rooms, it cannot have been an ordinary villa.²³ This building, too, fits the pattern of a ruler's house. Upper stories would provide living space and, possibly, reception rooms. There was storage space for the incoming agricultural produce and for the ritual equipment necessary for ceremonies. Although the pottery dates the building at Kannia to Neopalatial times (LM IA/B), the clay goddess figures found in it date to Postpalatial times (see chapter 11). The most plausible scenario is that the building, which was originally the residence of a local district governor, was reoccupied after the fall of the palaces and part of it was then turned into a local shrine.

The group of rural buildings of the Palatial era that have been considered here have been designated as country villas, farm houses, town shrines or even temples. Although they vary in size and level of luxury, they have some common features. They are typologically distinct from palaces and mansions because they lack adyta, pier-and-door-systems, and frescoes.²⁴ On the other hand, they contain the same functional units as the palaces and mansions: cult and storage rooms. I suggest that these buildings were the residences of local lords, lower in rank than the lords of the mansions, but high enough to be in charge of arable land in the countryside. Rather than explaining the cult equipment as implements for domestic, private cult, I detect the presence of official religion and theocratic administration. The owners of the country villas acted both as administrators and as religious officials for their rural clients. In so far as the local chieftains would provide the movable cult paraphernalia, stored in significant numbers within their houses, they would have controlled and directed ritual.

This theory has the advantage of accounting for the similarity of design in the palaces, mansions, and rural houses. We can visualize the palaces as cores in a system of dependencies in which the rural houses constitute the furthest outposts of palatial administration in the countryside. We are thus left with very little in the way of purely public town shrines during the palace period. Public cult apparently took place in nature or open spaces, squares or courts adjacent to the mansions, under the towering authority of the rulers/priests.

The situation changes after the fall of the palaces. With the collapse of central authority, the town shrine (or rather, chapel) makes its appearance. This change in the cult will be explored in chapter 11.

Nature Sanctuaries

Peak Sanctuaries

Crete is a very dramatic island in terms of landscape. Mountain ranges are visible from almost everywhere, and the highest mountain, Ida (Psiloritis), has snow on its peak even in the summer. It is not surprising that mountaintops, the beauty of which produces feelings of awe even in today's visitor removed from the immediacy of religious experience, became foci of worship in antiquity. Expression of religious feeling is, to a great extent, induced and shaped by the natural environment.

It is in nature sanctuaries that we find true popular cult, although even there official religion intrudes, especially in the New Palace period. People made pilgrimages to the sanctuaries in the countryside,²⁵ caves or on mountaintops, to deposit some offerings as a permanent commemoration of their presence. The abundance of figurines and other objects found in nature sanctuaries is the best

evidence of votive religion that we possess from Minoan times.²⁶ Even the most modest of the gifts is not to be despised, as it gives a glimpse into the hopes, anxieties, concerns, and gratitude of the common man. Votive offerings can be seen also as a major human strategy for coping with the future. It makes time manageable by contract.²⁷

Peak sanctuaries first appeared in Crete shortly before the emergence of the palaces.²⁸ This perhaps shows that originally they were independent of official religion; however, to the extent that they represent communal cult, they seem to presuppose some form of organization. Although located on summits of mountains, they were not too far away from settlements and could be reached comfortably within a few hours.²⁹

Already by the Protopalatial period, there is evidence of wealth on some mountaintop sanctuaries. The one at Petsofas in eastern Crete, near the town of Palaikastro, has yielded figurines of exceptionally good quality,³⁰ which indicate the presence of a clientele more sophisticated than the shepherds and farmers of the immediate vicinity. In the Neopalatial period peak cults declined. Yet, those that survived show unambiguous palatial influence and were perhaps brought under state control.³¹ New buildings were erected, prestige artifacts made their appearance; most important is the presence of offering tables inscribed in Linear A, an unmistakable sign of palatial presence. The worshippers would now be mixed; peasants and nobles would gather together on the mountain for the festival day.

The best excavated peak sanctuary is located on the mountain of Juktas, near Archanes and not very far from the palace of Knossos. The sanctuary was surrounded by a huge wall, the erection of which alone testifies to unified effort of human labor; it is still an unsolved mystery as to why such a wall of Cyclopean

proportions was necessary.³² Inside it, the rocky terrain was terraced so that there was plenty of space for the carrying out of the cult. On the terraces, the excavator, A. Karetsou, found ash layers which led her to the conclusion that great bonfires were lit periodically. Large quantities of ashes have been identified also on other peak sanctuaries, so that the phenomenon seems to have been general.³³

On the topmost terrace, a stepped altar was situated with offerings *in situ* on the steps: small offering tables (some inscribed with Linear A), and bronze and clay figurines of worshippers. Interestingly enough, an offering table was built into the altar itself as a kind of foundation deposit.³⁴ Next to the altar was a hoard of bronze double axes.³⁵

Perhaps the most interesting feature was a deep chasm, a fissure in the mountain rock. It was next to this fissure that the altar was built and in it masses of offerings were found, among them a gold amulet decorated with a scorpion and snake and several clay worshiper figurines.

On a terrace below were five rectangular spacious rooms in which were found offering vessels, a sealing, a bronze figurine of a worshiper, and other objects. One of the rooms contained animal bones, mostly of sheep and goats.³⁶ The finds suggest that the rooms were used for the storage of the cult paraphernalia; yet the bones show that dining took place in some of them, perhaps with the priests as the principal participants.

The votives fall into two classes. Firstly, there are luxury objects, such as the bronze double axes, bronze figurines of animals and worshippers, gold items, costly seals, alabaster cups, stone libation tables with Linear A inscriptions, and miniature incurved alters. In all of the above items one detects not only costly material, but the emblems of official religion as well. They are rep-

resented by the miniature altars, libation tables, and double axes. Some peak sanctuaries have even yielded models of shrines in ashlar masonry surmounted by sacred horns; these offer the clearest testimony of official cult.³⁷

Secondly, there are modest gifts, almost handmade.³⁸ Clumps of clay were molded into the shape of a birthing woman, a snake, a bird, a cluster of grapes(?).³⁹ There can hardly be any doubt that the peak sanctuary of Juktas was under the strong influence of the palace of Knossos.⁴⁰ Yet, it is equally clear that it was visited also by common men—shepherds, peasants, and the like. This juxtaposition of poor and rich votives seems to be the general rule for other peak sanctuaries as well, although the quality of the finds from Juktas has not been matched elsewhere. Nevertheless, bronze knives and double axes are reported from Vrysinas near Rethymnon⁴¹ and from the spring sanctuary of Kato Syme in the mountains.⁴²

The finds from mountaintop shrines can also be analyzed from the point of view of what they represent: they may throw light on the preoccupations of the votaries. Animal figurines abound. Oxen, sheep, and goats are very common, but there are also dogs, cats, hedgehogs, tortoises, weasels, beetles, fish, and birds. Some of these can be described as pests, but others belong to domestic species.⁴³ In general, the animal figurines express a concern with the natural environment, of which the Minoans were acutely aware. Interesting is the absence of the fantastic animals of Minoan religion, demons (*geni*) and griffins; these belong to the symbolic realm and are out of place in the context of votive religion.

Human figurines of both sexes are numerous in the First as well as in the Second Palace periods. As we have seen, they varied in quality, being made either of clay or bronze. Size also varied. Some

figurines were quite large and can be better termed figures or even statues.⁴⁴ Still, there is no trace of images of the deity or cult statues.

Although the gestures of the figurines vary,⁴⁵ they can all be described as attitudes of self-containment or respect, not of display. This shows that the figures were adorants, not divinities. Three particular types of adorants stand out. In the first scheme, the fist is clenched and held close to the forehead; it seems to be a gesture of salute (fig. 83). The second shows mostly male adorants with arms bent and held very close to the chest. The third, associated exclusively with female worshippers, has the arms crossed over the belly and breasts: these are the "zones" of motherhood (fig. 84).⁴⁶

A special category is that of votive limbs which, *pace* Nilsson,⁴⁷ do not refer to human sacrifice and dismemberment, but rather express a desire for healing.⁴⁸ A seated woman with a swollen leg indicates that there was hope for the cure of disease.⁴⁹

Personal items, such as swords, seal-stones, and amulets, probably had a similar purpose, being either thank offerings or prophylactic measures against disaster. Among the more unusual personal gifts can be counted a model of a ship (referring to the dangers of seafaring?) and the talon of an eagle,⁵⁰ a special trophy denoting power offered to the god. A visitor to a contemporary Greek Orthodox church is likely to see metal votive plaques with embossed images, attached to an icon of a saint or the Virgin Mary. They represent the hopes and concerns of the common man, which overlap greatly with those represented in the Minoan offerings. There, too, we see personal gifts, such as rings or bracelets, votive limbs, eyes, and human figures of both sexes; occasionally there are apotropaic gifts such as a car, representing a source of danger in our contemporary world.

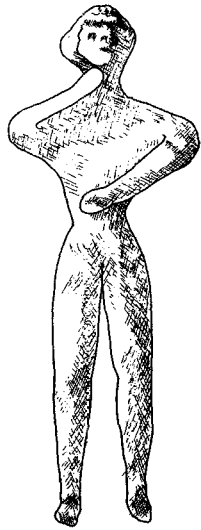


Fig. 83. Adorant in a gesture of salute

The rituals of peak sanctuaries can be only partially reconstructed. That they were elaborate and relatively frequent can be argued on account of the buildings which were erected on the most important sites; these structures betray complex ceremonies which necessitated storage of cult equipment and possibly food (fragments of storage jars are reported from several mountaintop shrines). The rooms at Juktas, which served as sacristies and probably also as dining areas, have already been mentioned. The sanctuaries of Petsofas and Traostalos had buildings with benches,⁵¹ whereas remnants of walls have been found at Piskokephalo in eastern Crete, Philiorimos, and other sites.⁵²

By far the most salient feature of the cult are the ash layers mixed with animal bones, fragments of figurines, and other objects. Where natural clefts in the rock existed, as at Juktas, Maza, Karphi, Afentis Christos, and Petsofas,⁵³ the votives were disposed of by being thrown into the crevices. I suspect that, whereas



Fig. 84. Female adorant with crossed arms touching chest and hips. From Piskokephalo

pilgrimage may have been frequent and regular, only once or twice a year would great bonfires have been lit. On such occasions, the sanctuary would have been cleared of the votives. They would either have been burned or thrown in the chasms and fissures of the rocks. This was the final act of a ceremony of renewal in which the old must be destroyed to make room for the new beginning.⁵⁴ Communal participation may have involved throwing round balls into the fire.⁵⁵ As it has been stated, material from peak sanctuaries consists almost entirely of discarded objects,⁵⁶ this certainly is a result of the distorted archaeological picture reflecting the situation after the ceremonies. In reality, the votives must have been left on the altar for some time, else the objects *in situ* on the stepped altar on Juktas cannot be explained. From this we can infer that one of the functions of altars was for the display of the offerings until the time of the major festival.

At this festival sacrifices must have been made, and the ceremonies would

have ended with a huge fire into which the discarded votives would have been thrown; there would have been a communal meal, to which the abundance of animal bones, mixed with ashes, testifies. The priests and emissaries from the major cult centers would have displayed their authority and prestige through the expensive gifts and their insignia of authority. Peatfield has made the interesting suggestion that bonfires would have been lit on peak sanctuaries in the same night all over Crete. If this is so, the fires would have been an ostensible message of unification of the Minoan theocratic rule.

A major question has not yet been addressed: what was the occasion of the great festival and which divinity was worshiped? Answers have not been lacking. Nilsson saw a mistress of animals,⁵⁷ Platon and Dietrich an all-encompassing nature goddess.⁵⁸ Rutkowski sees a great goddess who bestows power on the king.⁵⁹ All this is pure speculation. In the absence of cult images, which would have betrayed the nature of the deity, we simply lack the information to pronounce any judgment. The oft-cited sealing from Knossos depicting a goddess on a mountain, flanked by lions and saluted by a male (fig. 133) does lead us in the direction of a female divinity, but it is not conclusive. We cannot be certain that such a divinity was worshiped on *all* mountaintops throughout Crete; moreover, nothing excludes the possibility of worship of a male god connected with weather and rain. Parallels for both male and female deities venerated on mountains exist in the ancient Orient.⁶⁰ The most reasonable suggestion is that there was not *one* god or goddess who was venerated at *all* peak sanctuaries, but that each region had its own set of deities. For example, in later times, the Greeks worshiped different gods on mountaintops, not exclusively Zeus the weather god; nor are the chap-

els on mountains in contemporary Greece all dedicated to the Prophet Elias (who is commonly worshiped on peaks), but also to other saints or to Christ.

A few iconographical examples of peak sanctuaries exist and have been used as a starting point for elaborate reconstructions of the architecture.⁶¹ Unfortunately, the iconographical material is not reliable evidence for the true appearance of the buildings, as I shall try to show. What has not been stressed enough is that artistic expressions of architecture may be symbolic, as is the case in medieval art. The representations we see in Minoan scenes may provide more valid information about symbolic images than real constructions.

The most discussed item in connection with mountaintop shrines is the stone rhyton from the palace of Zakros (fig. 85).⁶² It depicts a building with a tripartite facade, surrounded by a wall, topped with sacred horns. The mountainous terrain is indicated by three elements which function as identifying signs: (1) rocks, (2) crocus plants (typical of rocky terrain), and (3) mountain goats. There is thus no doubt that a mountain sanctuary is meant.

But how accurate is the depiction of the tripartite building? Tripartite facades can be regarded as standardized formulas for depicting a sacred building. The crucial elements are the three niches of the facade. The central one is huge and decorated with spirals; the side ones are small. The tripartite scheme here is thus achieved not only by the elevation of the central wing (this is only slightly higher), but by the size of the central niche and its decoration. The superstructure of the two side niches consists of sacred horns on which there are birds. The central niche, on the other hand, is topped by a baetylic object which, due to its undulating contours, in all probability represents a rock or the sacred mountain. This object must have

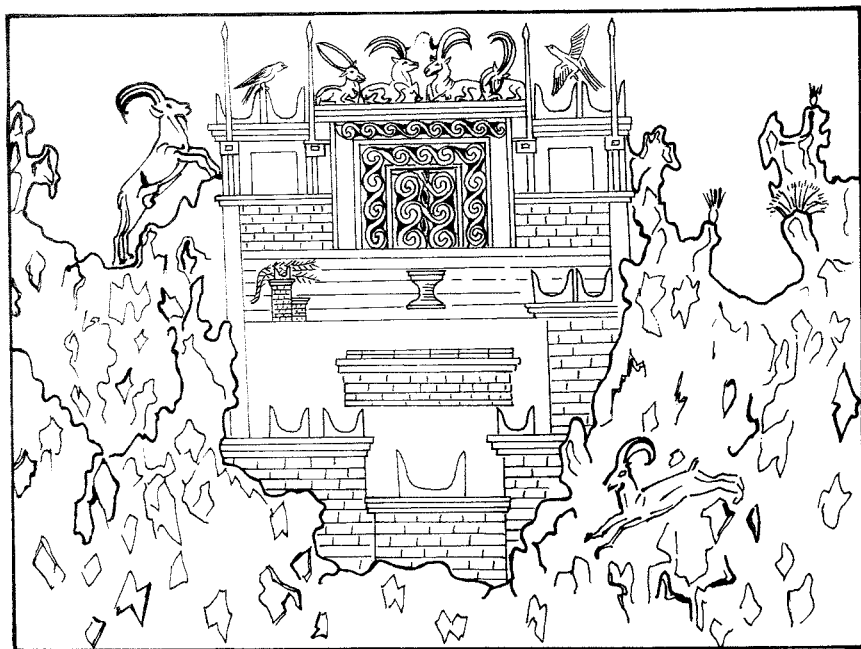


Fig. 85. Zakros. Peak sanctuary on a stone rhyton from the palace

had a major symbolic importance, for it is flanked by pairs of goats. Here a connection with the palace of Knossos emerges. The shape of the baetylic object in question is identical with the shape of the back of the throne in the throne room at Knossos. There, too, we had the heraldic arrangement with flanking griffins (fig. 43).⁶³

Another noteworthy feature is the axis of alignment of the most important structures in this scene. Starting with the baetylic object at the top of the shrine, we observe that right below it is the center of the niche; below this is an incurved altar standing on the steps which lead up to the niche; beneath this is an oblong altar built by isodomonic blocks; finally at the bottom of the picture we reach the outer wall of the *temenos* surmounted by the largest horns of consecration. The scene is composed

in such a way as to have the eye focus upon this central axis. Yet there is no action. We see an empty stage perfectly set up with all the important props, except for the actors, who are conspicuously missing. The altars are not full of offerings, there are no human participants and no deity. As soon as one moves to the periphery, the scene becomes more lively. A stepped altar on the ground under the left niche has a branch between sacred horns. A bird is alighting on the sacred horns on top of the right niche. Mountain goats are outside the sanctuary to the left and below.

The emptiness of the stage is deliberate; it betrays dramatic tension. We are anticipating the ritual which will invoke the divinity.

Although we do not know who the god is, it is clear that he or she will appear at the center. The niche is remi-

niscient of the false doors in Egyptian funerary architecture, the purpose of which was to allow communication between the living and the dead. In Minoan shrines also there seem to be false doors as *loci* for communication with the beyond; it is on this spot that some contact with the deity is expected to take place.⁶⁴

The information that the Zakros rhyton provides is more relevant for decoding Minoan ritual than for reconstructing concrete buildings at peak sanctuaries. Three-dimensional shrines with pseudo-doors or niches for communication with the deity certainly existed, but it is doubtful that they were confined to mountaintop shrines. In this sense, we hardly see a typical peak sanctuary on the Zakros rhyton. Moreover, the size and articulation of the various parts of the facade on the rhyton need not correspond to any particular building; rather, they constitute its symbolic expression. All the important elements of the cult are present: the symbol of the sacred mountain (baetylic object) flanked by goats; the niches for communication with the deity: three distinct types of altars. There is no doubt that all these features are based on actual structures, but the combination and the exaggeration of the proportions of certain elements (the goats, for instance, are too large in relation to the altars) result in a distorted picture, the purpose of which is to represent an ideal, rather than a "snapshot" image of the sanctuary.

This hypothesis is supported by a model found at the peak sanctuary of Petsofas.⁶⁵ Here the sanctuary has the shape of two huge sacred horns, one inside the other (fig. 86). A tripartite scheme is effected by three portals which, in this case, are not receding niches but doors in relief. The central one stands out by being both flanked and topped by sacred horns. Such a con-

struction in the shape of horns cannot but be imaginary; yet, it too, emphasizes the most important features of sacred architecture: the central false door and the sacred horns. We note again the absence of divinities and the lack of any ritual activity.

There is another stone rhyton, from Gypsades near Knossos,⁶⁶ which, although fragmentary, supplies us with information about ritual action (fig. 87). It shows another tripartite building on a mountaintop, in front of which a *maris* is bending to handle the contents of a basket. The location is indicated by the rocky landscape and the steep slope on which the worshiper has climbed. The building exhibits a slight asymmetry in its two side niches. This is probably due to an attempt at perspective: the right side of the facade is partially concealed by the rocky slope in front of it. The shrine is topped by horns and its central wing is elevated. I think that it is in the missing upper part of the central wing that the niche for communication with the deity would have been located.⁶⁷ In front of the shrine, but attached to its walls, are free-standing flagpoles, which also are shown on the Zakros rhyton.⁶⁸ What the worshiper is doing is unclear. Is he depositing the basket? Is he leaving something in it? But then why leave the basket on the rock? Or is he getting some fruit from the basket in order to place it in front of the central false door? Whatever the case may be, here also we see a preparatory stage, not the main ritual. We are left once more with a feeling of suspense; we are allowed to see the beginning of the action, but not its final outcome.

The catalogue of such scenes is completed with a third fragmentary stone rhyton, this one from Knossos.⁶⁹ Again we have masonry topped with horns and the familiar flagpoles. The building is constructed on different levels which,

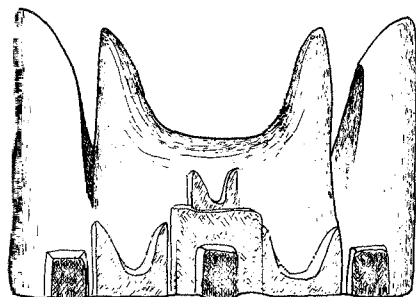


Fig. 86. Sanctuary model from Petsofas

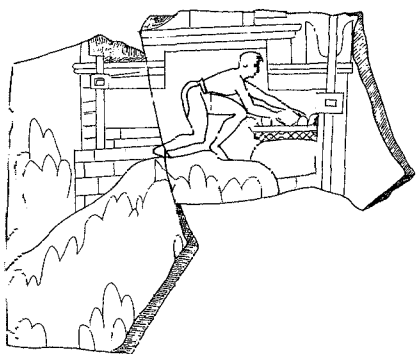


Fig. 87. Peak sanctuary on a fragmentary stone rhyton from Gypsades

in all likelihood, indicates an ascending slope rather than a staircase balustrade.⁷⁰ Our building is likely to have been another tripartite shrine, in front of which an offertory procession with only male participants takes place.

The iconography offers a few clues about ritual. The Zakros rhyton shows that different types of offerings were made (hence three different types of altars). The Gypsades and Knossos examples show us human worshipers

bringing the offerings to the shrine. Of interest is the fact that all the above scenes are depicted on stone vessels, which themselves would have been used actively in ceremonies of various types.

Based on the Zakros rhyton scene, one could venture the hypothesis that the divinity made its presence known through signs, or through its animal messengers. This might be the role of the birds and the mountain goats. It should be stressed, however, that the ultimate revelation, the epiphany of the divinity, was reserved for a special medium: rings of gold or silver which were in the possession of the palatial elite only, the priests in the major cult centers.

A nature sanctuary which deserves special mention because of the richness of its finds and the exemplary way in which it has been excavated is the one at Kato Syme, Viannou.⁷¹ It is not, strictly speaking, a peak sanctuary, because although it is high in the mountains, it is not on a peak or even near one. Its most prominent feature is a spring which still exists today. Noteworthy is the fact that religious celebrations are still held on this spot with a huge plane tree as a focal point. No doubt the existence of water is what attracted the Minoan pilgrims in the first place, and it would explain why the sanctuary was occupied continuously in antiquity from Minoan to Roman times.

The cult practices, as they are reflected in the finds, do not differ much in character from those of the richest peak sanctuaries, most notably Juktas. The sanctuary of Kato Syme was terraced and, in the New Palace period, it had a large building with many rooms. A spacious room, with a plastered bench running the length of its walls, could have been used for dining. Another adjacent room contained a repository.⁷²

The terraces were replete with burnt earth and animal bones, so that the excavator, A. Lebessi, concluded that the cult took place outdoors. The focal point was not a stepped altar or a chasm, as at Juktas, but a large platform or podium around which there was burnt, greasy earth, mixed with animal bones, cups and stone offering tables. Was the podium a focus for sacrifices, a stand for officials, or a platform for the display of symbols? We can only speculate, because its upper surface was not preserved.

The finds from the sanctuary at Syme consisted of an abundance of conical cups (which indicate banqueting), chalices, offering tables (often inscribed with Linear A), jugs, bronze and clay animal figurines, bronze adorants, and swords.⁷³ In short, there exist all the typical items of votive religion plus luxury objects that we meet only in the wealthiest sanctuaries. The question arises whether a palatial center sent the rich pilgrims, but this cannot be answered at the moment.

Kato Syme is one of the few sanctuaries to display such an unbroken continuity with later times. Since we know much more about Greek religion than about the Minoan one, the temptation arises to connect some of the features of the Greek cult with Minoan times.⁷⁴ A. Lebessi has found that the principal deities worshiped at Syme in Greek times were Hermes "of the tree" and Aphrodite.⁷⁵ She thinks that the vegetation aspect of Hermes goes back to the Minoans, and that the association between Hermes and Aphrodite may reflect a sacred marriage between the Minoan goddess and the young god of vegetation. Note, however, that Lebessi is cautious about drawing too many inferences: "After the dissolution of the Mycenaean world at the end of the Bronze Age, the Dorians met with a

fragmented deity whom they recast according to their own religious beliefs and social institutions."⁷⁶ The last remark, that there is remodeling in a new social setup, is particularly important when we consider another possible function of the sanctuary at Kato Syme: puberty rites.

Let us review the evidence for puberty rites during the Greek phase of the sanctuary. Some of the characteristic finds of the Early Greek level consist of metal sheets showing young and mature men in hunting contexts or engaged in homosexual encounters.⁷⁷ It is well known that homosexuality was practiced in an initiatory context in Doric tribes⁷⁸ but this does not entitle us to project this custom back to the Minoan era.⁷⁹ Still, Kato Syme, a sanctuary in the wilderness, would have been ideal for carrying out initiation practices in Minoan Crete.

In conclusion, the remarkable cult continuity between Minoan and Greek times at Kato Syme may, if viewed cautiously, give some indications about the nature of the deities worshiped. That Minoan nature sanctuaries were *loci* for puberty rites is a plausible hypothesis, but we cannot reconstruct the Minoan rites on the basis of later ones. If nature sanctuaries attracted initiates, we can explain why many dedicatory figurines have peculiar hairstyles which characterize youths in Minoan art (see chapter 10).⁸⁰ It is possible that many of the votaries were young men who had just undergone the rite of passage.

Nature sanctuaries must have existed in the plains also, around springs or trees.⁸¹ The archaeological evidence is scanty but enough to show that cults were practiced in the rural countryside.

Cave Sanctuaries

Cretan caves are really wondrous sites to visit. Some of them are composed of

multiple chambers, situated at different levels and joined together by passages. Many contain stalagmites and stalactites; some have pools of water. In such an awesome atmosphere of partial or total darkness, it is easy to understand how human imagination could be spurred to see in the shapes of the rocks divinities or spirits. For these reasons caves became places of worship as early as the First Palace period. It was only during the New Palace era, however, that cult became really intensified,⁸² continuing not only after the disintegration of the palatial system but well into Greek and Roman times. The reason for this continuity must certainly be sought in the emotional response that the awesome atmosphere of caves evokes in the human psyche. Even in our times, there is a little chapel built over the cave of Skoteino east of Herakleion. The cave is still used for yearly celebrations and barbecues.

The interiors of the caves were utilized. Natural rock formations, such as those in the first chamber of the caves at Skoteino and Amnissos, became focal points for worship. Flat rocks could be put to use as altars. Objects were sometimes placed in between rocks or stalagmites, but man-made altars are not lacking either.⁸³

The offerings are typical of votive religion and do not differ significantly in character from those in peak sanctuaries. The main difference is the preponderance of bronze over terracotta objects, especially figurines.⁸⁴ This may have to do with the fact that caves were used for more specialized needs than peak sanctuaries. Some may have been foci of public festivals, others may have served personal needs, and yet others may have been used by special groups or societies.

Many caves had relatively poor votives: cups, jugs, kerno, bowls, even

pithoi. Others included more prestigious items, such as stone offering tables, bull rhyta, seals, jewelry, double axes, and weapons.⁸⁵ This discrepancy in the wealth and the types of offerings between the two categories⁸⁶ has led scholars to postulate different types of deities for each group.⁸⁷ To my mind, the variation reflects a fundamental difference in the identity of the *worshippers* rather than the venerated gods. Whereas some caves would have been under the influence of the palatial theocracy, others could have attracted rural inhabitants for the performance of popular cults in the countryside.

The cave of Kamares will be considered first. It is situated within the domain of the palace of Phaistos, high up in the mountains; it flourished during the First Palace period.⁸⁸ Because of the altitude, there is snow in the winter, which makes visits impossible during this time of year; only in the late spring and summer could people climb there. A seasonal festivity seems a plausible occasion for the visits of the pilgrims. The finds support this suggestion. Neither figurines of worshippers nor personal items were found, only pottery. The latter consisted mostly of dining equipment: jars, jugs, bowls, plates.⁸⁹ In the interior there was found a heap of grain, and it is possible that more was kept in the storage jars of the cave.⁹⁰ This would suggest that an agricultural festival was the occasion which prompted visits to the cave,⁹¹ and that there was an ensuing communal feast. The participants would have been poor people from the countryside but, as the good quality of some of the pottery shows (Protopalatial Kamares ware), palatial emissaries also must have taken part.⁹²

Storage jars were found also at other caves. Food storage presupposes collection and redistribution of produce;

hence some form of organization must be postulated. In some cases it would have been the district ruler who acted as an administrator during the festival, and in others it could have been the palace itself. For our understanding of the social dynamics of Minoan religion, it is important to note that the evidence from the Kamares cave indicates that people from different social strata mingled during the public festivals.

In the second category of caves, personal votives abound. The striking abundance of bronze might at first seem evidence for a wealthier clientele. An additional factor has to be considered, however. If the occasions for pilgrimage were more intimately connected with situations of personal crisis, whether illness, pregnancy, or transition into another status, the votives would have been more distinctive and precious than if the cave were visited for public festival as a matter of routine.

Personal items such as seals, weapons, bronze tools, tweezers, and needles, as well as many bronze figurines of animals and human worshippers were found in the caves of Skoteino, near Knossos, and especially Psychro on the Lasithi plateau.⁹³ A common conception is that votives give information about the nature of the deity worshiped, and yet the dedicatory offerings are just as telling about the identity of the donor. The dedication of weapons, for example, betrays the presence of male warriors. Although female figurines have been found in caves, male ones generally predominate.⁹⁴ As to bronze animal figurines, these may have been dedicated by wealthy farmers or herdsmen who wished to multiply their flocks.

Let us elaborate on the idea that weapons suggest dedications by male warriors.⁹⁵ Consider especially the cave of Arkalochori. There the votives consisted almost exclusively of weapons and

emblems of power. At least 100 double axes have been found, 26 in gold, 7 in silver, in addition to blades, swords, and knives. Some of the double axes were inscribed, an indication of upper-class presence. Because a few of the weapons seemed unfinished, and because there were also ball-shaped ingots among the objects, the excavator, Sp. Marinatos, toyed with the idea that the cave was not a cult place, but a smithy. The absence of tools and installations, however, is a decisive argument against this hypothesis, as he himself admitted. Another suggestion of his may be more fruitful: that there may have been some kind of priestly guild in control of the cave.⁹⁶ It is easy to imagine that the Arkalochori cave would have been used by a society of warriors or priests whose *insignia dignitatis* were swords, daggers, and double axes, dedicated during major festivals and/or initiation rituals. The deposition of ceremonial weapons, as well as the leftover raw material (which would be owned by the donor), would be an integral part of the ceremony. Other caves also yielded warrior figurines, especially the cave of Patso. Although these are Postpalatial in date,⁹⁷ they show continuity of the custom with later times. It is possible that we can link the custom of dedicating weapons in caves with the later Greek tradition of the mythical young Cretan warriors, the *kouretes*, who brandished their shields in war dances. This line of investigation also leads us to initiation rituals and special societies.⁹⁸ If there is some truth in this, a distinctive role for some of the caves emerges as centers of specialized social groups, especially warriors.⁹⁹ This does not mean that we should exclude other participants.

It is interesting that daggers are used as insignia of status in the iconography (see the Chieftain's Cup, fig. 100), whereas weapons and religious implements are combined in graves of person-

ages of high status.¹⁰⁰ Thus, a society of warrior-priests can be easily imagined as fitting the context of the social tableau.

As to the rituals, they must have been similar to those of peak sanctuaries. Here also we have evidence of libations and agricultural offerings, attested by jugs and stone offering tables. At Psychro, the latter were found around an altar together with chalices, jugs, cups, and bowls.¹⁰¹ There were animal sacrifices and ensuing cult meals which left behind them bones and ashes.¹⁰² Some of the offerings, seals or figurines, were destroyed by being thrown into the rock crevices or into a pool of water, as at Psychro.¹⁰³ This recalls the custom of throwing objects into rock fissures or into the fire, observed at peak sanctuaries. A special instance of dedication consisted of embedding double axes and daggers in stalactites. This act presupposes strength. Does it also suggest male votaries?

The figurines exclusively represent worshipers, not deities. The gestures indicate reverence or, when the hands are stretched out, offering. I suggested above that, given the fact that the figurines were predominantly made of bronze, they would have been dedicated on special occasions or during major festivals. Life-crisis rituals spring to mind, but seasonal festivities cannot be excluded.

The question of the deities venerated must be left open. For only one cave, that of Amnissos near Knossos, do we have information about the name of the deity worshiped. It has been identified as the cave of Eleithya (the goddess of birth). It yielded mostly pottery and hardly any figurines, and its floruit came in the Greco/Roman period.¹⁰⁴

Despite the dearth of information, many scholars suggested a chthonic goddess for some caves, or, in the case of Arkalochori, a war god.¹⁰⁵ I prefer to abstain from this type of speculation since the evidence of the ex-votos is not conclusive and can be analyzed from the point of view of the economic status and personal needs of the worshipers. Given the similarities of the objects at peak sanctuaries and caves, it is too simplistic to reconstruct celestial deities for mountain shrines and chthonic goddesses for caves.¹⁰⁶

Nature sanctuaries have shown us a different facet of Minoan cult. It is precisely in those places, those extra-urban sanctuaries, that official and popular religion met in common concerns, such as plentiful harvests or life-crisis rituals. That the palaces would try to use such cults to unite the population in the rural countryside is a logical assumption.

6

THE PRIESTHOOD

Introduction

It is rather remarkable that in Nilsson's *Minoan-Mycenaean Religion* the subject of the priesthood was not deemed worthy of a special section. Yet, if the thesis that palatial Crete was under a theocratic regime is correct, we should expect to find representations of priests; indeed this will prove to be the case.

In the Orient, where the priesthood played an important role, an iconographically distinct type evolved; this rendered priests easily distinguishable from ordinary people by dress and insignia.¹ In Crete, however, it was not until the Neopalatial period that a specialized type appeared in the iconography. It is probably at that time that a need for a more pronounced identity arose as a result of the greater consolidation of the ruling class.

The sources that will be subsequently treated are almost exclusively iconographical: there are a few paintings but, for the most part, the material consists of seals, rings, and sealings. It should be stressed that these objects were privately owned by the upper classes who controlled the economy and administra-

tion. It is hardly an accident that glyptic art has furnished most of the images of priests; once more the elite and the sacerdotal class are shown to merge.

The issues that will be addressed cluster around appearance and roles, as well as the difference between male and female priests.

Priests

Despite the predominance of women in Minoan representational art, it is the male priests that are most easily identifiable. They were first recognized as sacerdotal personages by Evans on account of their characteristic long robes with diagonal bands decorated with tassels. The dress is probably of Syrian origin.² Although most representations come from seals, a few examples can be found on paintings. The first example is the men on the Camp Stool fresco (see chapter 3, and figs. 44, 46). The second is a fresco fragment from the palace of Knossos of a man in a chariot. The details of the garment, especially the tassels in the lower band, are clearly visible.³ A bull follows the chariot and it is obvious that

a sacrificial procession was the subject of the composition.⁴ The third is a panel on the short side of a Postpalatial terracotta coffin from Nirou Chani in central Crete, not far from Knossos.⁵ A man, dressed in the robe with diagonal bands, raises both his arms in a gesture of display. In his right arm he holds a scepter. He is a priest, most probably performing some kind of ritual for the dead.⁶

In addition to the dress, male priests

are characterized by a special hairstyle, on the seals at least.⁷ The hair is closely cropped in the front, forming a fringe or bangs, and longer in the back (fig. 88a,f). On some seals a beard is clearly discernible (figs. 88c, 89–91). In some cases, like the seal from Malia (fig. 88e), a cap is worn on the head.

Some gems, known as portrait seals, depict only heads. The hairstyle is always the same: short hair in the front;

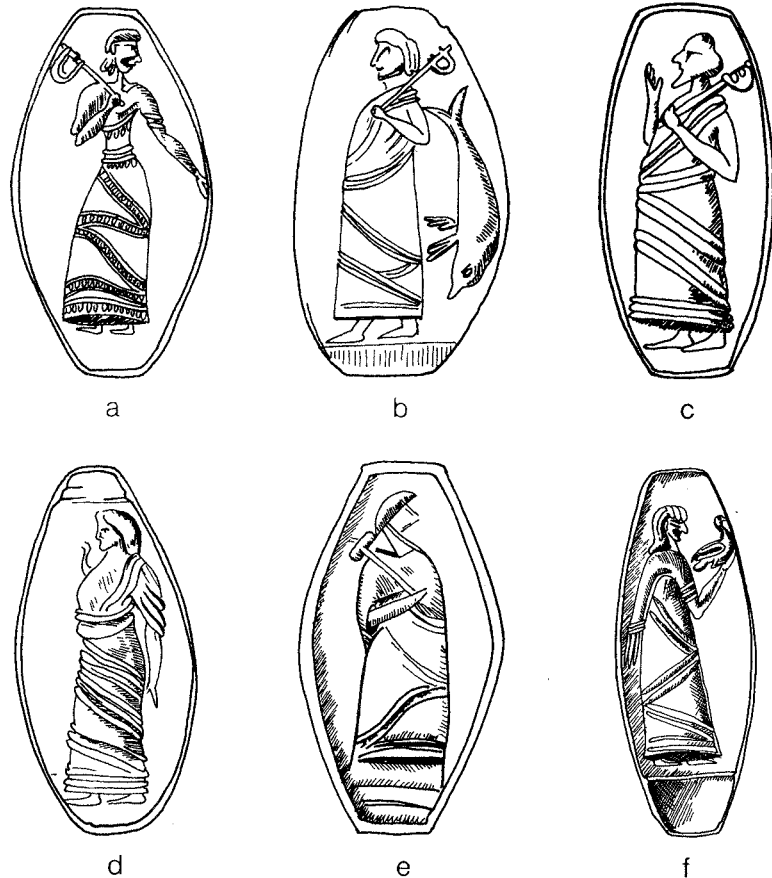


Fig. 88. Sacerdotal figures on seals



Fig. 89. Seal depicting head of a priest and sacrificial animals

the faces usually have a beard (figs. 89–91).⁸ These heads are not, of course, portraits in our sense; rather, they are genre imagery designating the type "priest."⁹

The sacerdotal figures hold insignia of their authority. Most common is a curved axe, known as Syrian (fig. 88a–c), or a stone mace (on the seal from Malia, figure 88e).¹⁰ Both of these are attested archaeologically.¹¹ They are instruments of authority, but they also denote power to kill or injure. That instruments of aggression are connected with priestly figures may come as a surprise. But in the ancient world, power was often expressed as the ability to kill or sacrifice. As we shall see later, this aspect of the Minoan priests was tied to their role as sacrificers and hunters.

On an intaglio from Knossos (fig. 88d) Evans thought he recognized a bow held by the right hand of the priest.¹² Although it is not easy to discern this object, Evans may have been right, because the bow is indeed attested in connection with another bearded figure. On a fragment of a steatite conical rhyton, a bearded man with the characteristic hairstyle is depicted holding a bow (fig. 92).¹³

A priest with a bow is also depicted on a portrait seal (fig. 91a). Lances, too, are associated with priests: on a sealing

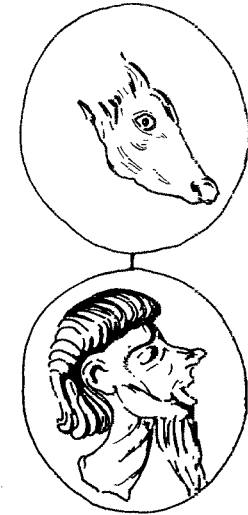


Fig. 90. Head of a priest and sacrificial victim on a two-sided seal

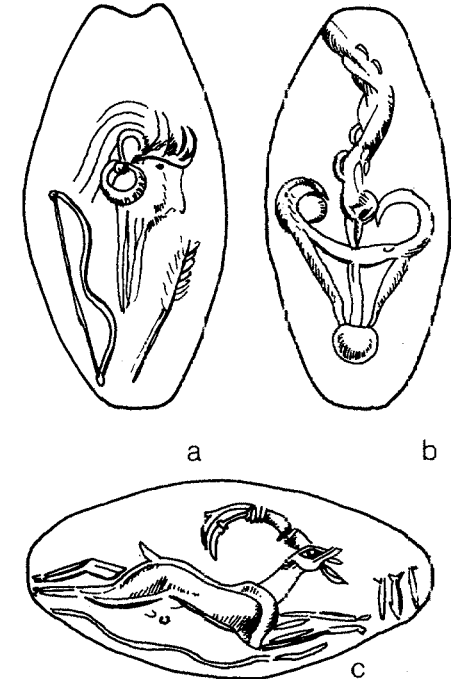


Fig. 91. Head of priest, running animal, and bucranium on a three-sided prism seal



Fig. 92. Priest as hunter; fragment of a steatite vase

from Hagia Triada a long-robed figure is holding two lances.¹⁴

Interesting is also the link to the Orient. As Evans noticed, both the dress and the axe point in the direction of Syria. He remarks: "It must be certainly taken to indicate that a very strong politico-religious influence was making itself felt at this epoch. . . ." ¹⁵ Indeed, the parallels with the Orient are many. It is striking, for example, that maces and bloody swords were carried during festivals by certain priests in Mesopotamia in the second millennium.¹⁶

The leopard axe from Malia, which has already been discussed in connection with the loggia of that palace, can now be better interpreted.¹⁷ This type of axe head in the form of an animal has close Syrian parallels and may even be of Oriental origin.¹⁸ Not only does it give us further testimony concerning the affinities of the Minoan sacerdotal class with the Near East, but it also offers some clues about the nature of the ceremonies. I suggested in connection with the loggia at Malia that the personage

who appeared to the public, gathered at the central court, could have been male, rather than female. Since Syrian axes are held exclusively by men, the iconographical evidence tends to confirm this. One can imagine a priest, dressed in the long fringed robe with diagonal bands, displaying his insignia.

Thus, there are several indications that the consolidation of priestly identity was effected through contacts with the East, especially Syria, during the New Palace period. Yet, the selection of dress and insignia from Oriental models need by no means imply full-scale adoption of customs and functions. To understand the latter, the Minoan evidence alone should be considered.

Priests are characterized not only by their insignia and dress in the iconography, but by certain symbolic images that accompany them. These images, which can be termed signs, are visual concepts which reinforce and expand the meaning of the representation.

A common association of images, which appears especially on the so-called portrait seals, is that of animals or animal heads shown together with a priest's head. On a two-sided gem from Knossos the head of a priest and a calf are engraved on opposite sides (fig. 90). On another one from Crete (fig. 93) a priest's head is shown amidst animal heads. The relationship must be one of sacrificer-victim, and the role of the priest is here connected with sacrifice.

On a three-sided seal from a private collection (fig. 91) the associations are more complex. Side *a* shows the priest's head between a bow and an arrow; side *b* a running goat; side *c* a stylized bucranium (bull's head) with smoke(?) rising between the horns. The images on the three sides, if read as a sequence, give the following narrative: the priest is a



Fig. 93. Head of a priest and animal heads on a seal

sacrificer (hence the head of the sacrificial victim), but he is also a hunter pursuing a running goat.

A human unbearded head together with heads of animals (ram, goat, deer, lion) is depicted on another seal now in Washington (CMS XIII, 22D). The gem has been suspected of being a forgery but, if it is genuine, it may be another instance of the association of a priest with several sacrificial victims.

Sacerdotal figures in long robes holding inverted spears are shown among winged(!) deer on a seal (fig. 94). A context of hunting is probably implied here also, although it may be taking place in a metaphysical realm.

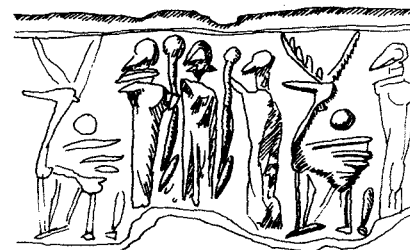


Fig. 94. Seal depicting long-robed priests amidst winged deer

The connection with sacrifice and hunting explains why the sacerdotal insignia are weapons. As to why priests are depicted as hunters, there is a two-fold explanation. Firstly, there is an imitation and partial assimilation with the Young God, who will be discussed in the next chapter. Secondly, ritual hunting was almost certainly practiced in Minoan Crete. It is not uncommon in the religions of the ancient Orient and, to judge from cave paintings, it may well go back to Paleolithic customs.¹⁹ Ceremonial hunting was a feature of kingship in Egypt and the Near East. The pharaoh had to kill a lion upon accession to the throne,²⁰ while the Assyrian kings are often shown hunting lions and then pouring libations over the slain victim.²¹ One would like to know more about the circumstances and the exact significance of the ritual hunt by Minoan priests; perhaps it was related to mastery of nature and proof of superior ability. At any rate, the connection of the sacerdotal role with sacrifice and hunting can be deduced from the iconography with some degree of certainty.

We now turn to other signs on seals. On one from the palace of Knossos (fig. 88b) a dolphin is engraved vertically next to the figure of the priest. In order to understand the obscure relationship between the animal and the sacerdotal figure, another set of scenes, where the dolphin is featured, must be examined. There it has a very extraordinary role: it is a predator attacking horned animals.²² In these almost surrealistic scenes, the dolphin attacks from above, like a bird, while the prey is often in a contorted position denoting pain. On some representations it appears together with other predators, griffins or lions.²³ A marine animal attacking a terrestrial one appears to be an absurdity. But the paradox can be explained if we consider that the

ancients considered the dolphin as a marine predator. In Homer's *Iliad* (XXI, 22–24) it is presented as an attacker pursuing the small fry and is compared to Achilles fighting the Trojans. Interesting is a scene on a vase from Ras Shamra-Ugarit in which dolphins attack goats and horses(!). In some of Aesop's fables too, the dolphin is featured as a predator, the marine equivalent of the lion.²⁴ Thus, the concept of the dolphin as an attacker/predator was widespread in the whole Mediterranean basin. In the Minoan classification system, both dolphin and priest share one aspect: power expressed as predatory aggression. On the seal, the dolphin is a sacred animal; it is also an intensifier, designating the priest as powerful, at the same time providing a framework through which the sacerdotal role can be understood in the context of nature.

The association of powerful predators with deities may explain why priests are shown together with griffins. In so far as the priest becomes partly assimilated with the god in the iconography, he assumes some of his attributes. Thus, on a seal from Vapheio²⁵ a sacerdotal figure leads a griffin (fig. 95). On a cylinder seal, two griffins flanking a sacred papyrus plant are held on a leash by a long-robed frontal figure (doubled on the rolling out, fig. 96). Frontality is, as a rule, a mark of divine status. However, here the figure is wearing the characteristic sacerdotal robe with diagonal bands, and it is likely that he is a priest incorporated in an iconographical pattern designed for divinities. It is, of course, important to keep in mind that god and priest can become interchangeable in the imagery.²⁶

In addition to predators, the sacerdotal figures can appear also in connection with birds. On a Knossos seal (fig. 88f) the priest is holding a dove in his hand. It is probably meant as an offering, espe-



Fig. 95. Long-robed priest leading griffin; seal from Vapheio on the Greek mainland



Fig. 96. Long-robed priests holding griffins on a leash; cylinder seal

cially since terracotta votive birds have been found in peak sanctuaries. However, birds have a different role in ritual contexts, like on a model of a shrine from the loom-weight basement at Knossos where they are perched on columns.²⁷ On the Hagia Triada sarcophagus (figs. 27–32) birds are atop double axe poles. In such contexts they probably are messengers or representa-

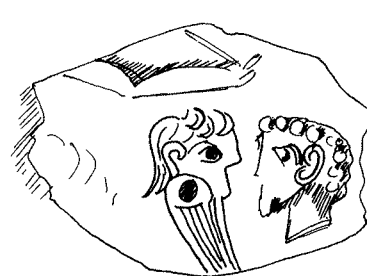


Fig. 97. Seal depicting heads of a bearded priest and boy

tives of gods;²⁸ they signify that ritual is efficacious because nature is participating. The relationship priest-bird will be discussed further in connection with music.

More puzzling is another pictorial formula which juxtaposes a priest and a boy. On a seal from a private collection in Zurich, a bearded priest's head with a large earring (compare with figure 91a) is facing another head (fig. 97) which certainly belongs to a boy. Not only does this second face lack a beard, but it also has the short curly hair which designates youthful figures.²⁹ On another three-sided prism, now in Paris, a bearded priest's head is depicted on one side; on the other two are engraved heads of boys with curly hair (fig. 98). Could it be that we have here a master-apprentice relationship, the older priest training and schooling the younger one? If that is so, this relationship was deemed very important since it became emblematic. Perhaps continuity of generations in the priestly office was emphasized that way.

On another seal of unknown provenance, however, it appears that the older priest is juxtaposed to the young god. The priest, recognizable by the typical garment and the flat cap, is advancing toward a young man with a kilt and long hair (fig. 99). The latter is stretching his arm out in an interactive gesture. That

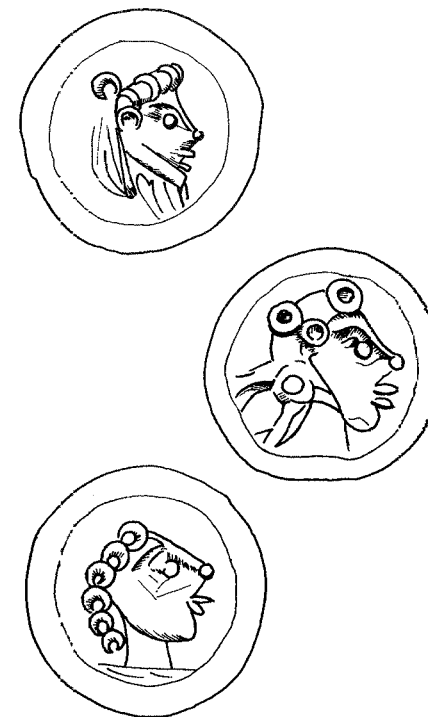


Fig. 98. Heads on a three-sided seal



Fig. 99. Long-robed priest and a young god (?) on cylinder seal

he is young can be seen from his kilt and the long hair; he is a full-grown youth, not a boy, however. One very important element in this scene is that the younger figure is larger and more robust than the priest. It is difficult to imagine that a youth would be higher in the hierarchi-

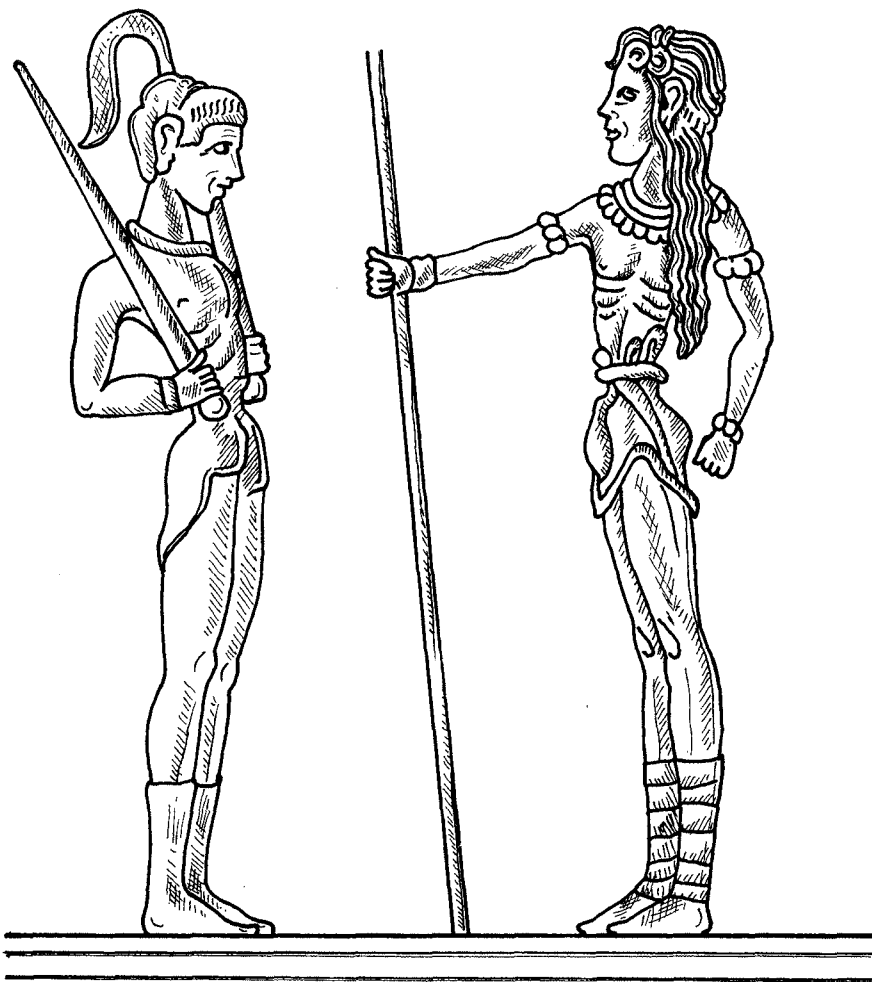


Fig. 100. From the so-called Chieftain's Cup. Young God or man in the guise of the god confronting a youth

cal scale than the older man, unless he is the Minoan Young God, about whom more will be said in the next chapter. Alternatively, he may be a youth who acted as the impersonator of the Young God. Another scene involving the impersonation of the god by a youth must be examined in this context.

On the steatite chalice from Hagia Triada known as the Chieftain's Cup (figs. 100, 124)³⁰ a youth leads a procession of men carrying animal hides which they bring to an imposing long-haired young man. It is evidently a presentation scene of the type commonly found in the Aegean and the ancient Orient. What is of

interest here is the recipient figure on the right. He is wearing a short kilt with articulated phallus sheath, namely a garment that emphasizes manhood.³¹ He is wearing jewelry: necklaces, armlets, and bracelets. He is also armed: a dagger is attached to his belt and he is holding a spear or staff. He is larger and slightly more robust than the youth facing him. The interpretation that he is a prince or chieftain is plausible. However, and this is the important point, his iconographical type is indistinguishable from that of the Minoan Young God. The latter also is characterized by the long hair, spear, and identical costume.³² I am not arguing that every depiction of a young Minoan male with long hair and kilt is a god. Still, it is not an accident that there is an identity of costume, hairstyle, and insignia. It is therefore arguable that the prototype for young aristocrats was the god. On the Chieftain's Cup, then, we may have either a god or a god impersonator receiving gift-bearing youths.

To return to the relationship between older priest and young boy: if young members of the priesthood acted as impersonators of the young god (this is arguable on account of their adopting his appearance), they must have gone through a period of schooling and apprenticeship with older priests as masters. An initiation ceremony into priestly office is highly likely. This may be the meaning behind the juxtaposition of bearded and youthful heads on the portrait seals, whereas the scene with the older priest and young god shown in figure 99 could be a double reference to the contact of master-pupil and priest-god.

The connection of the priestly office with sacrifice and hunting has already been discussed; we now turn to other types of ritual. Two more garments, which are intimately connected with

cult activities, have to be investigated.

The first is the animal hide skirt,³³ best illustrated on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus (fig. 27-32). Many more examples come from glyptic art, but there, due to the small surface of the medium, it is impossible to render the shaggy texture of the hide which is recognizable only by its outline resembling knickerbockers.

The hide skirt is a simple garment, with a deliberately primitive appearance, worn by men and women alike.³⁴ Although Nilsson discusses Egyptian parallels, the prototype, if a prototype is required, is rather to be sought in the Near East, where sacred garments were made of animal hide.³⁵ But we can imagine that the idea sprang spontaneously in both cultures. The skin of the sacrificed animal worn by the priest establishes a link between sacrificer and victim.³⁶

The paradox, however, is that in Minoan Crete, sacrificial priests do not wear the hide garment. In the sacrifice scene on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus the priestess in hide skirt is performing a libation (fig. 30). Thus, the original meaning may have been lost when specialization of functions set in.

It is, rather, processions which are commonly associated with hide skirts in glyptic art (figs. 101-104).³⁷ The gestures of the participants are formal: one arm bent and held close to the torso. A variant of the processional scheme shows women in flounced skirts with the same formal gestures, following a leader clad in the hide skirt (fig. 104).³⁸ The gender of the leader is difficult to determine, but it is worth observing that breasts are not shown and the arms are hanging down. The leader is thus differentiated not only by dress, but by position and gestures as well.

Persons in hide skirts are some times shown transporting cult objects, espe-

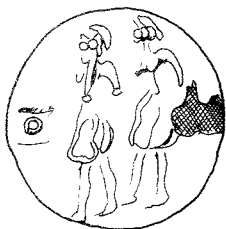


Fig. 101. Persons in hide skirts in procession on seal



Fig. 102. Persons in hide skirts in procession on seal



Fig. 103. Persons with hide skirts; the one to the right is also wearing a cuirass. Seal-impression from Hagia Triada

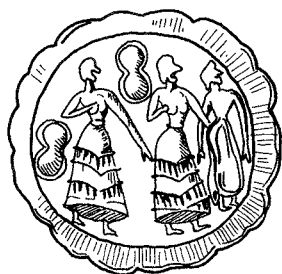


Fig. 104. Seal depicting women in flounced skirts following a hide-clad person



Fig. 105. Woman with flounced skirt and person in hide skirt carrying double axes. Seal-impression from Hagia Triada

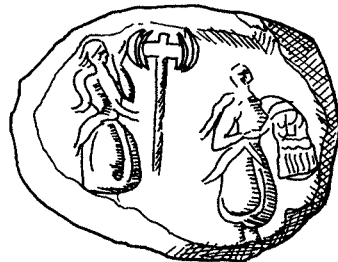


Fig. 106. Hide-clad persons in the presence of a double axe. Seal-impression from Zakros

cially double axes. On a sealing from Hagia Triada (fig. 105), a hide-clad person is holding a sacred axe in a stiff, formal position. He follows a woman in a flounced skirt; she, too, carries an axe on her shoulders and looks backwards toward him. On a sealing from Zakros (fig. 106) two figures in hide skirts are carrying a garment in the presence of a large double axe.³⁹

On a sealing from Hagia Triada (fig. 107)⁴⁰ two figures in hide garments (probably male because no breasts are discernible) flank a woman. The latter wears a flounced skirt and peaked cap. Her higher status can be inferred by her headdress (often worn by gods and goddesses) and central position.

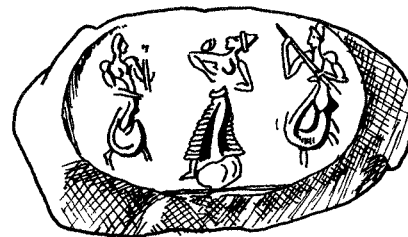


Fig. 107. Persons in hide skirts flanking a goddess or priestess in a flounced skirt and peaked hat. Seal-impression from Hagia Triada

She may thus be a goddess or a goddess impersonator.⁴¹ One of the flanking hide-clad figures is holding a lance. The nature of the scene is difficult to determine.

The corpus of the extant representations with persons in hide skirts is not large enough to allow complete decoding of the significance of the garment. However, the following can be deduced. Firstly, the dress in question is not characteristic of gender and we cannot associate it exclusively with male priests.

Secondly, unlike the long Syrian robe, it is not emblematic or determinative of office/status. Persons in hide skirts, whether men or women, do not appear singly in a stiff position of formality, like the priests in the Syrian dress. The hide skirt may thus have been worn on specific ritual occasions but does not seem to have designated an office.

Finally, it can be conjectured that the hide skirt was commonly worn during processions during which cult paraphernalia was carried around. It is thus likely that the garment in question was worn by cultic personnel of both sexes when they officiated during certain festivals. The activities involved were: carrying of sacred objects, processions, and libations (the latter shown on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus, fig. 30).

Another curious type of garment is the "cuirass" or "corselet," so named because it appears to consist of "... semicircular scales pointing upwards."⁴² It was worn in two ways: over the shoulders (as a stole), and over the hide skirt. The latter type is exemplified on a sealing from Hagia Triada (fig. 103).⁴³ The similarity with a military cuirass is probably entirely fortuitous, and the garment under discussion is a mantle made either from worked animal hide or, more likely, from woven textile, embellished with a fringe.⁴⁴

Unlike the hide skirt, the cuirass is an exclusively male attire.⁴⁵ Most articulate of all is the scene on the Harvester's Vase, a steatite rhyton from the mansion of Hagia Triada (fig. 108). There, an all-male procession of singing young men, carrying pitchforks on their shoulders, is led by a figure with the characteristic short hair of the priest dressed in a cuirass. It has been doubted that this is a religious occasion; the scene has been interpreted as a joyous celebration after the harvest, the leader being the local lord.⁴⁶ Yet there are three considerations that argue for a ceremonial interpretation of the procession.

Firstly, it is not unimportant that the medium of the representation is a rhyton, a vessel used for cultic purposes. Secondly, the men, although depicted as interacting freely and joyfully with one another, are constrained by a certain formality. Many participants have one arm bent, fist clenched and held close to the chest. This is a ceremonial gesture, occurring in many scenes of religious content.⁴⁷ The clenched fist recalls the gestures of votaries from peak sanctuaries and caves. Finally, and this is most important, the leader is not just any man: his hairstyle and physiognomy are the (by now familiar) features of the male priest so often depicted on portrait seals. The harvester's procession, then,

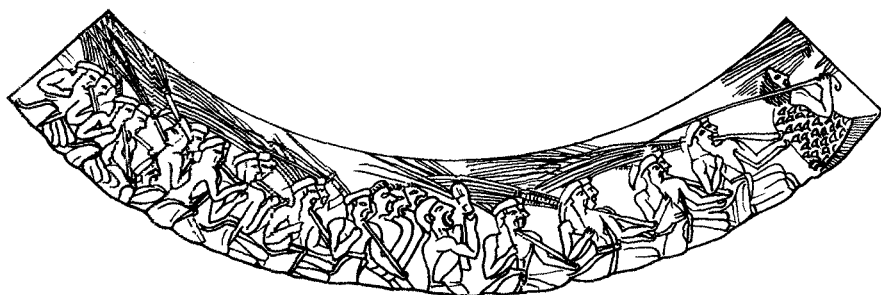


Fig. 108. Development of the Harvester's Vase from Hagia Triada showing a procession of harvesters led by a priest in a cuirass

can be designated as a ceremony after a successful harvest, led by a priest whose status is made clear by the special garment. We are thus able to isolate one occasion in which the cuirass was worn.

Other instances are more elusive. On a sealing from Hagia Triada⁴⁸ two men are walking toward the left. One, in the front, is wearing the hide skirt, the other is wearing the cuirass on top. An abbreviated procession toward some unknown destination is depicted here; to the right some columns(?) are discernible. Are the men leaving a shrine? The role of the cuirassed man cannot be deduced from this depiction.

A costuming scene, in which the cuirass may be worn, is the subject of another fragmentary sealing from Hagia Triada.⁴⁹ The garment cannot be identified with certainty, however, nor can it be decided whether the person being dressed is male or female. It may well be that a priestess is being decked out,⁵⁰ or it may be that a priest is being attired in the cuirass.

All in all, then, the role of the cuirass in cult is vague because of the relative dearth of representations. What can be said is that it apparently was a male ritual dress worn by priests during harvest

and other festivals. One observation leads me to venture a bold hypothesis. The cuirass is indistinguishable from the flounced skirt in the iconography, as far as the form and decoration go; only the way it is worn and the sex of the person wearing it enables us to differentiate. Could it be that this elusive garment is simply the flounced skirt, but that when it was used by men, it was worn as a stole? In that case, the cuirass was a unisex piece with sacred significance worn in a different manner by the two sexes.

One of the special functions of priests was making music. On the Hagia Triada sarcophagus (figs. 27, 29), male participants, dressed in long robes,⁵¹ hold musical instruments. The lyre accompanies a libation scene, the flute the sacrifice scene. An even more interesting representation comes from a pyxis (clay box) from a Postpalatial grave at Kalamia in western Crete (fig. 109).⁵² Two scenes are painted on opposite sides. Side A depicts a figure dressed in the long Syrian robe with diagonal bands (hence identifiable as a priest). He is holding a huge lyre on one hand and a branch on the other. To his left are sacred horns with double axes between them. Large



Fig. 109. Two sides of a clay box (pyxis) from Kalamia

swooping birds are flying downward; one is touching the lyre, the other the branch. Side B is taken up by large birds flying upward. The connection of birds with priests is evident from several other representations as well,⁵³ not least from the Hagia Triada sarcophagus. It will also be remembered that a priest holding a bird was engraved on a Knossos intaglio (fig. 88f). Terracotta votive birds are found in cemeteries and nature sanctuaries.

A few more words about the interpretation of the Kalamia pyxis. The two sides of the box constitute a unified thematic program, like the scenes on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus. It will be remembered that the theme there was that of two antithetical cycles (see chapter 2). Birds, double axes, vegetation, and music featured there also. A ritual of renewal is depicted on the Knossos larnax discussed in chapter 2 (fig. 33). There, a bird is held by the priestess. This is remarkably similar to side A of our pyxis, which shows the priest invoking birds through his music. The importance of the birds is stressed by their large size. Similarly, the lyre is overproportionate,

which indicates that the medium of invocation is a crucial element in the pictorial cultic code. The priest is displaying a branch. Vegetation is a sign pointing to a nexus of regeneration-spring-fertility. The arrival of the birds, which can be regarded as messengers of the gods, would then signify the coming of spring or a season of fertility in general. Side B of the pyxis shows the departure of the birds: the coming of winter?

A winter-spring cycle may thus be conjectured, although the opposition need not be strictly related to seasons, but to the arrival and withdrawal of the gods, or a situation of prosperity contrasted with one of barrenness.⁵⁴ Unlike on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus, the gods are absent here and represented only by their messengers, the birds. The priest's role is unmistakable: he is the one who causes, if not outright controls, the outcome.

It is worth comparing this scene with a fresco from the throne room of the palace of Pylos (fig. 110) on the Greek mainland.⁵⁵ A male figure, seated on a rock and dressed in the characteristic



Fig. 110. Fresco from the palace of Pylos

priestly long robe with diagonal bands is playing the lyre. He is shown next to a huge bird. No doubt we have here the same scheme transferred from Crete to the mainland. But what was the thought behind priests invoking birds?

Music has always been thought to be especially efficacious in ritual since it transgresses the normal boundaries of communication. One of its effects is to "tame" nature, by including it in a non-verbal, universal medium. Musical instruments, perhaps because they are thought to imitate the sounds of birds, are often the tools of the shaman. If the gods cannot be present themselves, they send their celestial messengers as assurance of their goodwill. Behind the later Greek mythical figure of Orpheus, who enchanted animals with his lyre music, almost certainly lies the cultic reality of a priestly figure. Did not Greek and Ro-

man priests (augurs) claim a special art of reading the will of the gods by observing birds? This is not to identify the Bronze Age priestly figures as early forms of Orpheus or Greek priests, but to suggest an analogous phenomenon which can be paralleled elsewhere, especially in shamanistic cultures.⁵⁶

It remains to discuss one striking piece of evidence that affirms the involvement of the priesthood in administrative affairs. On certain Linear A tablets from Hagia Triada, there appear ideograms of priests with long robes and axes on their shoulders alongside the syllabic signs.⁵⁷ The contents of the inscriptions are undeciphered, but it is almost certain that commodities were catalogued and listed on the tablets. The presence of the sacerdotal figures is one more piece of evidence for the close

contacts of the sacerdotal class with economy.

The survey of sacred dress has shown that the roles of the priesthood were multiple and varied. The priests seem to have had different garments depending on the nature of the ceremonies, but it cannot be discounted that certain other persons, perhaps of lower rank, could take on cultic roles by wearing the appropriate dress. Despite the fact that many questions must remain unanswered, it is clear that there was complexity and variation in the priestly roles and that different ages were involved.

The male priest was an important figure in Neopalatial Crete. Especially important are his insignia of power, his various types of dress, and his juxtaposition with boys or youths; the latter may have impersonated the Minoan Young God.

Priestesses:

Their Costume and Apparel

Unlike their male counterparts, priestesses have no distinct dress. A female in a costume with open bodice and flounced skirt can be a goddess, a priestess, or a lady of the nobility; only the context can reveal the difference.⁵⁸ Hide skirts, which, as we have seen, were worn during ritual occasions, are unisex and cannot be said to characterize the priestess. And yet the usual female costume⁵⁹ is not a result of mere fashionable innovation, but has a symbolic significance attached to it.

The most striking feature is the deep décolletage which leaves the breasts exposed. This feature deliberately emphasizes femininity and is the counterpart of the phallus sheath which emphasizes virility in the costume of male youths. Thus, despite the absence of ithyphallic figures and explicit erotic scenes in Mi-

noan art, an emphasis on sexuality is unmistakable.

Furthermore, it can be said with certainty that this female costume conforms to a prototype, the dress of the goddess, just as the kilt with a phallus sheath imitates the attire of the Young God (see chapter 7).

Detailed discussion of the costume appearance would be out of place here. Certain ornamental motifs, however, which have a symbolic character, pertain to the characterization of the goddess or her priestesses. For this we turn to some examples of sacred robes⁶⁰ from Neopalatial Crete.

Griffins, sphinxes, and bucrania ornamenting a dress on a fragment from the NW Fresco Heap at the palace of Knossos.⁶¹ These animals represent the categories guardian/predator and sacrificial victim, respectively, and can thus be regarded as belonging to the realm of the goddess.

More frequent are plants, the ornamental value of which was certainly symbolic.⁶² Crocuses are painted on the faience votive robes from the temple repositories at Knossos (fig. 111)⁶³ and on the dress of a goddess from Thera (fig. 112).⁶⁴ The same goddess even has a crocus tattoo on her cheek. Moreover, she receives offerings of saffron, collected by girls. It is evident that the crocus decoration of the costume reflects the cult activity relating to the goddess. Sometimes crocus or lily motifs take the form of pendants on necklaces. I would suggest that these flowers have a reference to fertility/regeneration. More will be said about this in chapter 5.

No doubt the dresses of priestesses also were decorated with meaningful symbols. The gold foil ornaments from the shaft graves at Mycenae, in the shape of shrines, naked goddesses, octopuses, butterflies, rosettes, etc. were probably stitched onto ritual costumes.⁶⁵



Fig. 111. Small faience robes and girdles from temple repositories, Knossos



Fig. 112. Detail of the goddess from Xeste 3, Akrotiri, Thera

They functioned as symbols imparting a sacred aspect to the dress. The importation of the latter to the mainland from Crete furnishes a clue about the manner of transmission of cultural and religious symbols. In this context, the octopuses are worth mentioning. They not only refer to the realm of the sea, but to the regenerative power of this mollusk.⁶⁶

Thus, the costumes of priestesses must have differed from those of ordinary women mainly in the choice of symbolic motifs. But other accoutrements may have enhanced the appearance of the priestess. One of these is the "sacred knot," thus named by Evans,⁶⁷ which can be described as a kind of bow

in the back of a long robe. It is featured on females such as the *Parisienne*, a priestess supervising a banqueting scene on a fresco from Knossos (fig. 45).⁶⁸ It also appears as an isolated symbol on seals⁶⁹ and frescoes,⁷⁰ or as an actual three-dimensional object in ivory or faience.⁷¹

Another piece of apparel is the crown adorning the head of a frontally depicted goddess flanked by griffins. Such representations are attested only on seals (fig. 113). This crown is also shown with heads of sacrificial animals (fig. 114). The conclusion that it is made out of horns of sacrificed animals lies close at hand.⁷² It is likely that priestesses wore or carried the horned crown on occasions when they impersonated the goddess.⁷³ Horned crowns are commonly worn by deities of the Near East.⁷⁴ The significance there, however, has to do with the power of the animal embodied in the deity. In the Minoan case, the horns are interfered with; the tips are covered with bulbs. They are also artificially bound together. This means that something of the raw power of the horns is lost; the animal features have been manipulated: the Minoan horn crown is a product of culture rather than nature. It is one of the insignia of the Minoan goddess and her priestess, establishing a link between her and the sacrificial act.

The main function of Minoan priestesses, at least the one that can best be deduced, was the impersonation of the goddess. The procedure, as it can be reconstructed from the architectural evidence, has been discussed in chapter 4 and it will be taken up again in chapter 7. Here a few words must be said about how the dressing of the priestess, either for the impersonation or for some other ritual, resulted in the sacralization of her costume.

Ever since Evans found the votive



Fig. 113. Goddess with horn crown, flanked by griffins. Seal from Crete; slightly restored drawing



Fig. 114. Ram's head topped by horn crown and flanked by birds. Seal-impression from Zakros

faience robes in the temple repositories at Knossos, it has been suspected that the sacral dress played a role in Minoan cult. The picture is made more complete by scenes on seals which show the carrying of a flounced skirt by a woman together with a double axe or in the



Fig. 115. Priestess (?) in flounced skirt carrying a garment and a double axe on seal from Knossos



Fig. 116. Person handing over garment to priestess on seal from Malia

presence of the double axe (figs. 107, 115).⁷⁵ A sealing from Hagia Triada shows a woman carrying a flounced skirt which hangs from a curved frame resembling a bow.⁷⁶ A seal from Malia depicts the handing over of the robe to a woman(?) (fig. 116), whereas a fresco from Thera shows a group of women bringing dress and ornaments to a



Fig. 117. Reconstruction of a fresco from Akrotiri, Thera, showing the dressing of a priestess

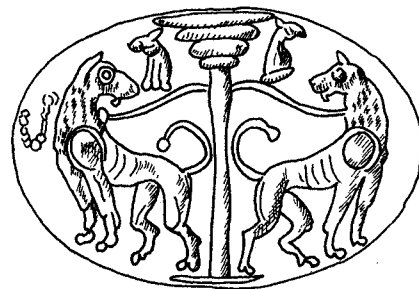


Fig. 118. Sacred garments hung on a column which is flanked by lions; gold ring from Mycenae

seated female (fig. 117).⁷⁷ A sequence of actions can be put together as in a comic strip: (a) a robe is ceremonially brought to a priestess; (b) it is handed over to her; (c) she is decked out, presumably in order to appear to the public. Even the sequel can be conjectured: the dress becomes sacred after this and is hung on columns or trees (fig. 118). It then be-

comes a symbol and is featured as a sacred sign on seals.⁷⁸ It may even be worshipped in itself after its sacralization and Niemeier has recently drawn attention to a seal showing just such robe worship.⁷⁹

Conclusions

In the New Palace period there was a clear role division between priest and priestess. For males, there may have been different stages of training, involving hunting or similar ordeals, which culminated in the impersonation of the Young God. Older male priests were established hunters and are represented as such. They were also in charge of sacrifices; for this reason, the Syrian axe and animal heads became emblematic of the office in the iconography. The priests were distinguished by the long Syrian robe, hairstyle, and sometimes beard. They also had other types of dress, like the cuirass, which was worn only on special occasions, such as harvest festivals. But their authority was also felt in the daily administration of the palaces and mansions.

The priestesses had different domains. Pouring of libations, taking part in processions, bringing flowers and other offerings to sanctuaries, and performing dances would have been common activities.⁸⁰

They also had a role to play in sacrifice. On the Hagia Triada sarcophagus, a priestess stands in front of the slaughtered animal, hands stretched forward, palms facing down (fig. 30). It is perhaps an act of consecration which marks the post-kill phase. On a set of seals, women are depicted carrying animals already dead.⁸¹ More important is the Knossos seal CMS II.3, 16, where a woman, most probably a priestess, is holding a crook, an instrument the use of which we do

not know, and a sword. This is ritual equipment, which has some connection with sacrifice for the following reason: the same set, sword and crook, is held by the younger man on the Chieftain's Cup (fig. 100). He heads a procession of youths carrying animal hides. It follows that the animals on the cup have been hunted or sacrificed and that the two instruments were used in this context. These instances show that priestesses were involved in sacrifice. Yet, it does not look like they did the killing themselves, since sacrificial instruments are not emblematically associated with them.

It is, of course, true that women in flounced skirts or goddesses are shown holding the double axe. But the latter is not an instrument of sacrifice; it is rather a symbol, the precise meaning of which is not entirely clear. What is evident is that it was set up to mark the sacred spot or placed between sacred horns.⁸²

By far the most important aspect of female priesthood was the impersonation of the goddess. We do not know how the women were chosen, whether the office was hereditary, or whether there was special education during which some girls distinguished themselves. It would not be too surprising if the major palaces and mansions served also as schools for the young girls of the nobility. The concept of the Oriental harem, denoting not concubines but collective womenfolk, may be applicable here. What else could be the iconographical message of the Grandstand fresco showing important women gathered together (see chapter 3)? A context of initiation for both young men and women of the nobility, in the course of which the best were chosen for impersonation, is likely.

Certain indications suggest that Minoan priesthood was a permanent profession and not a stage in the "career" of the nobility. In the ancient Orient pro-

fessional priesthood was hereditary and constituted a strong force. The close connection of sacerdotal personages and administration in Crete points to the Oriental model. Closer to Crete is the Mycenaean mainland, which has left us written testimony in the form of Linear B tablets. There the designation *hiercus* points to a profession.⁸³ I would think that the priesthood in palatial Crete formed a strong corporation from the ranks of which the priest-king and the goddess impersonator were chosen.

In the roles of the priesthood there were undoubtedly variations and complexities of which we are unaware. What seems reasonably certain is that priests were in charge of organizing festivals and that they took care of the adminis-

tration and economy of the district they were allotted.

The historical dimension must not be lost sight of. Toward the end of the Knossian Palatial era, from 1400 onward, there was a change in sacerdotal dress. The fringed Syrian robe did not disappear, but evolved into a long, sleeved robe with the seam in front, a good example of which we see on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus. This became a unisex garment,⁸⁴ like the hide skirt, which was retained and used alongside the long robe. Bearded figures virtually disappear. The era following the fall of the palaces also saw some changes in religious expression, and a general tendency toward blurring of distinctions made itself felt.

7

GODDESSES AND GODS

Goddesses

Origins

That a powerful goddess of nature was the chief deity of the Minoans was recognized already by Evans and has never been seriously questioned. More controversial is the issue of whether there were many goddesses or only one with several manifestations.¹ This problem, which will be addressed below, may never be satisfactorily resolved. What we must keep in mind, however, is that religion is not static: historical change entails transformations which affect religious expression. It is therefore necessary to start with the earliest examples of the goddess in the Prepalatial period, and trace the changes she underwent in the course of time.

From Prepalatial times only the goddess vessels testify to the early form of the female divinity. (figs. 15, 16, 26). Although most were found in burial contexts, one example comes from the settlement shrine of Myrtos (fig. 26). Note that these figures are small objects of utilitarian character, not monumental cult statues of the divinity. Still, they

give us invaluable clues as to how the Minoans of this period imagined their goddess.

Although the goddess vessels have no attributes, they are nevertheless expressive. They look like a mother holding a baby, only instead of a baby they hold a jug (figs. 16, 24, 26); some have perforated breasts for the flowing of liquid. It is clear therefore that the Minoans connected the goddess with sustenance through her ability to supply life-giving liquid.

The animal and bird figurines, found in substantial numbers in burial contexts, were perhaps thought to belong to the domain of the divinity. If that is so, she was a protectress of nature already in the Prepalatial period.

Differentiation During the Palatial Era

The issue of monotheism vs. polytheism aside, it is certain that with the emergence of large-scale cities and the establishment of the palaces, diversification and transformation of the divine personality of the goddess must have taken place. It is very likely that the pal-

ace, the abode of official religion, would have propagated official schemes of religious representations that were meant to be imposing. Without abandoning the aspect of fertility, the goddess (or goddesses) would now take on additional aspects.

Scholars rushed into identifying such specialized divinities as the mountain goddess.² While it is true that the rise of peak sanctuaries indicates that cult shifts away from cemeteries to other places in nature, the case for a female divinity worshiped exclusively on mountains is not strong. It rests solely on representations of a group of seal-impressions dated relatively late in the history of the palace of Knossos (circa 1400): a goddess flanked by lions (fig. 133). Although she is standing on top of a mountain, her appearance, her gesture, and the heraldic arrangement are so standardized that there is no reason to single this representation out as revealing anything special about the goddess or her abode. The mountain setting is not unique: male gods, too, can appear on mountaintops.

A second, even more popular divinity is the household goddess, whose characteristic animal is supposed to have been the snake. It was Evans who first spoke of a snake goddess as "the underworld form of the Great Minoan Goddess,"³ and the otherwise skeptical Nilsson concurred that "the cult of the goddess . . . often with snakes as her attribute, is a domestic cult carried on in houses and palaces."⁴

It is true, of course, that the pieces of Minoan art that one is not apt to forget are the snake goddesses from the palace of Knossos (figs. 140, 141). What is not often stressed is that the two faience figures are the *only* examples associated with snakes from the entire palace period;⁵ even in Prepalatial times, there is no snake goddess.⁶

A second prevalent assumption concerns the snake goddess. She was supposedly also the guardian of the household and the palace. Although Evans regarded snakes primarily as emblems of a chthonic divinity, he imparted to them a "friendly or domestic aspect."⁷ Snakes are protectors of the household in European folklore, agreed Nilsson.⁸ There is a dangerous equation here: the palace and household are made equivalent although they are separated by a huge social gulf. At best, one should have spoken of a palace divinity. More serious is the problem that there simply is no evidence of goddess figures from any Minoan private household in the Palatial period (see chapter 5). Nilsson cites the Postpalatial examples, disregarding the fact that they belong to a very different era. What the meaning of the Postpalatial snake figures is will be discussed in the last chapter. For these reasons I suggest that the Minoan household goddess is a modern myth.

It will be remembered that domestic cult, although it must have existed in some form, has left very few traces in the archaeological record. The identifiable shrines (in mansions or chieftains' houses) were not strictly private, but had an official and public character. The notion of the household goddess is hardly a helpful tool in understanding Minoan religion. It is in the realm of official cult and in the totality of representations that we must look for the manifestations of the goddess.

The Goddess in the Old Palace Period: Connection with Lilies

Evidence of goddess representations from the First Palace period is scarce.⁹ A few female figures with upraised arms from seals or seal-impressions are not very telling.¹⁰ More promising is a pottery set consisting of a bowl and a fruit-

stand from the first palace of Phaistos.¹¹ The schemes and the style in the two vases are similar: two dancing women flank the goddess.¹² On the stand (fig. 119) she has a human form, looms large, and has raised arms displaying lilies. On the bowl (fig. 120), however, she is represented as a semi-aniconic image; the body is a cone framed by loops.¹³ A flower is recognizable in the bottom right of the scene.¹⁴

The loops of the cult image perhaps represent a kind of costume.¹⁵

Now to the interpretation of this set of scenes. An important feature in both is the presence of lilies. On the stand the goddess announces spring by displaying the flower. On the bowl, the dance around the image takes place in the presence of a flower. Given that nothing is fortuitous or merely ornamental in this kind of simple art, the lily must have some significance. It is a typical spring flower, and can thus be best regarded as a seasonal determinative.¹⁶

Thus, the most significant change from the Prepalatial period is that the goddess is no longer holding a jug; she is visually connected with vegetation and a seasonal cycle. We discern here a dimension which was absent in her previous representations. It is certainly no accident that on another depiction from Phaistos, male adorants are shown approaching plants: vegetation can be associated with concrete ritual actions.¹⁷

New Palace Period: The Goddess and Vegetation

The New Palace period witnesses an explosion of representational art. It is now possible to isolate different categories. The goddess appears seated or standing; she is worshiped by human or animal adorants; she is represented in the countryside or close to her shrine. This artistic diversity reflects pictorial

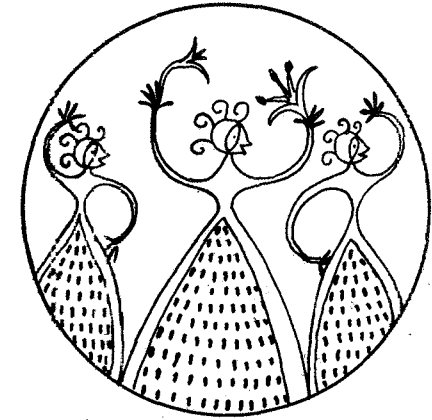


Fig. 119. Offering stand from the first palace of Phaistos showing goddess displaying lilies and flanked by votaries

categories rather than essential differences in the identity of the deities. In all cases we are entitled to speak of one or many goddesses of nature; female martial deities of the Near Eastern type seem to be lacking.¹⁸

The connection of the goddess with flowers and plants will be examined first, as it continues the Protopalatial tradition evident in the Phaistos objects.

A fresco from the mansion of Hagia Triada¹⁹ shows a goddess seated upon a platform, supervising a scene of flower gathering conducted by women. There are various plants on the painting, among which are featured lilies and crocuses. The landscape is populated by animals as well, of which the best known is a cat stalking a bird. The goddess is thus shown in a setting bursting with life, full of animals and vegetation. The impression is captured in the restoration by M. Cameron (fig. 121).

Paintings with similar landscape scenes exist also at Knossos; suffice it to



Fig. 120. Goddess bowl from Phaistos



Fig. 121. Fresco from Hagia Triada, showing goddess and attendants, as reconstructed by M. Cameron



Fig. 122. Fresco from Thera showing goddess receiving an offering of saffron and flanked by a monkey and a griffin. Slightly restored interpretation by N. Marinatos and L. Papageorgiou

mention the flower-gathering monkeys from the palace (fig. 53) and the House of the Frescoes (fig. 200).²⁰ Thus, although the divinity is not always present, the landscape is her domain.

A most important testimony comes from a Theran fresco. The goddess is seated on a tripartite platform receiving an offering of saffron collected by young girls (fig. 122).²¹ Mention has already been made in the previous chapter of her costume and face which are decorated with crocus flowers. Around her neck, she has a triple necklace with duck

and dragonfly pendants (fig. 112). Her attendants are a monkey and a griffin. The divinity thus incorporates several aspects of nature: aquatic and terrestrial animals, insects, and flowers.

On a seal of almost certainly Minoan origin (although found in the Peloponnese), a female figure is shown approaching an altar (fig. 123).²² The latter is topped with sacred horns, between which lilies are placed. The woman holds the flowers and appears to be smelling them. Although she is often identified as a worshiper, the artistic



Fig. 123. Seal depicting goddess smelling lilies

code suggests that she is a divinity. Had she been a worshiper, she would be bringing flowers to the altar; yet, what she is clearly doing is smelling them. She must be a goddess enjoying the fragrance of the flowers adorning her altar.

Lilies grow in a meadow on another cult scene depicted on the gold ring from Isopata, Crete, to be discussed more fully below. A seal-impression from Knossos shows a goddess holding a staff in a meadow with flowers (fig. 124); another shows just a hand offering a lily.²³ Frescoes from Amnisos and Thera have as their sole subject lily plants.²⁴ Lilies can be pendants on necklaces.²⁵

We can thus infer that the lily was not just a decorative motif, but that it had a symbolic content (compare with the similar function of papyrus and lotus in Egypt) and was closely related to the goddess.

It is not only flowers that the deity is associated with but trees as well. On several glyptic scenes to be discussed below, she is seated under a tree or appears in its immediate vicinity.

The Goddess and Her Animals

The goddess of nature has a special relationship with the animal world. Vari-



Fig. 124. Seal-impression from Knossos showing a goddess flanked by birds in a flowery meadow



Fig. 125. Seal showing goddess feeding a goat. Slightly reconstructed drawing

ous wild beasts and fabulous creatures, such as griffins, attend her or are nourished by her. A common type of representation is a seated goddess feeding or petting a goat, deer, or lion (figs. 125-127).²⁶ The relationship between divinity and animal is one of harmony—of affection, one could almost say.

Griffins are not fed (fabulous creatures hardly need nourishment) but sit peacefully by the goddess. On a gold ring

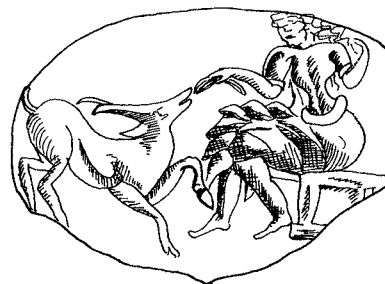


Fig. 126. Seal-impression from Chania showing goddess and animal



Fig. 128. Ring from Mycenae showing a goddess and a tethered griffin



Fig. 127. Seal from Armenoi showing goddess and animal



Fig. 129. Seal showing goddess and griffin

from Mycenae (fig. 128)²⁷ a seated divinity holds the leash of a tethered griffin. On a seal from a British private collection a standing griffin is entwined with the deity in a position of affectionate interplay (fig. 129).²⁸

Often the goddess rides the animals. On a cylinder seal from Hagia Pelagia, Crete, the griffin with the goddess on his back moves in a purely symbolic²⁹ landscape of papyrus plants; a male god follows, carrying another griffin (fig. 130). A similar riding goddess is shown on a seal-impression from Hagia Triada.³⁰ On a seal from Mycenae the goddess is seated on a griffin (fig. 131);

on another from Kasarma in the Peloponnese, she rides a lion which is juxtaposed with a griffin (fig. 132). The piece may well be of mainland manufacture, but such scenes are likely to have originated in Crete, finding acceptance because they fitted Mycenaean religious mentality.

The most common of all, however, is the heraldic scheme in which the goddess is flanked by her animal guardians, be they lions, griffins, birds, or fish. The flanking creatures are usually identical, but on the Theran fresco they are of different species: a monkey and a griffin (fig. 122).



Fig. 130. Cylinder seal from Hagia Pelagia, showing goddess riding a griffin and god carrying a griffin



Fig. 131. Seal from Mycer.æe showing a goddess riding a griffin

The antithetical arrangement is an imposing one, because symmetry emphasizes monumentality. It emits a message of power rather than interdependency or affection. Heraldic representations originated in the Orient,³¹ where they served a similar purpose of religious monumentalization. They were readily adopted also by the Mycenaeans via the Minoans, which explains why many of the gems with such schemes were found on the mainland.

Although not many Minoan murals with heraldic compositions have sur-



Fig. 132. Seal from Kasarma with a goddess riding a lion; a standing griffin to the left

vived, the fresco from the throne room at Knossos (fig. 43) and the one from Thera (fig. 122) confirm that it was in this medium that heraldic compositions would have been most effective. Most extant representations, however, come from seals and rings.

Lions and griffins are the most common animals flanking the divinity.³² This is natural since they are the most powerful creatures of the animal kingdom and were therefore deemed appropriate guardians.

A most powerful image is the aforementioned Mother of the Mountains (fig. 133).³³ The goddess stands on a mountaintop, with her arm outstretched in a gesture of command, displaying her staff of authority. She is flanked by lions, but the antithetical effect is enhanced by two elements in the borders of the scene: a shrine to the left, a male figure to the right. The latter is normally considered to be an adorant.³⁴

Many other glyptic scenes,³⁵ notably seal-impressions from Knossos,³⁶ depict a goddess between lions.

One group of scenes on seals merits special attention. The goddess is always frontally depicted and is flanked by either griffins or lions. She wears a triple-framed crown on her head, which she

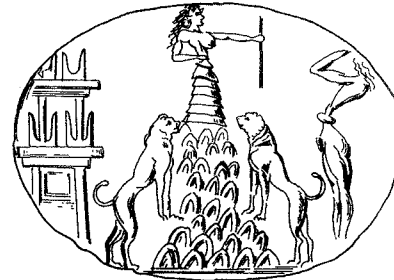


Fig. 133. Seal-impression from Knossos. A goddess on a mountain peak is flanked by lions with an adorant or male god to the right.



Fig. 134. Seal from Rhodes showing goddess flanked by griffins and supporting a double crown made from the horns of sacrificed bulls



Fig. 135. Seal from Routsis showing goddess holding two birds by the neck

supports with her raised arms (fig. 134). This crown, which has already been discussed in chapter 6 in connection with the apparel of priestesses, is constructed of horns of (sacrificed?) animals. Because the crown is a real object, it is certain that behind this scheme lies a ritual reality, that the prototype for the goddess image was furnished by a priestess who impersonated her. The fact that the griffins are on a higher level than the feet of the goddess may further suggest that the seals are reproducing a mural iconographical scheme, in which the standing priestess was flanked by painted griffins.³⁷ This accords especially well with the interpretation of the Knossos throne room painting as being a backdrop for a goddess impersonator. On one seal (CMS XIII, 39) the goddess with the horn crown appears on top of a stylized palm. The tree, which rather resembles a standard, rests on an incurved altar flanked by griffins. The representation is completely imaginary but even here there is a realistic detail: the incurved altar. Thus a scene of purely fantastic character is grounded in ritual; the altar is the focus of the epiphany.

Birds are commonly associated with the goddess. She is represented on a number of seals in an antithetical arrangement holding large water birds by the neck (fig. 135)³⁸ or by the legs (fig. 136).³⁹ It should be noted that these depictions are found on seals which come from the mainland or are in private European collections; therefore, we cannot be sure that the scheme is purely Minoan. The formula may be a Mycenaean adaptation of Minoan motifs under Near Eastern influence.

Species that appear in Minoan iconography are doves, eagles/hawks, and possibly crows.⁴⁰ Birds are not always shown together with the goddess but are sacred in their own right. Often they are atop structures with religious signif-

icance; examples are the shrine model from the loom-weight basement deposit, Knossos, and the Hagia Triada sarcophagus, where birds perch on double axes (figs. 27, 30). It is generally agreed that the bird is the embodiment of the divinity. I, on the other hand, am more inclined to believe that the bird is one of the sacred animals of the goddess, her celestial messenger.⁴¹

Most fascinating is another product of Minoan imagination: the bird goddess. She has the body of a woman, but the wings and head of a bird. In some cases, we can guess that the head belongs to a predatorial bird, a hawk or an eagle (fig. 137).⁴² The heraldic scheme is adopted here also. On a seal from Palaikastro, Crete (fig. 138), a bird goddess is flanked by dolphins; next to her is a plant between two water birds. On a seal-impression from Hagia Triada,⁴³ the bird-goddess is seated on a stool in a position reserved for normal deities when receiving offerings.

The significance of the bird figure can only be guessed at. Most probably, she represents the merging of the goddess and her attribute as in Egypt, where many gods are shown with the head of their sacred animal. Seal-impressions from Zakros have furnished further varieties of female figures with the heads of goats or deer.⁴⁴ It is unlikely, however, that these depictions are anything more than playful experimentation. The basic image of the deity remained anthropomorphic.

The marine world is represented by fish, notably dolphins. On the seal from Palaikastro, dolphins flank the bird figure. On another from Knossos the goddess holds a dolphin to her bosom (fig. 139).⁴⁵ On a seal-impression from Pylos (CMS I, 344), a goddess is flanked by dolphins. In the previous chapter the association priest/dolphin was noted (fig. 88b). Noteworthy are certain Minoan floors decorated with dolphin or marine



Fig. 136. Seal, now in the British Museum, showing goddess with a peaked cap holding two birds by their legs



Fig. 137. Seal from Crete with bird goddess

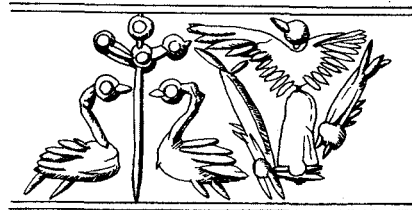


Fig. 138. Cylinder seal with birds flanking a plant and bird goddess flanked by dolphins



Fig. 139. Seal from Knossos with goddess holding a dolphin (?) to her bosom

motifs which are now thought to have belonged to shrines.⁴⁶

If birds represent the sky, and dolphins the sea, snakes allude to the subterranean realm. As we have seen above, only two pairs of goddess figurines with snakes⁴⁷ exist from the Neopalatial period; a few more are attested for the Postpalatial era (figs. 230, 231).

It should be noted that the Knossian faience snake goddesses (figs. 140, 141) are restored. One was headless with one arm missing; of the other only the upper half of the body was preserved.⁴⁸ Still, there can be no doubt that snakes were coiled around the body, extended arms, and tiara of the larger figure. The smaller female raises her arms, displaying snakes; on her head is a headdress with a feline quadruped.⁴⁹ If the restoration is correct, the second figure incorporates both snakes and other animals as her attributes. In these examples, the goddess handles the snakes without fear, showing that she is in control.

The snake is a potent religious symbol because it evokes different, and sometimes contradictory, associations. Although Freudians like to regard it as a phallic symbol, its significance is certainly much wider. It is certain that it

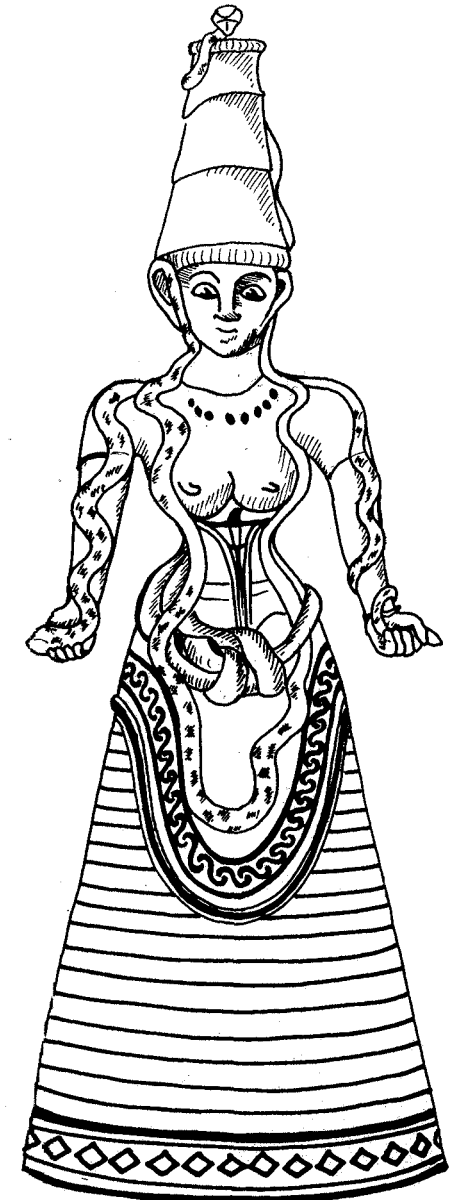


Fig. 140. Faience goddess with snakes from the temple repositories, Knossos



Fig. 141. Faience goddess with snakes from the temple repositories; Knossos

causes terror, which may be rooted in our biological history: all primates have an instinctive fear of snakes.⁵⁰

The connection of serpents with the earth and/or the underworld is another important component which may be coupled with the fact that serpents change skin and are dormant in the winter, appearing in the late spring

from the earth. Thus, a snake is a terrifying creature coming from the underworld, but it has at the same time positive connotations of renewal. It is no accident that in Egyptian religion serpents combine all these different functions: they can be scary guardians, creators, underworld guardians, mediums of renewal, monsters to be over-

come. In folklore, the snake has the ability to restore life to the dead.⁵¹

It will be remembered that Evans and, following him, Nilsson stressed the domestic aspect of the snake and deduced a house cult. Without wishing to completely deny the possibility that the snake could have been a guardian of the palace,⁵² it seems to me that it is a much more complex symbol combining contradictory associations. As for the snake goddess, she is just one variant of the "goddess with animals" type. It is for this reason that other creatures can appear as ornaments on her headdress.⁵³

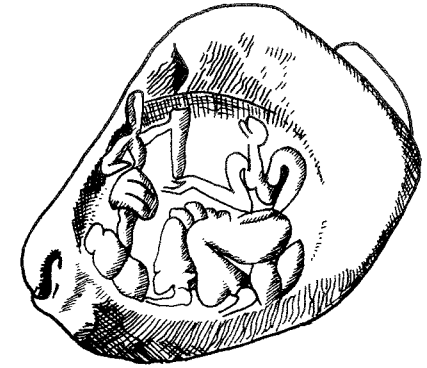


Fig. 142. Seal-impression from Hagia Triada showing an adorant and a seated goddess



Fig. 143. Gold ring from Mycenae showing goddess under a tree receiving floral offerings from female adorants

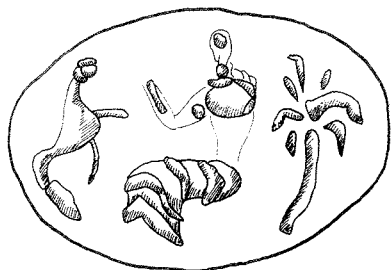


Fig. 144. Gold ring showing a goddess under a palm tree being worshiped by a monkey. Slightly restored drawing

The Offering Scheme: The Goddess and Worshipers

The offering scheme can be described as a pictorial formula in which worshipers bring offerings to a deity. It is one of the most common formulas in Egyptian and Near Eastern iconography, and, although it is less frequent in Minoan art, it appears there as well.

One major difference with Egypt and the Near East is that the Minoan goddess is never shown inside a shrine;⁵⁴ she manifests herself within a natural environment, seated under a tree or on a rock. Even when she sits on a man-made construction (often this is a wooden platform) this, too, is situated in a natural setting.

Another difference from Oriental iconography is that the Minoan goddess is not attended by priests dressed in the sacerdotal costume. Those that come close to her are either animal servants or worshipers mostly of the female sex.

On a seal-impression from Hagia Triada (fig. 142) a goddess⁵⁵ is seated on a rock. She is receiving with outstretched hand a conical rhyton from a standing person, whose sex is difficult to identify. Could it be a young girl with a shorter skirt? At any rate, it seems that an offer-



Fig. 145. Ring from Kalyria showing a goddess seated next to a column, worshiped by a female adorant and a monkey

ing ceremony is reflected in this scene. On a badly preserved seal-impression from Knossos⁵⁶ the goddess is seated on a stool which is situated on uneven ground, possibly a rocky terrain. She is bending forward to receive an offering given to her by an adorant whose gender is difficult to determine.

On a gold ring from Mycenae (fig. 143) the divinity is seated under a tree receiving floral offerings from a procession of women.⁵⁷ Here again the setting is nature; the epiphany is taking place under a tree and, judging from the lilies and crocuses offered, the time of the year can be defined as spring. The tree appears to be full of fruit; that, too, argues for a season of fertility. Note that the adorants are exclusively of the female sex.

Monkeys can be featured as adorants of the goddess, as on a ring of unknown provenance (fig. 144). There she sits under a palm tree with a monkey as a worshiper.⁵⁸ On another ring from Kalyria, near Phaistos,⁵⁹ an apparently naked goddess is seated in front of a column (fig. 145); a woman and a monkey are worshiping.

There are other rings, too, where the deity appears next to a tree or a tree shrine. These will be discussed further on in connection with epiphany; suffice it to stress the importance of the natural

setting with the tree as a marker of sacred space.

We now turn to a subcategory of the offering scheme where the goddess is shown in nature, but is seated on a man-made construction. This is the case on two frescoes, already referred to above, one from Hagia Triada (fig. 121), the other from Thera (fig. 122).

On the Hagia Triada painting, the platform on which the goddess is seated has an elevated center; it is most likely made of wood.⁶⁰ Although the scene is an outdoor one, a meadow with vegetation and animals, the construction is man-made. Its presence in this context indicates that the scene is a conflation of mythical and cultic components. The goddess represents a mythical level, but the flower gathering and the platform reflect a ritual actuality.

This fusion of the fantastic and the real is most apparent on the Theran fresco. Here the goddess is seated on the top level of a similar platform. Since it is better preserved, its tripartite form is very clear. The details of the design show that the beams were made of wood. The construction rests on four incurved altars. Real examples of the exact same shape have been found by J. and E. Sakellarakis at Archanes. Since there are exactly four of the Archanes incurved altars, it is more than likely that they were used as supports for precisely such a wooden platform.⁶¹ This confirms that the prototype for the throne of the goddess on the fresco from Thera was a real construction. There are good reasons to think that the flower gathering of the girls also reflects actual ritual process (see chapter 10). Yet the goddess herself is flanked by peculiar attendants: a monkey and a griffin. They act as symbolic barriers separating the divine level from the human.

The tripartite platform recurs on several representations from Crete itself.

On seal-impressions from Knossos and Zakros (made from similar rings), the goddess sits on just such a construction (fig. 146).⁶² On the latter, the right half of the platform is cut off so that only the left section is shown. The top level is surmounted by sacred horns and incorporates an incurved altar which functions here as an emblematic ornament. A woman worshiper is offering the deity a vase; presumably a libation is implied. Another woman is walking in the opposite direction, looking backward toward the goddess. A rock formation on the top projecting downward shows that the scene is taking place outdoors, since inverted landscapes in Minoan art indicate mountains at a distance. On a seal from Knossos (fig. 147) the elevated section on which the goddess sits is marked by a simple line. Lions flank the construction and rest their paws on it. On a seal-impression from Chania (fig. 148),⁶³ the worshiper is not offering but performing some acrobatic feat which involves balancing the tip of a sword on the palm.

In addition to Crete and Thera, the same iconographical scheme, with the same type of platform, can be traced on the mainland.⁶⁴ On an unpublished glyptic scene from Thebes, libations are offered to the goddess by two flanking demons who are in turn flanked by two griffins. The platform rests on incurved altars. This scene is surprisingly similar to the Theran fresco.

One cannot but conclude that this particular offering scheme originated on Crete and then spread to Thera and the mainland. More importantly, it was inspired from an actual Minoan performance. The platform on which the divinity is seated has such realistic details that it is inconceivable that it is a result of pure fantasy and symbolic imagery; the artists had something concrete to go by. It is usually stated that the iconography of the offering scheme in

the Ancient Orient was inspired by the cult image of gods enthroned in their shrines. In Crete it was apparently the living image of the divinity that acted as a prototype for the goddess; we can infer a performance involving goddess impersonation. The hypothesis that the goddess was represented by a high priestess, which has been suggested here on the basis of the architectural evidence of the throne room and balustrade shrines at Knossos, finds unexpected confirmation (see chapters 3, 4).

To summarize: the Minoan goddess is almost always depicted in an outdoor natural setting with flowers and trees, accompanied by birds or other animals. She always wears the flounced skirt; the breasts are bare, emphasizing her feminine appearance, but she is rarely depicted in the nude.⁶⁵ When her adorants are not animals, they are mostly women. It is evident, therefore, that the female divinity was never divorced from her natural habitat, nor was she conceived as a cult image residing in her temple. Moreover, she seems to have been primarily the protectress of her own sex. It is true that on the mountain goddess seal-impression (fig. 133) she is juxtaposed to a male, be he a mortal or a god. Still, this remains an exception, especially when we contrast the profusion of images showing a goddess with the king in the ancient Orient and later Classical Greece. In these cultures, goddesses, not only gods, protected the ruler. In Minoan Crete, however, role division among deities seems to have followed more clear-cut lines relating to sexual identity.

The Transportation of the Goddess

Not all goddesses were always present; some would arrive for their festival to herald a new season of renewal. This can be deduced from the iconography.



Fig. 146. Seal-impression from Knossos showing goddess seated on a tripartite construction, receiving offerings

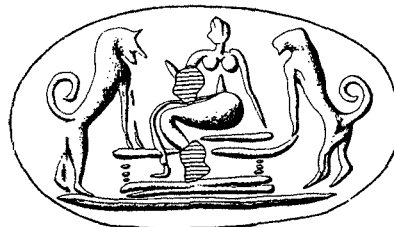


Fig. 147. Seal from Knossos showing goddess on a tripartite platform



Fig. 148. Seal-impression from Chania showing a goddess seated on a tripartite platform; in front of her a woman performs an acrobatic dance with a sword or mace



Fig. 149. Gold ring from Isopata depicting a cult scene taking place in a meadow with lilies



Fig. 150. Ring from Mochlos showing the arrival of a goddess and a tree in a boat. Shrine to the right.

On a ring from Isopata (fig. 149) the deity is represented as a hovering image descending from the sky (note that her hair is flying, which indicates rapid movement), while women adorants or

priestesses await her in a meadow abloom with lilies. Epiphany scenes will be examined in the next chapter. Yet, the arrival of the Minoan goddess from somewhere in the beyond is not always depicted as an epiphanic appearance witnessed by her votaries. Sometimes she uses a vehicle, like a boat or a chariot.

Two scenes from glyptic art depict the advent of the goddess in a boat. On a gold ring from Mochlos (fig. 150)⁶⁶ the boat has the shape of a dragon, which shows that it is a divine vehicle, not an ordinary ship. On this boat is a wooden construction (in my opinion, a planter) containing a tree. To the right is visible the left half of a shrine. Above are symbols: a rayed pillar, a chrysalis(?) and a double oval object with vegetation. These symbols⁶⁷ recur in other scenes

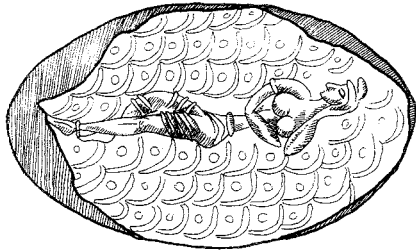


Fig. 151. Seal-impression from Knossos, with goddess reposing on the waves

and by a correlation of the contexts we can deduce that they are references to specific rituals connected with the tree shrine (see chapter 8). They indicate that the arrival of the goddess coincides with these rituals.

Most interesting is the shrine to the right. Note that it does not have a tree on top. The tree is instead shown in the boat: it arrives together with the goddess and will be placed on top of the shrine to mark her arrival.⁶⁸ The advent of the goddess and her tree thus coincide.

On a seal-impression from Hagia Triada,⁶⁹ a figure, whose sex is unidentifiable, is represented in a similar dragon boat which he or she is paddling. On the analogy of the previous representation, we might surmise that the figure is a goddess, but the question must remain open.

On a seal-impression from Knossos⁷⁰ a female is shown reposing on the waves (fig. 151).⁷¹ She seems to be asleep with one hand under her head as a pillow. The goddess is being transported by the waves arriving again from the sea.

It is worth remembering that in the great riverine civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia, the gods often arrive by boat, sailing on the river. In Crete, however, the deity comes from the sea. This is not unexpected in an island civiliza-



Fig. 152. Seal from Archanes with goddess and griffin

tion where the sea is both a divider from and a connection with the outside world. But the sea can also have a symbolic significance standing for the liminal zone through which one reaches the "beyond."

It seems that goddesses could also arrive by chariot as on the short side¹ of the Hagia Triada sarcophagus (fig. 31, 32), where they are invoked by a hide-clad priestess standing in front of a tree shrine (fig. 30).

On a seal-impression from Knossos⁷² the goddess is shown on a chariot drawn by two griffins. She is bending forward in an effort to control the animals whose feet do not touch the ground. Similarly, on a seal from the cemetery of Phourni, Archanes (fig. 152),⁷³ the goddess is shown behind a galloping griffin whose front legs are in the air, the hind ones touching the ground. The chariot is omitted here. We must have an abbreviated transportation; otherwise, the scene is nonsensical.

The means of transportation of the deity reflect contemporary realities. Ship processions during festivals, which are common in the Orient, can now be

identified on a Theran fresco.⁷⁴ As for chariots, they were apparently used in processions.

It is worth looking at another image although it comes from post-Minoan times: a goddess decorating a Greek burial pithos found at Knossos. The goddess, who has preserved some Minoan characteristics, stands on a platform with wheels. This means that her image is transportable, thus implying a withdrawal and return (fig. 153).

One or Many Goddesses?

It is time to take up the issue of polytheism versus monotheism that so concerned earlier scholars. On the one hand, one has to agree with Nilsson that polytheism is more in tune with the thinking of the times. On the other, Evans was undoubtedly correct when he wrote that although there may have been many goddesses, he at least could not distinguish them in the iconography.⁷⁵

The iconographical analysis here presented has confirmed Evans's contention: there is an essential unity in the symbolism which connects the goddess with nature in all its manifestations. Even though there is great diversification in the imagery of the Neopalatial period, as contrasted with earlier times, iconographical specialization of deities with distinct attributes such as we find in Egypt, the Near East, or Classical Greece is not evident.⁷⁶

And yet the picture is not as paradoxical as it may seem at first. A small digression on Pharaonic Egypt may throw some light on the issue.

It is a fact that Egyptian gods have some of the most complex manifestations and attributes to have evolved in any civilization. Each figure can appear in many different guises, animal and human. What complicates the picture even

more is that gods borrow each other's attributes, they even merge into one another in elaborate syncretistic combinations. The complexity of the iconography would have led to total confusion had it not been for the hieroglyphic inscriptions identifying each god by name. And yet this multiplicity and diversity is reducible to a few basic formulas. Similar deities are attracted to one another. For example, all principal underworld gods are also gods of fertility. Moreover they look similar: Ptah, Min, and Osiris are all wrapped in mummy cloth. Min and Osiris share the same symbol, the Djed Pillar. All are connected with vegetation.

The character of the main female deities revolves around fertility and motherhood. Hathor, Nut, Mut, and Isis have interchangeable attributes and manifestations. One must conclude that the concept is more important than specialized identity, and it is the concept that is conveyed by the image.

Reduction to a basic idea can also be discerned in the case of the Egyptian creator god. The Egyptians often invoked one single creator, but he was not always the same deity; his name varied depending on the locality and the circumstances.⁷⁷ Here, too, the concept is more important than the name. A kind of monotheism was thus developed even before the revolution of Akhenaton in the Amarna period. But it was a peculiar monotheism (or rather henotheism) which admitted the concept of One alongside that of the Many.

Let us now see how all this applies to Minoan religion. It seems to me that female polytheism almost certainly did exist and that the "goddess," as I have called her throughout, was several deities. Some scholars have deduced particular names for deities from the Linear A texts,⁷⁸ whereas the multiple goddess idols of Postpalatial times point to the

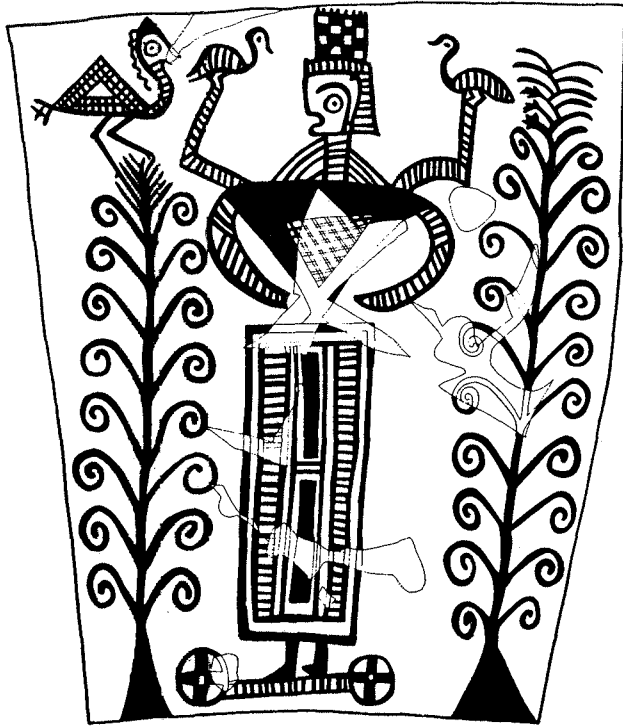


Fig. 153. Goddess on platform, from an early Greek pithos found in a tomb at Knossos

direction of polytheism (see chapter 11).

Yet, the paradox that multiple deities interchange and share attributes is ultimately not as disturbing as one might think. As in the case of Egypt, our understanding of the religious mentality can be enhanced if we see art as a meta-language which does not simply duplicate information retrievable by texts, but rather supplements it by pointing beyond it. Indeed, image may be a more primitive and therefore a more direct means of communication than written language. The iconography of the female Minoan deity points unambiguously to a concept of primary importance: a nur-

turing goddess of nature.⁷⁹ She portrays an important Minoan perception, the *essence* of the goddess, which can be established independently of the issue of the One or the Many.

Gods

Introduction

"A male god appears surprisingly seldom," wrote Nilsson.⁸⁰ This is not true. Despite the indisputable predominance of goddesses, male gods are neither rare nor unimportant. They are always

shown as possessing exceptional bodily strength and vigor and their domain is both the wilderness and the urban setting. Notable, however, is the relative rarity of bearded gods, who would indicate an older deity, a creator or a god of wisdom, a type that exists in Near Eastern and Egyptian religions. Martial deities with ostensibly military gear are also missing; the armed god seems rather to be a hunter.

One tendency has been to reduce the Minoan god to a mere consort of the goddess,⁸¹ another to identify him with the dying god Tamuz or his Greek version Adonis.⁸² Another yet was to see Minoan male gods as early versions of the later Greek ones.⁸³

The Minoan god has also been identified as a bull.⁸⁴ This perhaps is due to lingering evolutionist ideas about zoomorphism in so-called primitive religions. At any rate, Fr. Matz showed conclusively that bull worship is a misconception.⁸⁵ The bull is never shown as an object of adoration in Minoan iconography; on the contrary it is a hunted animal or a sacrificial victim.

It is not to be denied that some of the analogies with Oriental gods may be valid or that something of the divine personality of Minoan male gods may have been incorporated into later Greek deities.⁸⁶ But it is methodologically unsound to force models derived from other religions on the evidence. As in the case of the goddess(es), I shall try to remain true to the message which the language of the iconography alone can impart.

The Master of Animals

Most frequently, the god appears as a Master of Animals. This designation refers to an iconographical formula: a deity who holds two wild animals in a position of submission or subjugation. There

is no doubt that the type was taken over from the Near East, where it is attested at least as early as the third millennium BC.⁸⁷ In Crete the Master of Animals becomes common from the New Palace period onward. It will be remembered that this is precisely the time also when the male priest with the Syrian garment appears (see chapter 6). The indebtedness of Palatial Crete to the Near East seems evident here as well, and there is little doubt that the ruling class was actively seeking inspiration from abroad to express its ideology.

Still, the Minoan Master of Animals is distinctive. He rarely is bearded, as Mesopotamian types often are.⁸⁸ His appearance is fairly uniform. His hair is short and often curly. The chest is broad. He is shown frontally with both arms extended. He is dressed in a codpiece with a prominent belt around the waist.

The animals are taken from the Minoan repertoire. Lions, which are inspired by Near Eastern iconography, are common (figs. 154, 155; and 161),⁸⁹ but we can also find bulls (fig. 156), wild goats,⁹⁰ dogs (fig. 159), or a lion-griffin combination.⁹¹ Birds are attested only on a gold pendant from Aegina, which I am not sure is purely Minoan.⁹² Especially characteristic of Minoan mentality are asymmetrical compositions where the flanking animals belong to different species.

On the whole, the animals are not only wild but powerful; the idea behind the Master of Animals is that he is in control of nature. This mastery is intensified by symbolic elements. Two scenes add a dimension of hunting to the pictorial formula of the Master of Animals. The first is a seal from Thebes (fig. 157), where the god holds two lions by the tail; to the right a griffin is attacking a stag. The griffin thus acts as a predator, adding an aspect of hunting to the persona of the god.



Fig. 154. Seal with Master of Animals holding two lions

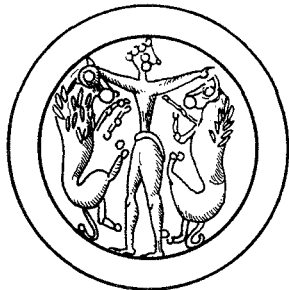


Fig. 155. Seal with Master of Animals holding lions.



Fig. 156. Seal with Master of Animals flanked by two upside-down bulls



Fig. 157. Seal from Thebes with Master of Animals flanked by lions and griffin attacking a deer



Fig. 158. Seal with Master of Animals flanked by lions who are attacking wild goats

The second is another seal now in the British Museum (fig. 158). The Master of Animals holds two lions in much the same position as in the previous example. A wild goat, standing on its hind legs, seems to be worshiping the god, but the lion with its gaping mouth right below the goat looks like it is about to devour its prey. A hierarchy of power is thus expressed in which the predator (lion) threatens its prey (goat), and yet the predator is in turn subdued by a superior master. The message is clear: although the lion is the king of animals, the god is the one who has ultimate control of nature.

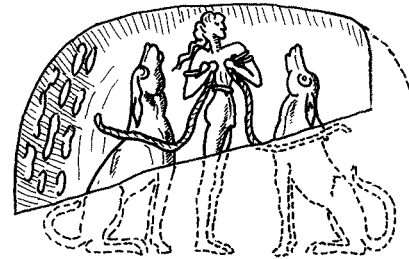


Fig. 159. Restored seal-impresion from Knossos with god flanked by two mastiffs



Fig. 160. Seal from Kydonia, showing god between sacred horns flanked by a winged goat and a demon



Fig. 161. Gem with Master of Animals flanked by lions

A variation of the Master of Animals depicts the god in a different gesture. He does not hold the beasts; instead his arms are bent, fists clenched close to the chest (figs. 159–161). Strangely enough, this gesture typifies also votaries, but the gesture of the god and his worshiper can apparently be identical.⁹³ This position of the hand results in an upright posture which is appropriate because of its formality.

The animals are not subdued forcefully by the god in this scheme; rather, they worship him of their own volition. On a gem from Kydonia in western Crete (fig. 160),⁹⁴ the god is standing between sacred horns which must be understood simply as a symbolic reference to sacred space. To his right is a demon holding a libation jug, to his left a winged wild goat standing on its hind legs.

A gem from Crete shows a figure in a similar posture flanked by lions (fig. 151).⁹⁵ Another depicts the god as being worshiped by flanking demons, whereas a seal-impresion from Knossos shows a youthful deity with long flowing locks holding two dogs(?) on a leash (fig. 159).⁹⁶

Representations of the male deity with one animal, although less frequent, are attested as well. On a seal-impresion from Hagia Triada (fig. 162) a possibly bearded god with a cap is depicted carrying a griffin.⁹⁷ On a seal from Crete and a seal-impresion from Pylos the god is worshiped by a monkey.⁹⁸ It will be remembered that all these creatures are servants of the goddess as well.

The Hunter with the Lion

Another guise of the male god is that of a hunter. His attributes are a spear and shield, a bow (figs. 163–166), or only a long staff which may be an inverted



Fig. 162. Seal-impression from Hagia Triada with a god carrying a griffin

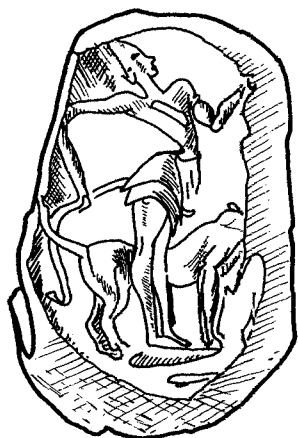


Fig. 163. Seal-impression from Hagia Triada with armed god and lion

spear (fig. 165).⁹⁹ He is wearing a kilt of varying length, not a mere codpiece. On his head he has a peaked cap. The latter makes him look tall and imposing; note that the same cap can be worn by goddesses (fig. 151). In all cases he is depicted together with a lion, an iconography which is reminiscent of the



Fig. 164. Seal-impression from Knossos with armed god and lion



Fig. 165. Seal-impression from Knossos with armed god accompanied by small lion

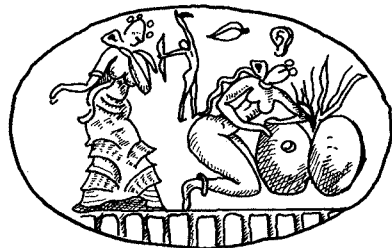


Fig. 166. Gold ring from Knossos showing cult scene; the armed god is shown as a hovering image in the center.



Fig. 167. Seal showing male figure with kilt and lion



Fig. 168. Seal showing two male figures and lion



Fig. 169. Seal showing a male figure and lion

Egyptian pharaoh, who is sometimes accompanied by a lion on his campaigns.¹⁰⁰

A related but distinct iconographical group consists of one or two male figures with a kilt or codpiece standing next to a large lion (figs. 167-169).¹⁰¹ The gestures are fairly uniform. One arm is bent, fist held close to the chest, while the other arm may be raised or touching the lion's mane. The lion often looks back to the male figure, but not always. The animal may be in the front plane or behind the male.

An important question is whether these figures can be unambiguously recognized as gods.¹⁰² In favor of such an identification is the iconographical affinity with the previous group. In addition, it is inconceivable that a mere mortal would appear next to a tame lion; only a god or a hero can aspire to such status. If that is the case, however, I would suggest that there is partial assimilation with the god. Thus, if these men are not gods themselves, they are their mortal representatives on earth. To put it differently, we may have here ideal representations of the young men of the highest social classes who aspire to the abilities of their god.

The Young God with the Staff

It is difficult to determine the age of the gods so far described, except that it is clear that they are depicted at their prime. The Master of Animals appears with a beard on very few occasions, whereas the hunter god has a long kilt and peaked cap, both of which are suggestive of status rather than youth.

There is one type of god, however, whose youth is unmistakable. He is characterized by a robust body; he is dressed in a short kilt or codpiece with phallus sheath. Most of all, he has long, flowing hair which distinguishes him from most of the previous figures. His

attribute is a long staff or spear which he holds with an extended arm.

Most impressive and elucidating of all representations is the newly discovered seal-impression from Chania made by a large ring (fig. 170). It is generally known as the Master Impression.¹⁰³ The scene depicts a town next to a rocky shore; the sea is at the very bottom of the impression. The city is rendered as a multiplicity of buildings which are symmetrically arranged on either side of a rock(?). Two large wooden gates ornamented with half-rosettes give access to the city. In the very center is something resembling a gate. Upon closer inspection, however, it reveals itself as a shrine portal or niche built on the rock (see chapter 8). On the central tower of the town stands the very imposing figure of the god. Around him float unidentifiable objects, symbols which may refer to offerings given to the deity.

The god is very muscular and stands in a position of tension. One arm is flexed, the other outstretched with the long staff or inverted spear in his hand. The position corresponds exactly to that of the goddess Mother of Mountains (fig. 133). He has long flowing hair and jewelry (a necklace and bracelets). His footwear consists of boots with leggings.

The god here is not represented as a hunter but as a protector of the town. The subject of the ring is his epiphany on top of the town and right above his shrine.

The same type of god is depicted on two gold rings, one from Knossos now in Oxford, the other now in Berlin. They will be discussed together because the two representations constitute a sequence.

On the Oxford ring (fig. 171)¹⁰⁴ the god is a small hovering figure occupying the center of the field. His gesture corresponds to the god on the Chania seal-impression. His hair is rendered as two strings of horizontal dots. We can thus



Fig. 170. The "Master Impression," from Chania, depicting Young God on top of a town

infer that it is windblown, a sign that he is in rapid motion, descending from the air. Note especially that the feet are pointing downward. His small size is therefore due to distance perspective, the only kind of perspective the Minoans knew (compare with the deity on the ring from Isopata in fig. 149).¹⁰⁵ To his right is a pillar; behind it is a building with a tree on top. The latter is a tree shrine with a portal or niche. To the left of the god is a woman votary whose fist is clenched and held close to the head. It is probably a gesture of salute or worship.¹⁰⁶

On the Berlin ring (fig. 172)¹⁰⁷ the god has a similar gesture and the same long hair, but he is no longer holding a staff. To his right is once more a tree shrine, to his left a female votary with flexed arms held close to the chest in an attitude of reverence. The scheme in both rings is

surprisingly similar. The main difference is that here the god occupies center stage and looms large because he is closer.

On these two rings we have the most dramatic instances that Minoan art has ever produced. The subject is the epiphany of the Young God to a votary shown in two distinct phases. Stage one is the appearance of the god in the sky (fig. 171), stage two his arrival next to his shrine (fig. 172). In the female we may possibly recognize the high priestess who is often depicted in the vicinity of tree shrines. The outstretched arm of the god toward this high priestess suggests that he is approaching her. Is a sacred marriage hinted at?

The votary greeting the god can also be male. On a ring from Pylos (fig. 173)¹⁰⁸ the deity makes his appearance on top of a mountain peak and is standing in front of a shrine. Behind the shrine, to the right is a mountain goat. To the left, facing the god, is a male votary. Note the reciprocal gesture of salutation by the clenched fist held close to the forehead between god and worshiper.

A god, identifiable as such by his outstretched arm and spear, is depicted on a seal from Naxos (fig. 174).¹⁰⁹ It is not clear whether he has long hair; he seems to be wearing a cap which may be due to a regional peculiarity. He stands in front of a palm and is receiving offerings and cult equipment which are shown above an offering table. The palm marks the sacredness of the space, because deities are commonly associated with this tree.¹¹⁰

In the Postpalatial period, crudely painted hovering armed gods appear also on clay coffins, possibly to reassure the dead of protection and regeneration.¹¹¹

The characteristics of the Young God can be summarized as follows. He has long hair and a slim but robust figure which is emphasized by his scanty clothing, consisting of a codpiece. He holds a



Fig. 171. Gold ring from Knossos, now in Oxford, showing the epiphany of the god as a hovering image next to a tree shrine

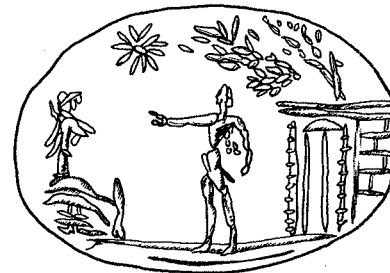


Fig. 172. Gold ring, now in Berlin, showing the epiphany of the god next to the tree shrine

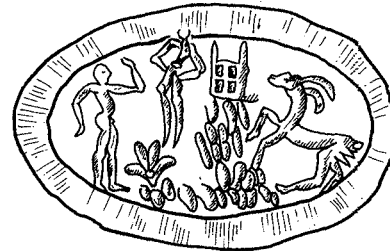


Fig. 173. Ring from Pylos showing the epiphany of a god near his mountaintop shrine; a male votary greets him.

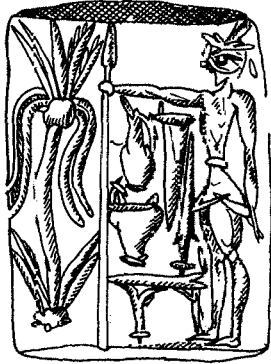


Fig. 174. Seal from Naxos showing god next to a palm tree receiving cultic equipment above an offering table

staff or spear and stretches his arm out in a gesture of command. It is precisely these features that the chieftain on the homonymous cup from Hagia Triada displays (fig. 100). I suggested in chapter 6 that if he is not a god,¹¹² he is a youth of high status impersonating or assuming the Young God's guise.¹¹³

We have seen in chapter 6 that the bearded priest is represented as a hunter and/or sacrificer. Here the assimilation with the male hunter god is obvious.

Their identities, however, remain distinct. The typical Minoan priest is bearded with a long robe, while the god is young and wears a codpiece or a kilt.

Although the representations of gods are fewer in number than those of goddesses, they are no less diversified. Like the goddesses, they fall into distinct iconographical types and have different domains. Since a god appears as a protector of the town on the Master Impression (fig. 170), we can conclude that male deities were associated not only with the wilderness, but with the towns and their institutions as well.

Like goddesses, gods have a multiplicity of animals as their companions, but the similarity stops there. While female divinities can be shown feeding or tending animals, the role of the male gods is to hunt wild beasts or to control them.¹¹⁴ This is best exemplified on the seal from Hagia Pelagia, (fig. 130). A goddess and a god are depicted together with griffins in a thicket of huge papyrus plants. The goddess is riding one griffin, but the other griffin, lifeless and utterly subdued, is carried by the god. The god's function is to control nature, not to nourish it.

8

SHRINES AND RITUALS

Minoan Epiphany and Its Significance

Epiphany implies vision, namely, the appearance of a deity to mortals. We have seen in the last chapter that both gods and goddesses reveal themselves to votaries. The most common type of epiphany is the offering scheme in which the deity receives gifts or libations. There is little doubt that this type of depiction is inspired by a cultic reality, namely, deposition of offerings at a sanctuary where the divinity is thought to reside or visit. As we have seen in the previous chapter, it is possible that a high priestess impersonating the goddess may have influenced the iconographical formula.

But there exists another type of epiphany also, unique to Minoan Crete, which can best be termed "visionary epiphany." This involves the confrontation of a single worshiper with the deity, who is most often represented as a small image descending from the sky.¹ It may be rightly asked why the small figures must be interpreted as descending from above and not simply as being at a distance. Two important indications support the former view. Firstly the hair

locks of the small figures are horizontal, blown by the air, thus indicating rapid movement. Secondly, on some figures at least, the feet point downward. This shows that they are not standing or walking but that they are in mid-air.

Discussed in the previous chapter were two rings, now in Oxford and Berlin, respectively, where the Young God manifests himself near a tree shrine (Figs. 171, 172). On the Oxford ring, the god was represented as a small hovering image in the sky. On the Berlin ring he had landed, standing close to the shrine. In both cases, the votaries who witnessed the epiphany were female, possibly high priestesses.

Other scenes show epiphanies near trees. The deity there either descends from the sky, or is situated next to the tree.

On a seal-impression from Zakros (fig. 175)² the tree is in the center; a goddess with upraised arms is seated to the right of the tree facing a female votary who is on the left side. The tree thus separates the divinity from the worshiper.

On a ring from Crete (fig. 176)³ the tree again occupies the center of the scene; a female votary can be seen to its

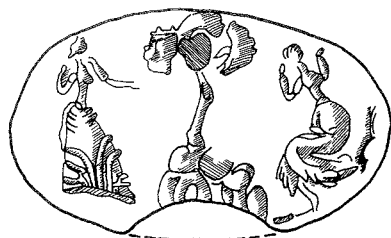


Fig. 175. Epiphany scene on seal-impression from Zakros



Fig. 177. Epiphany scene on seal-impression from Hagia Triada

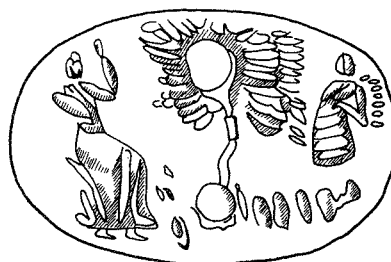


Fig. 176. Epiphany scene on ring from Crete

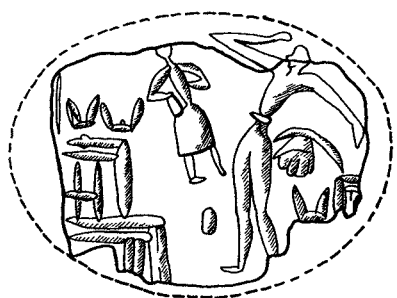


Fig. 178. Epiphany scene on seal-impression from Zakros. Slightly restored

left, and the deity is on the other side of the tree. As to how the deity can be identified, the following considerations play a role. On figure 176, the figure to the left of the tree is making a gesture which characterizes worshipers, whereas the gesture of the figure to the right of the tree is more typical of gods than of votaries. Long tresses, rendered as a series of dots, suggest long flowing hair for the deity. They could belong to either a young male god or a goddess. The long robe, however, is not compatible with the costume of the Young God; it is therefore likely that the figure is a goddess with an unusual costume.

On a seal-impression from Hagia Triada (fig. 177)⁴ the votary is on the left

and sees the goddess as a small hovering figure appearing in front of the tree. In all of the above representations, a tree marks the ritual space.

On a seal-impression from Zakros (fig. 178),⁵ the sacred space is defined by two shrines. The hovering deity (probably a goddess) is descending obliquely; a male votary greets her, as can be seen in my slightly reconstructed drawing. Behind him is a shrine surmounted by a plant.

Finally the gold ring from Isopata (fig. 179)⁶ depicts the hovering image of a goddess with flying tresses in the sky. Four women in a flowery meadow occupy most of the space of the scene. This is a special scenario in which the epiphany is not directly experienced by the



Fig. 179. Pharaoh making offerings to god, from temple of Seti I, Abydos

votaries: none sees the deity. The hovering image, therefore, may well be a *symbolic reference* to epiphany. In that case what we have here is depiction of a ritual in which priestesses (or a high priestess plus votaries) invoke the goddess, but the epiphany is not witnessed, only implied. This would explain the anomaly that several worshipers are present in contrast to all other scenes with visionary epiphany, where *only a single* votary is present.

Why was it that the Minoans, unlike other high civilizations around the Med-

iterranean basin, developed the visionary epiphany? Fr. Matz has made a series of observations which capture the essence of Minoan epiphany. He connects the astounding naturalism and mobility of the Minoan deities with the absence of cult images during the Palatial era.⁷ Because Minoan culture lacked cult images, states Matz, statues could not have influenced the appearance of the gods in art. In addition, since the Minoans did not confront the cult image daily to feed it or clothe it, as was the case in Egypt⁸ and the Near East,⁹ they were compelled to find alternative forms of contact with the divine.

It seems worthwhile to pursue the line of investigation which was opened by Matz but which has not had the impact it deserves. A brief look at the art of Egypt and the Near East may be fruitful.

In Egyptian *official* art of the New Kingdom, which coincides in part with the Minoan New Palace period, it is mostly the pharaoh or the priests who are depicted as the worshipers of the gods.¹⁰ Such representations (see, for example, fig. 179) belong to the offering scheme which has its equivalents in Minoan and Near Eastern art.

There exists also a third possibility, however, in which the pharaoh and a god are interlocked in a close embrace or another form of close contact (fig. 180).¹¹ This is a drastic departure from the offering scheme. By establishing such a special relationship with the god, the pharaoh displays his special status in society. In so far as contact with the god is personal, there seems to be an affinity with the Minoan votary who experiences an epiphany or encounters the god (compare the Berlin ring, fig. 172).¹² And yet, the embrace of the pharaoh and the god is a stylized, symbolic, pictorial formula, which represents neither the god's nor the king's point of view but a third person's objective perspec-

tive. On the contrary, the Minoan epiphanies can be termed subjective,¹³ because they represent the view of the votary: it is the *worshiper* who sees the divinity as a small figure in the distance. This is illusionary art which stresses perception even at the risk of distortion. It is fairly clear that the Minoan imagery, unlike the Egyptian, stresses subjective vision, rather than mere conceptual ideology.

In the art of the Near East, epiphany most frequently takes the guise of the offering scheme. The deity is seated,¹⁴ or stands on a base or on an animal.¹⁵ The ritual foci are mostly shrines, inside which the god is seated,¹⁶ but they can also be trees (fig. 181) in striking analogy with Minoan art.¹⁷ This is not to say that the idea of a vision of the god is unknown in Mesopotamian religious iconography. On an Akkadian seal-impression, a worshiper pours a libation to a goddess who is not inside a shrine, but stands on her sacred animal.¹⁸ On another Akkadian seal (fig. 182),¹⁹ the sun-god Shamash, holding a saw, is depicted on top of a mountain like the Minoan goddess (fig. 133). And yet naturalism is sacrificed on the Mesopotamian example: the god is framed by a gate. Although the latter is the gate of heaven, it is as though the vision were experienced through the open door of a temple. Thus, even when a visionary epiphany is implied, it is very unlike the Minoan subjective vision; a huge gulf separates the votary from the god. As H. Frankfort puts it: "Sometimes men are shown approaching this world of the gods; they bring gifts either as respectful familiars, or betraying the distance between human and divine. . . . The worshiper stands outside the space in which gods function."²⁰

This brief and undoubtedly superficial survey of Oriental comparanda is meant to show that the subjective viewpoint of the Minoan visionary epiphany is a re-

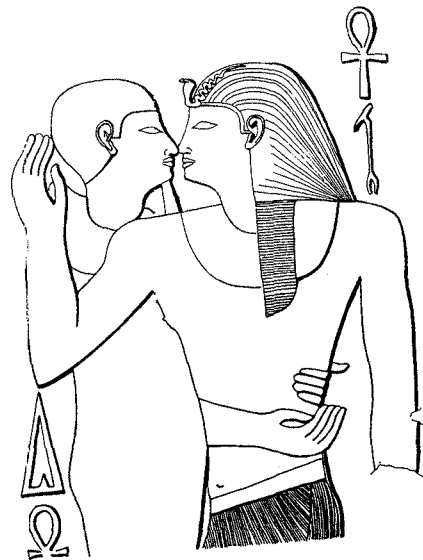


Fig. 180. Pharaoh Sesostri and god interlocked in embrace. Relief from Karnak temple

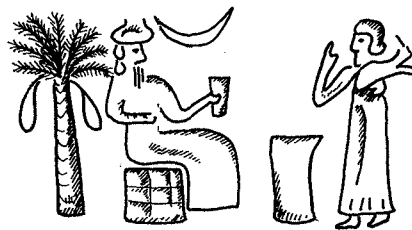


Fig. 181. Seal from Mesopotamia with scene of an epiphany; the god is seated under a tree

markable departure from the established traditions of the Orient. It goes a long way to explain the almost unique invention of distance perspective in Aegean art: it was necessitated by a kind of ritual which placed the votary in the center of the experience.



Fig. 182. Akkadian seal with epiphany scene

This does not mean that Minoan religion was open to all.²¹ Rather the contrary: there are good reasons to think that it was tightly controlled by a sacerdotal elite which was also the ruling class. It was presumably from their ranks that the high priests and priestesses were chosen.

A performed or enacted epiphany has been repeatedly referred to here. The primary pieces of evidence are the tripartite platforms which consistently appear in the iconography (see chapter 7).²² God impersonation was not a uniquely Minoan feature, of course.²³ What makes Minoan ritual different is that the impersonation was probably the main means to make the goddess manifest to the worshipers. We might then say that a Minoan would have been subjected to visionary conditioning.

In ritual enactment a performance is easy to imagine, but the same cannot be said about the visionary epiphany in which the worshiper sees the deity as a vision in the distance. What was the cultic reality behind it? We may suspect a combination of psychological suggestion and manipulation coupled with the cynical calculation that whoever had the experience would be singled out as privileged. I suspect that they were not or-

dinary worshipers who saw the deity, but only the elite and high priesthood. It is, at any rate, no accident that the epiphany is never represented as a collective vision; it seems to have been a solitary affair.²⁴ Special preparation, fasting, seclusion, even drugs may have been used. But I would suggest that once the high priestess or priest claimed to have had the vision, this would have been taken as a sign of charisma which conferred specialized status.²⁵ An attractive possibility is that the claimers of the vision would have acquired a golden ring. On it there would have been an engraving alluding to their experience, and it is precisely such rings that have served as a starting point for our discussion here.

Ritual Foci for the Epiphany

As we have seen, the place where deities appear is not random but is a clearly defined space designated by specific iconographical signs.²⁶ I am using the word *sign* deliberately here to suggest that we must not necessarily look for realistic structures in the iconography. Although undoubtedly inspired by contemporary buildings, the iconograph-

ical formulas for sacred space have an artistic autonomy. Signs for sacred space are columns, trees, and tree shrines.

Columns

Deities are often shown next to a column or shaft: on a ring from Phaistos (fig. 145) a goddess is seated next to a column; on a ring from Knossos (fig. 171) a male god is descending next to a pillar, his motion being emphasized by the vertical shaft rising behind him.

Various explanations have been given concerning the significance of columns. Some have seen them as aniconic images of gods,²⁷ an explanation compatible with beliefs about primitive religious mentality. Others have denied any sanctity.²⁸ None of these theories hit the truth. Since gods and columns appear together, it is not possible that the latter are aniconic images of the former; yet one cannot deny their sacredness either. It is best, therefore, to see columns as sacred monuments (*kultmale*),²⁹ as markers designating the spot where the divinity may appear.³⁰

Columns are also used more abstractly in the iconography, as elements in the Minoan religious pictorial vocabulary. For example, they are in the center of niches of shrines, such as the one on the gold foil from Mycenae (fig. 183),³¹ or on frescoes with sacred architecture from Knossos.³² In some representations, columns stand on top of incurved altars³³ or between sacred horns as seen in figure 183;³⁴ they may have double axes attached to them. Often they are flanked by animals.³⁵ In all these instances, it is quite clear that the nature of the depictions is purely conceptual, and that there is no attempt to render any real architecture. Emphasis is given to the centrality of the column, be it by a heraldic arrangement, by position within the

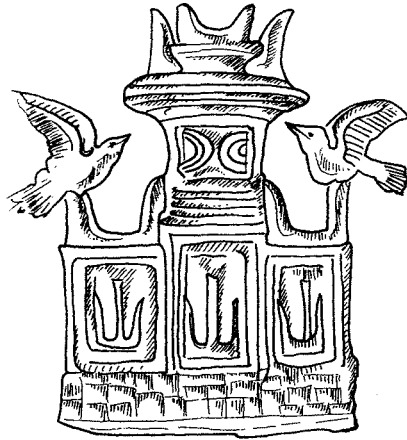


Fig. 183. Gold foil shrine from Mycenae

niche of the shrine, or by placement between horns. Note that in the pictorial code columns are almost interchangeable with divinities, and it is partly for this reason that Evans considered them to be aniconic images of gods. The interchangeability, however, is due to the function of the column as a sacred marker. It is not in itself the deity, but it tells one where the deity might appear.³⁶

As to how columns got their symbolic significance, we might only speculate. Perhaps it was their key function as structural supports which elevated them to such status. Or it may be that a free-standing column makes an imposing territorial feature. Finally, there is the possibility that they stand for abbreviated sanctuaries.

Trees

As we have seen before, goddesses are depicted seated under trees (figs. 143, 144) receiving offerings. The tree sometimes separates the seated goddess from the worshiper (figs. 175, 176) or it can be the ritual focus where the hovering im-

age appears (fig. 177). Male gods also are connected with trees, but they are not seated under them (fig. 174), unlike their Mesopotamian counterparts (fig. 181). Note that the male dead on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus is standing behind a tree (fig. 27). Thus, like the column, the tree is a marker of a sacred place, sometimes designating the spot for the epiphany of the gods.

The tree species depicted in Minoan iconography vary, but the palm seems to have been special, possibly under Near Eastern and Egyptian influence.³⁷

Not only the Minoans, but the civilizations of the Ancient Orient as well, imparted a certain holiness to trees, and regarded them as a source of life and regeneration. Important in this context is the Near Eastern Tree of Life³⁸ and the connection of the fertility goddess Ishtar with the Huluppu tree.³⁹ But Egypt, too, has parallels to offer. A tree goddess, often identified with Mut, resides in the sycamore tree. She is most prominent in funerary art, where she sustains the dead with the water of life and ensures their revitalization.⁴⁰ None of this points to tree worship, however.⁴¹ Behind the sacralization of the tree lies the recognition that it is important for the existence of man.⁴² It is permanently fixed in one place and yet it is subject to seasonal transformations. Moreover, not unlike the column, it is a natural territorial marker.

Shrines, Tree Shrines, and Related Rituals

Often the epiphany of the god or goddess takes place in front of what I have repeatedly referred to as a shrine. It is time now to discuss the structures that are so named.

Let us first explore the iconographical type "shrine." One major difficulty is that what we designate as shrines are buildings with considerable variation. Characteristic elements are (a) sacred horns on top, (b) a column within a niche, (c) a central niche or false door, (d) a tripartite form, and (e) a tree on top.

These features are not always present. Normally one will suffice to define the building as sacred, but often they co-exist in a variety of combinations. The size can vary. The translation of three-dimensional architecture into two-dimensional art does not happen automatically, nor without distortion. Suffice it to mention here the transformation of architectural form that takes place in the rendering of buildings on Greek vases⁴³ or Medieval paintings. It seems then, that although the iconographical types must reflect real architecture, no single actual standardized architectural unit is reproduced; rather, each unit may represent a conflation of characteristics such as make up the iconographical vocabulary of sacred architecture.

A common type of shrine, depicted mostly on rings and seal-stones, is a stone building surmounted by a tree or sacred horns. Most important is the fact that it is small compared to humans. Although the proportions are not always naturalistic in Minoan art, especially when it comes to seal-engraving, they are not random. On the contrary, they reflect significant relationships. If, for example, there exists a ground line at the bottom of the scene, and both the shrine and the human stand on this ground line, the size of the human figures relative to the shrine should be revealing. When humans in such scenes are consistently taller than the shrines, I take this to mean that the shrines were actually smaller.

Different rules apply when the spa-

tial setting is supposed to be three-dimensional—in other words, when depth is implied.

If the stone shrines are smaller than humans, I would like to suggest that they were not designed for interior use;⁴⁴ they were not meant to be entered, but functioned simply as facades.⁴⁵ This hypothesis finds support on many scenes of glyptic art (figs. 171, 172) and notably on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus (fig. 30). In all cases, action takes place on the *outside*, sometimes on an altar placed in front of the shrine facade.

Let us now turn to a most important feature that characterizes many, but not all, shrines: the center of the facade is often taken up by a niche (figs. 85; 171, 172, 183, etc.). The niche is thus a crucial feature of shrines. What was its purpose?

I believe that it is a false door for communication with the divine. The idea of a false door was possibly derived from Egyptian sacred and funerary architecture. The role of niches or false doors in Egyptian tombs is well known: they were the *loci* through which the dead were thought to communicate with the living. Niches are striking features already in the facade-shrines in the mortuary complex of Djozer at Sakkara in the third millennium BC.⁴⁶ Although the complex dates to a much earlier period than our Neopalatial shrines, it is not methodologically unsound to postulate a connection. The emphasis on the facade in Egyptian sacred architecture persisted even during the New Kingdom. In the Amarna period, for example, house altars had the shape of temple facades.⁴⁷

Naturally, the Minoan shrine niche is not a copy, but an adaptation of Egyptian architectural concepts in a new context. Specifically, it may have been funerary architecture that acted as an in-

spiration. If epiphany was as important for the Minoan worshiper as the numerous examples in art suggest, there would have been a need for a locus where communication with the deity could occur.

That the niches or false doors are the most important features of a shrine can be further argued on the following grounds. Firstly, they stand out through special decoration. The shrine niches on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus (fig. 30), the Zakros rhyton (fig. 85) and on a Theran fresco (fig. 214), all have a spiral decoration. On a clay model shrine in the shape of sacred horns from the peak sanctuary of Petsofas in eastern Crete, the central niche receives emphasis by being rendered in double relief and through an extra pair of horns above it, as in figure 86.⁴⁸

Secondly, niches are emphasized by means of visual tricks in ritual scenes. It is certainly no accident that the central niche of shrines coincides with the axis on which the deity or his/her sacred object appears. On the Zakros rhyton the central axis of the picture joins together the incurved altar, the niche, and the balylic rock-like object on top of the shrine. The latter is flanked by wild goats and seems to stand for the divinity. Thus, the symbol referring to the deity is *right above the niche*. More revealing is the Master Impression sealing from Chania with the depiction of the young god above the town (fig. 170). Below him, built on a rock, is a shrine with a niche.⁴⁹ That the epiphany of the god takes place on the *axis of the niche* is hardly fortuitous. Thus, niches on the facade of Neopalatial shrines designated the place where contact with the deity was thought to occur.

It remains to explore another important feature which sometimes is associated with shrines: a tree on top. This has

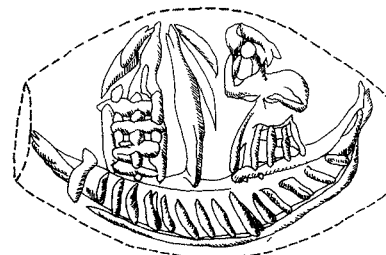


Fig. 184. Seal from Makrigialos showing the transportation of a palm tree

caused confusion, because the tree has been thought to be inside an enclosure. I shall argue that the tree is an additive element, an independent unit which could be placed atop the shrine or be removed as the occasion demanded.

Three observations are pertinent here. The first is that shrines can be depicted without trees on top (fig. 150).⁵⁰ The second is that trees can be transported in a wooden construction inside a boat (figs. 150, 184). The third is that the tree on top of the shrine is often, although not always, placed inside a wooden planter (Figs. 150, 184).⁵¹

Building on these observations, I have suggested elsewhere that the tree was transported in a boat, within a planter or pot, and was placed on top of the shrine on certain festival occasions.⁵² In other words, the shrine was a permanent construction, but it was empty for most of the year. On special ritual occasions, such as, we may surmise, the divinity's appearance, the tree would be ritually transported and placed on top of the shrine. It was a visual cue signifying the arrival of the god and his/her manifestation to the populace. This hypothesis finds support in the Makrigialos seal showing a palm being transported in a boat (fig. 184), but it is even more clearly

illustrated on the Mochlos ring, where both the divinity and the tree arrive together (fig. 150). Note that the shrine to the right of the scene has no tree on top: the goddess brings it herself.⁵³

An important Minoan ritual may thus be put together, piece by piece, through the analysis of shrine representations. Yet, when I ventured this hypothesis I was myself disturbed by the idea of tree transportation in a planter or pot.⁵⁴ Was this a modern idea inspired by the potted plants in the balconies and living rooms of contemporary apartments?

It was encouraging to discover a confirmation of the idea of tree transportation in a Near Eastern text and in Egyptian iconography. The transportation of the tree in connection with the fertility goddess Innana is attested in a passage from the Gilgamesh epic. The Huluppu tree was carried by the waters of Euphrates river. Then the goddess saw it. "Innana took the tree in her hand and brought it to the city of Erech, where she planted it in her fruitful garden."⁵⁵ This text is surprisingly congruent with the scene on the Mochlos ring.

In Egypt also tree transportation is attested. The god Min is normally depicted with one or more stylized trees growing from a wooden planter placed behind him (fig. 185).⁵⁶ This tree was carried in processions accompanying the cult statue of the god, as at the mortuary temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu (fig. 186).⁵⁷

The close association between the arrival of the deity and a tree is also attested in myths and rituals of Classical Greece; it is thus a broad phenomenon, the significance of which has been elucidated by W. Burkert.⁵⁸ The arrival of the tree coincides with the arrival of the deity to announce a period of renewal, prosperity, or fertility. The contemporary equivalent is the Christmas tree:

transported into the city from the forest. it marks the birth of Christ and the beginning of a season of increasing light.



Fig. 185. The god Min with trees in a wooden construction behind him. From the Middle Kingdom chapel of Sesostris at Karnak

High Priestesses in Front of Shrines

We shall now look at a cluster of representations which take place in front of shrines or other cult monuments. The protagonist is always a female, who, I shall argue, is a high priestess.

In theory, it is difficult to differentiate between goddess and priestess in art, because the latter assumes the visual characteristics of the divinity. It is no accident that scholars have been divided in their opinions over these females, debating whether a mortal or a divinity is meant.⁵⁹ Still, there are criteria that allow us to make a distinction.

One clue is that although the high priestess is differentiated by position, gestures, and size from ordinary worshippers, she does not deviate enough from mortals to warrant the characterization "goddess." A second is the ges-

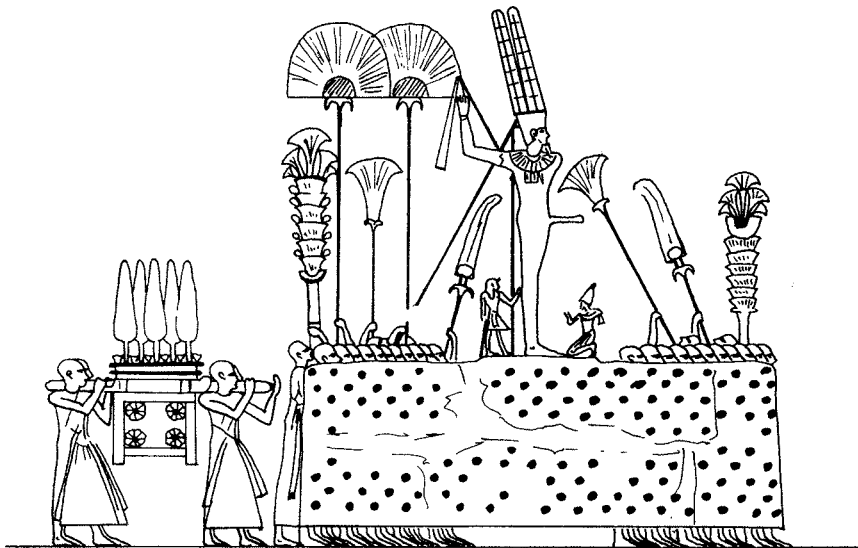


Fig. 186. A procession from the festival of Min; tree is transported behind the cult image of the god

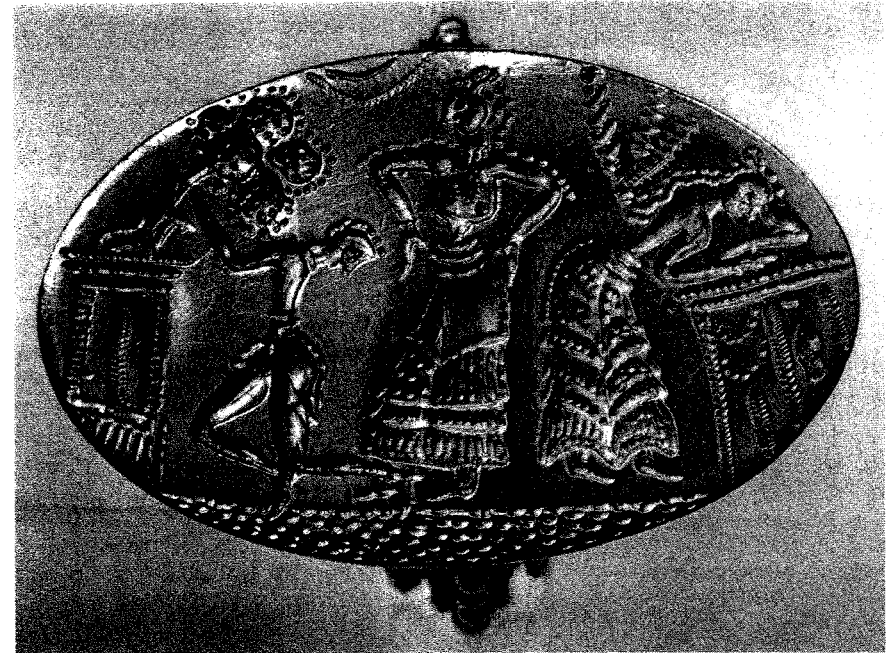


Fig. 187. Gold ring from Mycenae showing a tree-shaking ritual on the left; on the right a woman bending over a table; high priestess in the center

ture, which is fairly uniform: one arm is bent, and the other hangs loose or is extended to the side (figs. 188–92). This gesture is not attested for goddesses otherwise (see chapter 8). A less common variant is when both hands touch the hips (figs. 187, 194). I do not know the significance of the gestures, but it is certain that the specialized pictorial formula is what enabled the Minoan viewer to identify the figures.

The representations fall into three distinct groups. With very few exceptions, however, they have one element in common: the spatial setting is marked by a shrine with a tree on top of it.⁶⁰ It may also be noted that many of the scenes are engraved on gold rings of the highest quality. Such rings could have been in the possession of an elite only.

In the first group, the high priestess is always in the center. On a gold ring found at Mycenae (fig. 187), the central female figure rests her hands on her hips;⁶¹ a woman is bending over a table to the right; to the left, a man is shaking a tree placed on top of the tree shrine. On a gold ring from Archanes (fig. 188)⁶² the central woman is flanked by two men who are engaged in activities similar to the previous scene: one is bending over an object (pithos?), and the other is shaking the tree on top of the shrine. The gesture of the priestess is different here: one arm hangs down, while the other is bent and upraised. On another gold ring of Minoan origin, found at Vapheio on the mainland (fig. 189),⁶³ the central female has a gesture similar to the one on the previous ring,



Fig. 188. Gold ring from Archanes, Crete, depicting ritual in the vicinity of a tree shrine; high priestess in the center



Fig. 189. Gold ring from Vapheio, Laconia, depicting ritual in the vicinity of a tree growing from a pithos; high priestess in the center; a shield with a garment to the right

except that one arm is stretched out horizontally; to her left a man is shaking a tree; to the right is a shield with a garment on top. In all three cases we have the same scheme: a female in the center and participants in the margins of the field who are bending over an object or shaking the tree on the tree shrine.

The ritual depicted in the above scheme most likely involved two phases, which are visually condensed in the

same scene. Each phase is enacted by one of the participants. During one there prevailed a mood of aggression, even exaltation. The tree was bent out of shape and perhaps even destroyed. During the other phase, the participants bent over a pithos, an oval stone, or even a table. The body language in the iconography suggests a mood of dejection and depression. This ritual cannot be further discussed here. Suffice it to say

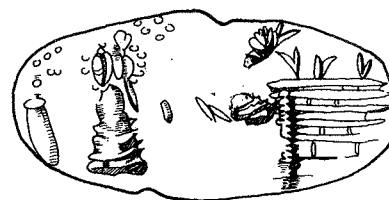


Fig. 190. Ring from Crete depicting ritual and presiding high priestess; Young God in the background

that a tree cult has been deduced: once more, ideas about vegetation cult influenced interpretation.⁶⁴

In my view, neither tree nor baetylic worship is depicted in these scenes. In no case is the tree venerated. What is more likely is that we have initiation rites involving psychological manipulation of the participants who experienced contrasting moods by handling the tree. We can only speculate about what the essence of the cult was. I would think that the desired outcome was a new identity for the participants, perhaps even greater insights into the mysteries of life. It is likely that the whole procedure climaxed in the vision of a deity. Compare the above with a very similar scene on a ring now in Oxford.⁶⁵ A high priestess presides over the usual ritual. A hovering image of a young god with a bow can be seen in the center of the field (fig. 190).

Let us now return to the role of the high priestess. It has been noted that the active but marginal participants are clearly differentiated from the female in the center. She is upright; her gesture is commanding. Yet she does not directly participate in the action. She is not significantly larger than the humans, nor are the latter in awe of her. It seems

that she controls and directs the ritual, perhaps acting as a stand-in for the goddess.

We now move to the second group, illustrated on a ring and two seal-impressions on Crete. The figure that we have identified as a priestess appears again here, recognizable by her gesture. She is alone next to the tree shrine (figs. 191-93).⁶⁶ But what is she doing there?⁶⁷ A clue is given by the cult paraphernalia: the oval object (pithos or storage jar) to the left on figure 191 and the double oval stone on figure 193. These are objects that occur in scenes of the tree-shaking ritual previously discussed. We can

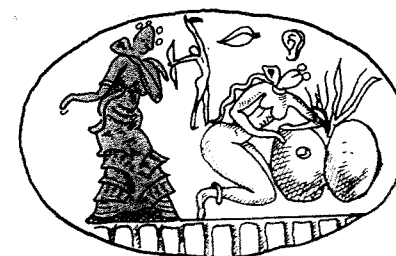


Fig. 191. Bronze ring from Knossos showing high priestess next to tree shrine. Slightly restored drawing

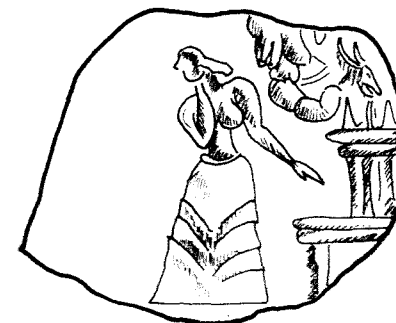


Fig. 192. Seal-impression from Chania with high priestess next to tree shrine

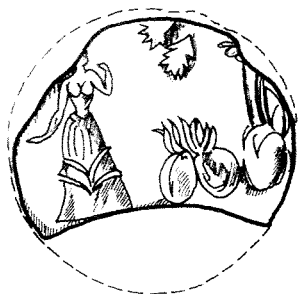


Fig. 193. Seal-impression from Hagia Triada showing high priestess next to a double oval stone behind which a plant can be discerned; on the right, the left edge of a shrine

therefore establish a connection between the two groups; what is depicted here is perhaps a stage of the tree-shaking ritual. Is the priestess's solitary appearance to be understood in connection with the preparations or the aftermath? At any rate, she seems to be a crucial protagonist in this rite.

The final group is very homogeneous. It is shown on a bronze ring from Knossos, seal-stones from Crete and the mainland, and a seal-impression from Hagia Triada (fig. 194).⁶⁸ Three females are shown in all cases, the central one being much larger than those flanking her. The central woman has her hands on her hips, a gesture identical to that of the central figure on the Mycenaean ring (fig. 187). This gesture, as well as the presence of a tree shrine, establishes a link with the previous two groups.⁶⁹ We are once again dealing with a high priestess. Who the smaller flanking figures are is difficult to tell. Perhaps they are younger novices, instructed by the high priestess into the secrets of the cult. If that is so, this scheme is the equivalent of the representations of male priests juxtaposed to young boys (see chapter 6).

In summary: the iconographical correlation of various types of scenes on rings

and seals has shown that the shrine, with or without a tree on top, was a place where rituals of a most important and perhaps even mystical character took place. One of these rituals involved the shaking of a tree (perhaps even its destruction) and the bending or kneeling over a stone or a pithos (figs. 187-90). Another, and probably more important experience was the very epiphany of the deity (figs. 170-73). In many of these activities, the presence of a high priestess can be inferred. When this observation is coupled with the fact that most scenes were engraved on precious rings, it is tempting to conclude that the rings had an emblematic character emphasizing the privileged status of the high priestess.

Sacred Marriage

In my view it is likely, *a priori*, that there was a divine union (*hieros gamos*) between the Minoan god(s) and goddess(es), not only because it is natural to project human sexuality onto the gods, but because such beliefs were widespread in the neighboring civilizations of Egypt and the Near East with Ishtar/Dumuzi and Isis/Osiris as the main



Fig. 194. Seal-impression from Hagia Triada representing high priestess flanked by attendants next to a tree shrine

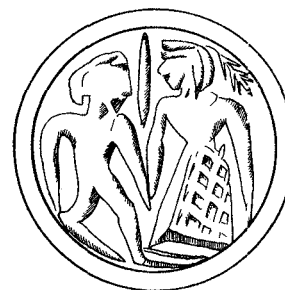


Fig. 195. Seal-impression from Phaistos; sacred marriage scene?

protagonists. For these reasons several scholars have assumed *hieros gamos* for Minoan Crete, using as models either Oriental or Greek beliefs of later times.⁷⁰ Here we must be cautious. Despite the conceptual and ritual affinities that existed between Minoan Crete and the Orient, there were differences and nuances which could be obscured by the imposition of a model derived from a different culture.

Rather than imposing ideas, it is safer to start with an internal analysis, namely, examination of iconographical schemata which could possibly refer to sacred marriage. It should be kept in mind that sacred marriage can refer not only to the union of god-goddess, but to the ritual enactment between priest-priestess, as well.

No explicit reference to sexual union exists in the iconography of Minoan Crete. Ithyphallic figures are rare (remember, however, that one type of male costume has a pronounced phallus sheath); the very few dubious examples may be very late. The task is thus made more difficult. Still, there are some clues that can be used as guidelines. The first is an observation made in chapter 7. In the offering scheme, the goddess receives gifts mostly from female worshippers; consequently, when a male is

depicted together with the goddess it is at least reasonable to ask the question whether some sexual intimation is hinted at. The second clue has to do with gestures or body language: the holding of hands or the moving of the male partner toward the female with his arms stretched out is definite proof of interaction and can plausibly be interpreted as courtship.

From the First Palace period comes a seal-impression depicting a seemingly naked man holding hands with a woman. Behind the latter's head there is a branch (fig. 195).⁷¹ Between the figures is an unidentifiable object. Perhaps it is a sword, an attribute of the male. The man seems to be moving toward her while she stands still. This purposeful approach of the man suggests interaction, if not amorous intentions. Although it cannot be securely stated that the couple is divine rather than human, it is more likely that a sacred rather than an ordinary marriage (in itself too common an event) would be the subject of a representation on a seal. In addition, the inclusion of the branch can hardly be accidental and may be a sign associating the union with a vegetation festival.

An ivory seal from Knossos has a very similar representation.⁷² It is divided in three registers: on top is a standing woman approached by a man who grabs her hand. He has a dagger at his waist. Below is a large dog, and further below, four pitchers. The presence of the dog is mysterious, unless it is an integral part of the man's identity (dogs being companions of males). As for the vessels, they may well be a reference to the wedding banquet. Once more, we cannot be sure that the couple is divine, but the allusion to marriage is clear.

The four next scenes date from the New Palace period. Two were found on the mainland, whereas two more come from a private collection and are there-

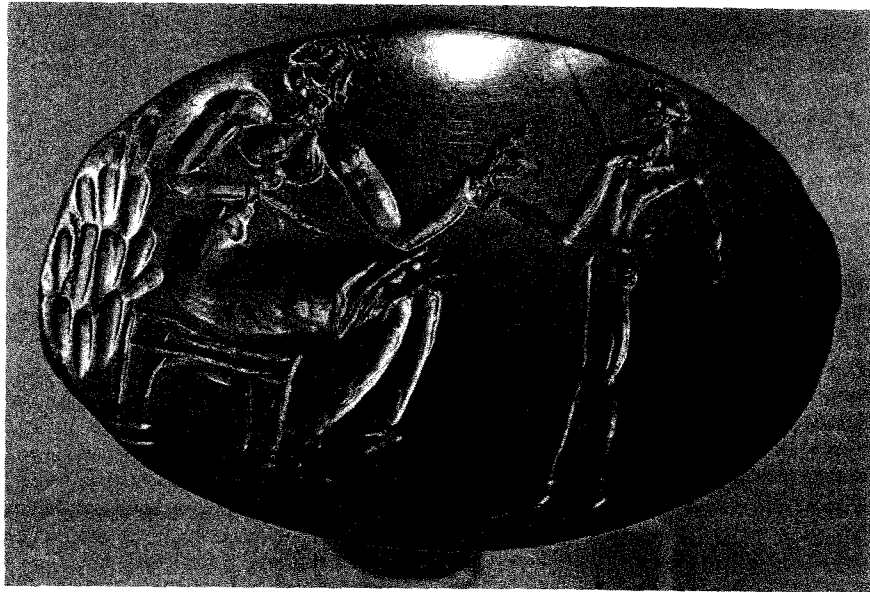


Fig. 196. Ring from Mycenae with divine pair

fore of unknown provenance. One should perhaps exclude them, since Minoan evidence alone should be examined here. On the other hand, the iconographical formula is consistent enough to reflect a widespread type, and it is precisely such widespread schemata that are more likely to be Minoan, rather than Mycenaean, inventions. The formula involves a seated goddess in interaction with a standing male who faces her.

On an electrum ring from Mycenae (fig. 196)⁷³ a male figure with a spear stands opposite a female seated on a stool; behind her are rocks. That the seated female is a goddess can hardly be doubted. In addition to the fact that the seated position signifies superior status, the rocks act as a sign to designate an outdoor setting. The combination of the stool and the landscape shows that the

scene is not domestic. As for the male figure, he is likely to be a divinity because, like the Young God, he has a spear as an attribute. Although his slender frame shows that he is inferior to (or at least younger than) the goddess, he cannot be a votary, for he does not offer anything to her. The relationship of the two figures is expressed by their interactive gestures. The latter, however, are not unambiguous: are the two pointing at each other because they are engaged in a lively conversation,⁷⁴ or is the god grasping the goddess by the wrist as a prelude to sexual union? I consider the second alternative a more meaningful interpretation of the scene. Note that a man grasping the wrist of a woman is an erotic gesture in both Egyptian and later Greek art,⁷⁵ besides, as far as I know, conversations are not normally depicted in the Bronze Age.

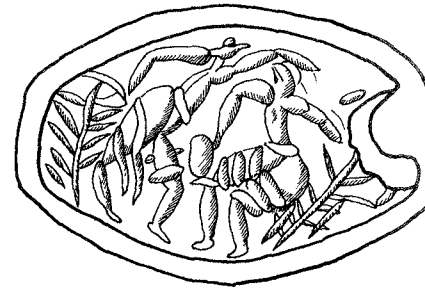


Fig. 197. Gem depicting divine pair

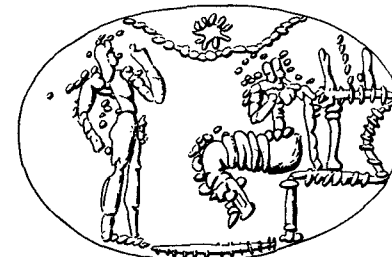


Fig. 198. Gold ring from Thebes with divine couple



Fig. 199. Seal showing divine couple and, above them, a child

A similar scene on a gem now in Paris (fig. 197)⁷⁶ supports this suggestion. The engraving is crude, but a seated female can be clearly discerned; a male walks toward her and leans over her. Both figures are framed by branches.

On a gold ring from Thebes (fig. 198)⁷⁷ the goddess is seated on a shrine (note the architectural signs of the visual concept "shrine": column and sacred horns on top). The Young God with long flowing hair, this time not smaller than the goddess, advances toward her. He is wearing a codpiece with pronounced phallus sheath; he looks almost ithyphallic, but this impression is created by his costume. His gesture is one of salutation, similar to that of the young male with the Mother of the Mountains (fig. 133). Above the two divinities is a curved line, indicating the firmament with a star or the sun in it. Perhaps the stars suggest a specific season.

Finally on a seal now in Geneva (fig. 199),⁷⁸ the goddess is once more seated and the young god approaches her. Both have their arms stretched out toward each other. Above the two principal figures are small symbolic images: a sheaf of wheat and a small figure which is difficult to identify, but which may well be a baby. It is worth risking the suggestion that the child is the desired outcome of sacred marriage, and the sheaf of wheat is the equivalent in the agricultural realm. Parallels spring to mind from Greek religion and myth: in the Eleusinian mysteries, sheaves of wheat were apparently displayed to the initiates. There was also a reference to the birth of a divine child. But even closer is another parallel in myth: the union between the corn goddess Demeter and the mortal Iasion which resulted in the birth of the child Ploutos (signifying agricultural wealth). The union is localized in Crete.⁷⁹

Most of the above scenes conform to a consistent iconographical formula. The god is the one who makes the advancing movement; the goddess waits for him seated. The god is young and potent, the goddess is seated and passive but larger, more mature, and somehow more imposing. Intimacy is suggested by interactive gestures. The setting is always nature and a connection with a seasonal festival may be implied by the presence of a star or vegetation. That the sacred marriage should result in the birth of a child may be the meaning of the Geneva seal.

It remains to explore the meaning of the discrepancy in size between the divine pair, the goddess being in most cases larger than the god. For a long time it has been assumed that Minoan society exhibited the "primitive" trait of matriarchy and that this is why the female deity is more important than the

male.⁸⁰ But the correspondence of religious and political ideology is not absolute. On the contrary, it can be shown that religion often emphasizes truths that society may suppress or conceal. Is it an accident that it is mostly in the male-dominated Catholic countries of the Southern Mediterranean and South America that the Virgin Mary, the mother, is most popular? The prominence of the goddess in Minoan religion emphasizes the fact that reproduction and the continuation of life come through women. When it comes to the depiction of the divine pair, the discrepancy in size illustrates the importance of the female in reproduction; subconsciously it may even be revealing a biological truth: the female must choose a powerful and young mate because it is she who has the greatest investment in the offspring; it is she who is supreme in the chain of life.⁸¹

9

THE WORLD OF NATURE

Landscapes and Biotopes

It is impossible to fully appreciate Minoan art and religion without a complete understanding of the role of nature. It must already have become obvious that the Minoan goddess is not only at home in an outdoor natural setting, but that she derives her very attributes from it. Her adornment consists of flowers, she may have a necklace with insect or bird pendants (fig. 112), and snakes can be crawling over her body (figs. 140 and 141). We have also seen that landscapes constitute the perfect setting for the goddess: the throne room fresco at Knossos has papyri, reeds, and palms; the landscape on a seal from Hagia Pelagia consists of papyri (fig. 130). On the murals from Hagia Triada (fig. 121) and Thera (fig. 213) flowers, rocks, and animals surround the seated deity. On seals the goddess is seated under trees tending animals (figs. 125-28; 143, 144). Minoan shrines, too, are frequented by animals, goats, or birds, as on the Zakros rhyton (fig. 85).

Let us start with an observation which has to do with classification. The Mi-

noans, like their Near Eastern neighbors,¹ allocated specific biotopes to animals. Goats, for example, are often depicted on mountaintops and rocky landscapes in both Near Eastern and Minoan art; so are lilies and crocuses² which, in their wild state, grow only on hilly terrain in Greece. The sea has its own creatures: octopuses, squids, fish, and dolphins. Rivers and marshes are associated with reeds, palms, papyri, and, on the animal side, ducks and dragonflies.³ It is interesting that some of the animals, like griffins and feline predators, may appear in connection with rivers. Crete does not have many rivers, nor any such animals, but the whole iconographical package, river plus plants and animals, was inspired by Egyptian or Near Eastern prototypes.⁴ We thus have transmission of concepts alongside the motifs; for in the iconographical code of the great river civilizations, rivers equal fertility. We thus arrive at the concept of the religious/symbolic landscape.

I would define a religious landscape⁵ as one populated with all kinds of animals and plants, especially when the



Fig. 200. Reconstruction of the paintings from the House of the Frescoes, Knossos

biotopes are deliberately mixed so that an impression of totality and abundance is achieved. "Praise the Lord . . . , fruit-trees and all cedars, beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds . . ." reads a psalm from the Old Testament.⁶ On a ritual vase from Uruk, plants, animals, and men appear in registers: presiding is Innana, the goddess of fertility, who appears as both the protectress and the recipient of all the wealth of nature.⁷

On the Minoan side, a good example of a fertility landscape is the painting from the House of the Frescoes at Knossos. It has been preserved only in fragments, but a convincing restoration was made by M. Cameron (fig. 200). The idea of profusion of animals, birds, and plants is evident in this painting. Here again the biotopes are mixed: the flora and fauna represent both hills and rivers. The goddess is missing but the

landscape is her domain. Likewise, the Knossos throne room fresco, framing the seated high priestess, is a fertility landscape (fig. 80). The river is missing but may be suggested by undulating surfaces, while the plants, a reed-papyrus combination and palms, are typical of river habitats. The throne itself, however, has the shape of a rock (compare with the baetylic rock atop the shrine of the Zakros rhyton (fig. 85). The throne room fresco may thus be an expression of the totality of nature incorporating elements of both the marshy and the hilly landscape: once more a deliberate mixing of habitats.

The animals, insects, and plants that most frequently appear are certainly not random. They, of course, represent the species that are most characteristic of the Cretan landscape, but there is more: the selection is related to the specific

properties that the animals or plants were thought to possess. Pure naturalism turns into symbol.

Lilies and crocuses have a symbolic function because they appear as offerings (fig. 143), on altars (fig. 123), as motifs on offering tables, as pendants, etc. It seems to me that the symbolism arose because of the seasonal associations of these flowers. It is interesting that it is not always the same season that is represented. For example, the saffron crocus (*crocus sativus*), a popular motif,⁸ is an autumn flower; the lily typifies the spring. But on some works of art, lilies and crocuses are shown together.⁹ This mixing implies a deliberate combination of the seasons, just as the biotopes can be combined to express the idea of fertility/abundance. This is not as surprising as it might seem at first. The spring and autumn are not antithetical seasons, heralding joyful summer and melancholy winter, respectively. In the Mediterranean both seasons announce renewal of nature, the spring an awakening after a period of winter dormancy, and the autumn a renewal after the intense drought of summer.

The same emphasis on renewal, but from a different perspective, is suggested by insect symbolism. Insects appear firstly as floating symbolic motifs on glyptic scenes of cultic character, sometimes shown disproportionately large, as on the ring from Archanes (fig. 188).¹⁰ Secondly, they can constitute the primary motif on seals, in which case they are emblematic images.¹¹ Finally, they take the form of jewelry: the goddess from Thera has a necklace with dragonfly pendants (fig. 112). The fascination with insects can be best explained by the circumstances of their life cycle, in which growth is visible not through augmentation in size but through change of form. Regeneration is

manifested by transformation: this phenomenon may have given rise to speculation about what life is all about. It is perhaps no accident that insect symbolism is featured prominently in scenes of the tree-shaking ritual discussed in chapter 8. This rite may have had as its focus the problem of life and death.

A special position in Minoan entomological symbolism is occupied by horned beetles. They are found mostly on peak sanctuaries in the form of votives or even libation vessels. Their significance may be related to sheep and pastoral life because the horned specimen uses sheep droppings as food which he brings to his home. A connection with the Egyptian sacred scarab has been plausibly suggested.¹²

The symbolism of mollusks, especially octopuses and squids, is of special interest. The motifs first appear on seals and later, in the Postpalatial period, they frequently decorate clay coffins (see chapter 6). There are indications that symbolic meaning was attached to the mollusks in Palatial times: marine motifs make their appearance already during the First Palace period.¹³

Regarding the symbolic meaning of octopuses and squids, let us first observe that marine-style decoration seems to have been applied on pottery of exclusively ritual use.¹⁴ Second, octopuses made of gold foil (quite possibly Minoan imports or imitations) were found in one of the shaft graves of Mycenae.¹⁵ They must have been stitched onto a funerary garment. The question therefore arises whether the meaning was related to funerary symbolism, especially in view of the profusion of the Postpalatial larnakes painted with such motifs.¹⁶ One property of mollusks is that they regenerate:¹⁷ if one tentacle gets cut off, another one grows to replace it. The choice of octopuses or

squids in connection with funerary symbolism may then have been connected with the idea of regeneration after death. A different set of ornaments, consisting of round sheets of gold foil with insects (most probably butterflies) and squids, was found in another shaft grave.¹⁸ These creatures, too, could be connected with cyclical renewal.

That both insects and mollusks symbolize regeneration is further suggested by their simultaneous appearance on a seal from Knossos (fig. 246). The scene, which includes a bird, an argonaut, and a butterfly, can be nothing but emblematic in character.

All this leads to the conclusion that regeneration was a concept of primary importance in the Minoan belief system. But what does it mean? I do not think that rebirth in the sense of transmigration of the soul was the underlying idea. More probable, and more compatible with the concepts of Mediterranean religions of the second millennium BC, is the notion of cyclical transformation. Death terminates our existence and that is a fact that cannot be denied. But death is only one phase in a cycle which ultimately leads to regeneration. Seasons succeed each other, a new lily will replace the decayed one, a new butterfly will emerge out of the pupa.

The cycle of life and death underlies Egyptian religious thinking and symbolism. Although plants and insects play a role there, too, the relationship of death to renewal is perhaps best captured in the image of the sun: it is a child in the morning; it is an old man in the evening, as the sun sets. In the night it is dead in the underworld, but it will pass through the body of the sky mother-goddess to be reborn in the morning.¹⁹

Such clear and explicit imagery was not developed by the Minoans, but their symbols suggest that they thought in similar terms. The Minoan pyxis from

Kalami (fig. 109), for example, exemplifies this cycle by the arrival and withdrawal of the birds. What is more, the juxtaposition of nurture and death was present already in Prepalatial times in the form of the life-sustaining goddess figures found in tombs and cemeteries, and it was to persist even after the destruction of the palaces.

The Society of Animals

The relationship of animals on Minoan representations is structured on a human societal model: there is dominance hierarchy based on power. And just as there is categorization of landscapes, there is classification in the animal kingdom as well, which divides creatures into two categories, predators and prey. Typical prey are horned or domestic animals, such as deer, sheep, goats, and birds.²⁰ Typical predators are lions and other felines, as well as fantastic creatures, such as griffins and demons. The bull occupies a special intermediate position; although it is a horned animal and therefore should be prey, it is very powerful and potentially dangerous to humans.

First a few words about the fantastic animals. Sphinxes were adopted from the Near East and Egypt and served mostly as guardians of deities. But it was mostly griffins that captured the Minoan imagination. The griffin combines the characteristics of lion and eagle, the two predators *par excellence* of the animal and bird kingdom. Its origin is certainly Near Eastern.²¹ It is worth noting that the actual bird of prey (eagle or hawk), a very prominent predator in Greek art of the Archaic period, occurs but is not as conspicuous in Minoan art; it is the griffin that is the main winged hunter.²²

Demons, also often referred to as *genii*, are very unusual creatures. They have unmistakably leonine characteris-

tics with prominent snouts and sharp claws. On their backs they have something which looks like a spiky overcoat (fig. 201); a variant of the spiked version is a tortoise shell (figs. 202, 209). Evans recognized that the prototype for the Minoan demons was the Egyptian fertility and childbirth deity Taurt.²³ Taurt, however, has the shape of a hippopotamus with a crocodile as a coat on her back, thus embodying the two most characteristic animals of the Nile. Although the derivation of the Minoan *genii* from Taurt is beyond doubt, this should not lead to the misconception that the Minoan versions have taken over the properties and the significance of the Egyptian Taurt.²⁴ The Minoan demons are free adaptations: the crocodile is replaced by a spiked shell, with a tortoise shell as a variant, as we have seen. Most important: Minoan *genii* are definitely predatorial creatures,²⁵ and are never connected with childbirth in the iconography. Their functions are mainly two: to carry jugs and pour liquid (figs. 201, 207–08) or to hunt animals (figs. 202, 204–06). Interestingly enough, these functions correspond exactly to two main ritual activities: libations and hunting/sacrifice.

Having surveyed the spectrum of real and imaginary animals, we now turn to the question of hierarchy. It is clear that the most powerful animals were those belonging to the predator class; this is why the bull, formidable as he may be, could never aspire to the top of the scale. But within the predatorial category there are grades, which can be discerned by observing who attacks whom.

At the bottom of the scale is the bull. And yet he, too, is perceived as dangerous, as can be seen from the many scenes where he gores humans (see chapter 10). When confronted with a

real predator, a lion or griffin, however, he inevitably becomes prey. Higher on the scale is the lion. When he is an attacker, his victims are only horned animals, deer, and, most commonly, bulls.

Griffins are superior to lions, because they can attack them; the reverse is never the case. In one instance,²⁶ there is a confrontation between a lion and a griffin, but elsewhere the griffin is the attacker, the lion the victim (fig. 203).²⁷

Genii also are superior to lions. On one seal two lions are carried by a demon as trophies, hanging from a pole (fig. 204).²⁸ Lions flank a demon on other glyptic scenes;²⁹ there the demon holds them in a subordinate position as though he were a Master of Animals (see chapter 7). Demons can help hunters: on a seal from Kakovatos (fig. 205)³⁰ a demon helps a hunter attack a lion. More often yet, demons attack bulls, the usual victims. In many scenes bulls are led for sacrifice, or carried as prey on the demons' shoulders. Most interesting is a scene on a seal now in London (fig. 206), because it shows a bull attacked by all kinds of predators.³¹ A bird attacks him from above, an octopus from below, while a demon on the right holds the snout. These predators represent three different categories of dangerous animals. From this scene it is evident that the demon was classified in the dangerous animal/predator category.

Griffins and demons, two creatures of fantasy, were thus perceived as superior to the natural predator. Perhaps this is why they were invented. It is also clear that both are hunters since they are often depicted in this role. As to the relationships between the two, they are never shown in combat; when griffins and demons occur together, they are both attendants of the goddess or god (fig. 207).³²



Fig. 201. Seal showing demon with libation jug



Fig. 202. Seal depicting demon with animal victim



Fig. 203. Seal representing predatorial griffin attacking animal



Fig. 204. Seal showing demon carrying dead lions



Fig. 205. Hunter attacking lion, helped by a demon; seal from Kakovatos



Fig. 206. Seal with horned animal surrounded by predators: bird above; squid or octopus below; demon in front



Fig. 207. God attended by lions, a griffin, a demon, and other animals; cylinder seal from Cyprus

The Servants of the Goddess

It will be recalled that both male and female divinities are often flanked by guardian animals. It is only the top three species of the previously discussed hierarchy, however, that qualify for this position: demons, griffins, and lions. Bulls make an occasional appearance with the Master of Animals (fig. 156). This is natural as the attendants of the gods must come from the top classes, as it were. There is a differentiation in the function of the attendants, however, and here we need to introduce another type of classification. This is based not on hierarchy of power, but on the degree of likeness to humans. Effective servants ought to have humanoid characteristics, as they must be able to use their paws as hands and stand on their two feet. For this purpose the Minoan demon was very well suited. His prototype, the Egyptian Taurt, had a hominoid posture.

It has been mentioned before that the two main functions of demons are to hunt and to carry jugs, and that both activities are connected with the ritual sphere. Jugs are used for the pouring of libations. It is in this capacity that genii

serve the goddess.³³ On several seals genii are shown singly holding a libation jug (fig. 201),³⁴ but in some scenes they are definitely serving a drink to the goddess or god. Thus, on a gold ring from Tiryns (fig. 208) a procession of jug-carrying demons is approaching a goddess who is holding a chalice to be filled.³⁵ A similar scene is depicted on an unpublished sealing from Thebes. The libating genii sometimes flank an altar or a tree.³⁶ In these cases the goddess is not present, but the cultic character of the representations is clear. Nilsson was thus right when he called the demons "ministers of the cult."³⁷

A most interesting object was recently excavated at Malia. It has the form of a triton shell, and it was almost certainly used as a libation vessel.³⁸ Engraved on this stone object is a scene with two demons facing each other, one holding a jug (fig. 209).³⁹ Let us note, first of all, that they are standing on a tripartite platform of the type that is normally associated with the goddess and which, I have suggested, must reflect a real construction. Thus, the platform here shows the mixture of cultic actuality and fantasy which so frequently characterizes Minoan religious art. The demons are not of equal height. The one to the left is slightly larger. It is the smaller one, to the right, who is pouring the contents of the jug; the superior demon is receiving the liquid in his paws (or is he holding a small bowl?) and is about to drink it. A servant serving, a master drinking: hierarchy here again within a cultic context. Compare this with the banquet scene on the Camp Stool fresco (fig. 46). We can conclude that there were superior and inferior classes even within the same category of imaginary animals.

A second creature that serves divinities in a similar fashion is the monkey (fig. 122). Although he is not a creation



Fig. 208. Demons offering libations to a goddess; gold ring from Tiryns

of fantasy, it is doubtful that monkeys abounded in Crete and the Cyclades. We cannot, of course, exclude the possibility that some few may have been imported,⁴⁰ but it is more likely that the inspiration for the iconography came from the Orient and was adapted to the Minoan idiom than that there was a profusion of the species on Crete. Monkeys are depicted in the role of ministrants of the cult in both Egyptian and Near Eastern art.⁴¹

Representations of monkeys worshipping divinities, gathering flowers, holding libation jugs, or even standing in front of a shrine abound in Minoan and Thera art (figs. 122; 144, 145).⁴² To a certain extent, the activities of monkeys overlap with those of demons: both can offer libations.⁴³ Yet there is differentiation of roles. Whereas demons are often depicted as wild hunters stabbing bulls or sacrificing deer,⁴⁴ monkeys are engaged in more peaceful activities: flower gathering (fig. 200), or offering saffron (fig. 122). An intriguing activity is the playing of musical instruments, which is attested on a fresco fragment from Thera.⁴⁵ Once more, the prototype may have been Near Eastern; there is a sug-

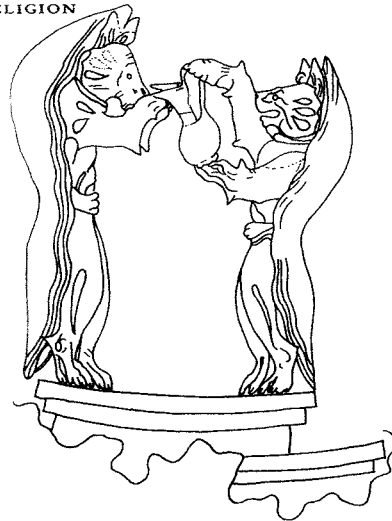


Fig. 209. Two demons pouring libation; stone triton shell from Malia. Simplified drawing

gestion that monkeys in the East were actually trained to use percussives!⁴⁶

The monkey was elevated to the status of divine servant probably because he partook both of animal and human characteristics. Indeed, on the Thera fresco (fig. 122) he is a true intermediary between the goddess and the crocus-gathering girls. He stands on a higher level than the girls on the platform, but he is below the goddess. It is he and not the girls who is doing the offering.

Monkeys also introduce an element of lightness in a realm where power and predation are the main qualifications to high status. The Minoan perception of nature thus allows many facets to surface: dominance and killing juxtaposed with nurture and play are all interwoven in a cycle of life and death.

10

RITUAL CONTESTS, HUNTING, AND RITES OF PASSAGE

Introduction

Thanks to A. van Gennep's, *Rites de passage* (1908), attention has been drawn to those rituals which accentuate states of transition and which are marked features of almost every society, no matter what degree of technology it has achieved. Van Gennep's definition, "rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position and age,"¹ is broad enough to include both rites of status transition and life-crisis rituals. It is mostly puberty rites which will be our concern here.

Some general remarks first. *Transition* implies a symbolic transformation which involves a change of appearance. This is often manifested in hairstyle and clothing;² it may even involve a permanent mutilation of the body such as circumcision: adolescents should not have the same external characteristics as adults.

Van Gennep also demonstrated that rites of passage have a tripartite structure. In the first phase, termed *separation*, the initiate is removed from the normal environment and may be secluded in the wilderness, the woods, or mountains.

In the second phase, often referred to as the *liminal period*, the initiate is "betwixt and between."³ He has no defined identity, is malleable and passive. During this time the novice is usually instructed by special tutors or elders in the norms of the society. There is also teaching of skills which may culminate in trials and ordeals. Endurance of pain, exercises in war and hunting, and participation in athletic contests are features frequently associated with initiatory rites for men; familiarization with sexuality and motherhood (which can entail encounter with pain and blood) as well as domestic tasks will often occur in women's puberty rites. It is evident that the ordeals, which can be quite painful, pertain to the future roles of the initiates.

Finally, there is the third phase, *reintegration*, in which the neophytes are incorporated into society as full adult members. They can now wear adult clothing and hairstyles, get married, and manage property.

That puberty rites were performed in Minoan Crete stands to reason. Yet, neither Evans nor Nilsson dealt with the

subject. The reason is most likely connected with the fact that scholars in the earlier part of the century were hardly aware of the significance of the phenomenon, being mostly preoccupied with magic and primitive fertility cults. But in recent years there has been increased attention focusing on Minoan puberty rites:⁴ van Gennep's work has slowly made an impact, mostly in the French-speaking world. Some major works dealing with the puberty rites of Classical Greece have appeared;⁵ awareness of the phenomenon has led to an investigation of the evidence.

Thus, scenes of contests between men or boys, previously simply classified as athletics, can now be reinvestigated in the context of initiatory procedures. Although we are far from being able to understand all facets of puberty rites in the Aegean, considerable progress has been made.

Appearance

Before anything can be said about the puberty rites themselves, it is important to show that youths can be recognized as such in the art. Some remarks to that effect have already been made in previous chapters in connection with young men who have just reached adult status. For example, we have seen how the Young God is depicted. He has long flowing hair, no beard, and wears a codpiece or kilt. Older figures, by contrast, have beards and/or long robes.

Children or adolescents can be differentiated from young men. The conventions can best be studied on the well-preserved frescoes from Thera; the material from Crete is more fragmentary and, in most cases, dates to later times.⁶ Still, the results can be shown to be valid for Crete as well.⁷

There are figures on Theran frescoes, both male and female, whose heads are blue, the only traces of hair being scalp locks. The excavator, Sp. Marinatos, first thought that the blue color represented tight-fitting caps or headdresses,⁸ but later he came to the conclusion that it represented shaved heads.⁹ This conclusion has now been proved to be correct beyond a shadow of a doubt, since on some examples the hair is shown in the growing stage.¹⁰

The significance of the shaving was only gradually understood. It did not indicate foreign influence on Thera, as the excavator originally thought,¹¹ but rather young age: since children should look unlike adults, they are differentiated through lack of full hair. The practice of shaving the head is certainly not confined to the Aegean; it is a widely spread custom characterizing children and adolescents in many cultures¹² including Egypt.¹³ The use of blue color is specific to the Aegean, however, where it is a convention indicating gray. Often animals, such as monkeys or dolphins, are also painted blue in Minoan and Theran art.¹⁴

As mentioned above, blue heads are not attested on Minoan paintings, but figurines with scalp locks are found in peak sanctuaries. The most recent addition to our collection of the evidence is a beautiful ivory figure from the town of Palaikastro dating to the New Palace period. The scalp locks are clearly discernible on the partially shaved head. The short hair on the younger man on the Chieftain's Cup is in the growing stage (fig. 224).¹⁵ Portrait seals show heads with curly, short hair which must be designating boys (figs. 97, 98, whereas babies have totally bald heads).¹⁶ It seems therefore that the manipulation of hair was not confined to Thera, but that it was a Minoan custom as well.

A second way to differentiate male children and adolescents from adults, in art at least, is by showing them naked. There is complete correlation between nudity and shaved heads. This evidence comes exclusively from Theran frescoes and no exact parallel in painting is hitherto known from Crete. It is attested in Egypt, however, where children and adolescents are represented as both naked and with partially shaved heads with scalp locks.

On the Theran paintings, only boys are nude; girls have shaved heads but are always clothed. The youth of a female is emphasized by another artistic convention: budding breasts or a complete lack of them, rather than a full bosom.

Even within this class of pre-adult youngsters, degrees of age are possible to detect. Girls have no breasts and a smooth chin when they are children. When approaching puberty they acquire budding breasts and a slight double chin. As regards the hairstyles, both sexes can be shown with half-grown hair, or hair at the growing stage rendered as short curly locks.¹⁷ In this case they are in a state of transition from adolescence to adulthood. Even the color of the skin can be indicative: on one Theran fresco, the youngest boy is painted in a yellowish instead of a reddish brown pigment.¹⁸

A Puberty Rite for Girls on Thera: The Frescoes from Xeste 3

The aim of this book is to arrive at an understanding of Minoan religion and, for this reason, as little evidence as possible has been adduced from the Mycenaean mainland or the Cyclades.¹⁹ In this case, I shall make an exception. Although not pretending that the puberty

rite from Thera to be described is purely Minoan in nature, I feel that we can perhaps learn something about Minoan rites indirectly, since Thera was subject to Minoan influence during the period under discussion.²⁰ More importantly: the Theran frescoes offer us such full and unique information about initiation that the opportunity to reconstruct the ritual should not be missed.

The paintings to be discussed all come from a room (3) in a building of substantial size known as Xeste 3 (fig. 210). As far as architectural typology goes, the building is a Minoan mansion. Paintings abounded, decorating the ground floor as well as the upper story, but the most important of the murals were situated above an adyton of the Minoan type. As it will be remembered from chapter 4, an adyton is a place of separation, a "holy of holies," where offerings were deposited by selected participants. Although two distinct fresco complexes decorated the Xeste 3 adyton, one on the ground level, the other on the story above, the two are thematically related and supply information about the initiation ritual.

A few words about the architectural setup first. On the ground floor, the adyton constituted the focal point of room 3, indeed of the whole building. It was situated in its northernmost section and was separated by a pier-and-door system.²¹ A secondary area existed within the same room, also separated by a pier-and-door. This was located in the west and will be henceforth called the western compartment (fig. 211). Its function is not as yet completely understood but its frescoes may give us some clues.

In order to reach the adyton, the hypothetical visitor would arrive via an anteroom (4). His or her movement and visual access would be controlled by another pier-and-door partition separating rooms 3 and 4. When standing in the

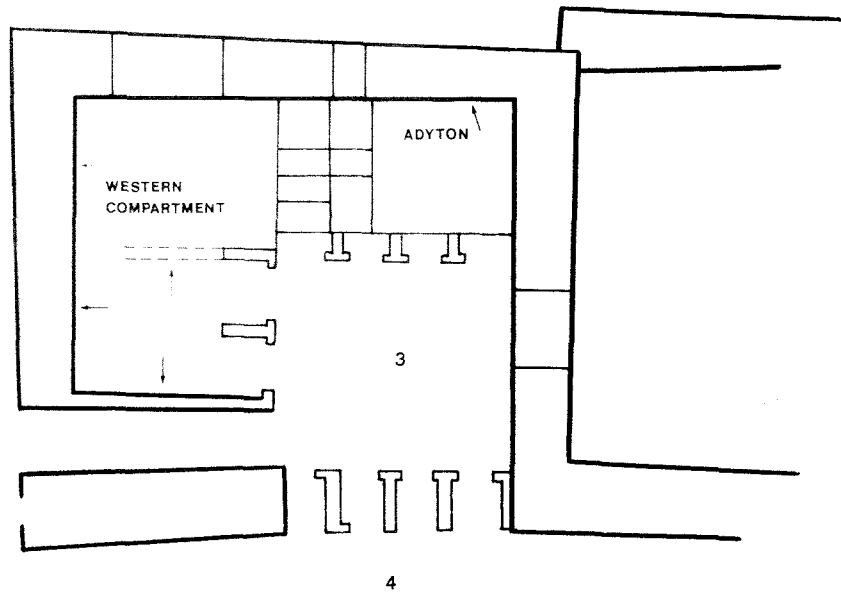


Fig. 210. Akrotiri, Thera. Plan of room 3, Xeste 3

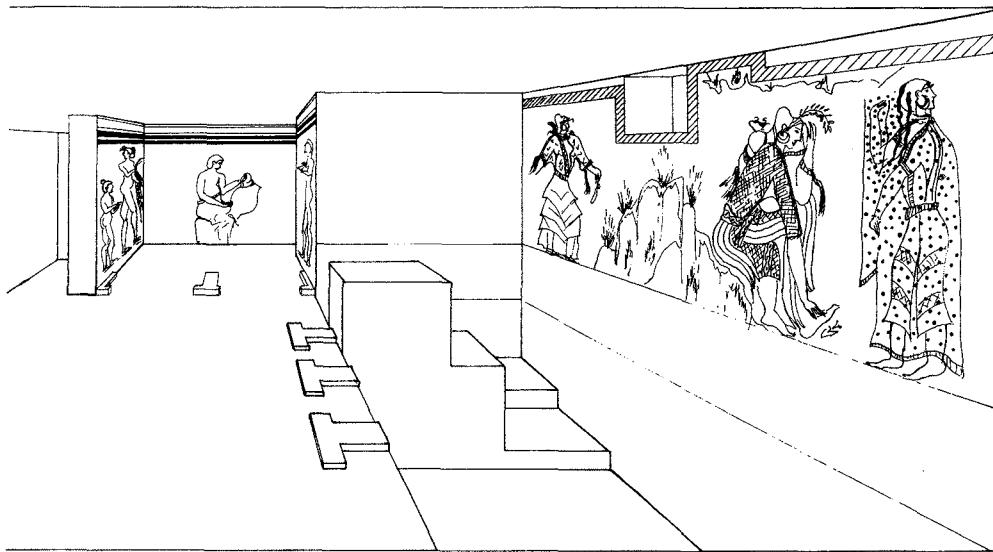


Fig. 211. Akrotiri, Xeste 3. Reconstruction of room 3 showing western compartment and adyton with their frescoes

middle of 3, the adyton would be ahead, to the north. What could the visitor see? The painting of the adyton would be only partly visible because of the pier-and-door screen obstructing the view. Through the bays between the piers (assuming there were no doors or curtains), the visitor would be able to see the three girls which form the subject of the adyton fresco (fig. 212).

If the visitor turned left (westward) he or she would be facing another pier-and-door screen, beyond which was the western compartment. The frescoes depicting men would be visible if the doors were open.

The architectural plan of room 3 was the result of a carefully worked out symmetrical design. Important is the fact that the visitor would be surrounded by pier-and-door screens which led to less accessible areas. That the frescoes allude to the events that took place within these areas is a logical assumption.

Moving to the upper story, the spectator would see a magnificent painting spread over the north and east walls depicting the so-called Crocus Gatherers (fig. 213).²²

It is now time to look at the paintings themselves. We start with the aforementioned Crocus Gatherers, the fresco on the upper floor. It has already been referred to in chapters 6 and 7, where the iconography of the goddess and her costume were discussed. We had noted then that the goddess is seated on an elevated, tripartite platform flanked by her attendants, a monkey and a griffin. The other figures are four young girls on a rocky terrain engaged in crocus-picking. Above them can be seen several clumps of crocus plants painted against the white background. Although the rocks are omitted, a rocky landscape is implied by the flowers, thus rendering depth to the fresco and suggesting more hills in the distance.

Each one of the girls represents two things: a distinct age group and a stage in the process of crocus-gathering. Thus, starting from the right (east wall), girl 1 collects the flowers, her basket resting next to her. She is the youngest; her head is shaved except for a forelock and a pony tail; she has no breasts. Girl 2, who turns her head and looks toward her companion, is also picking crocuses, but she is holding the basket. She is slightly older: short curls have grown, a double chin has been formed and a red dot, as well as a breast-curve on her bosom, indicate budding breasts and approaching womanhood. Girl 3 is placed on the north wall. She is carrying her basket on her shoulders and is walking toward the platform of the goddess. She, too, has growing curly hair, a double chin, and budding breasts. Finally, girl 4 is standing in front of the platform. Her head is raised, as she is looking at the goddess above her on the platform. She belongs to the same age group as girls 2 and 3 and her task is to empty the crocuses from her basket to a larger container. But it is left to the monkey to perform the offering of saffron to the goddess.²³

There is thus a sophisticated temporal articulation in the painting, a development in the process of offering but also in the age of the girls. The culmination is the goddess herself, who represents the full blossoming of womanhood. In a way, the fresco is a presentation scene, but there is more.

The crucial questions are: what is the occasion of the offering, and why are all the girls in the stage of puberty? Not a single one has long hair and full breasts. That the festival of offering has something to do with initiation is hinted at already from this detail.

Below this fresco was another one, immediately above the adyton (figure 212). That the two are intimately related can

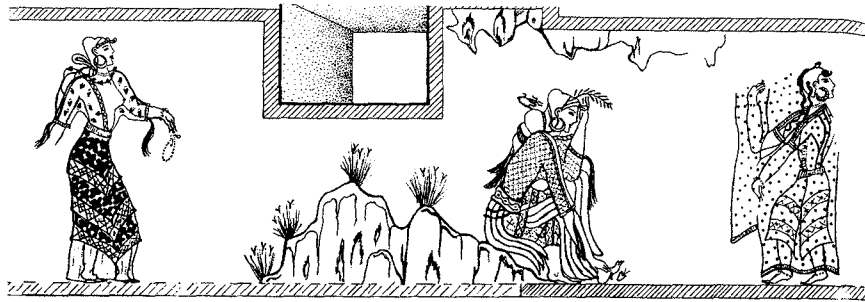


Fig. 212. Akrotiri, Xeste 3. Sketch of the adyton frescoes

be shown, not only because of the subject matter, but also because the same team of artists has worked on both.²⁴

The adyton fresco spread over the north and east walls. On the north wall, on the direct axis of vision of our hypo-

thetical visitor (but partly screened by the pier-and-door), were three girls. They, too, represent three distinct age groups.²⁵ The one on the far right is the youngest. She has a shaved head with scalp locks and no breasts. Her costume

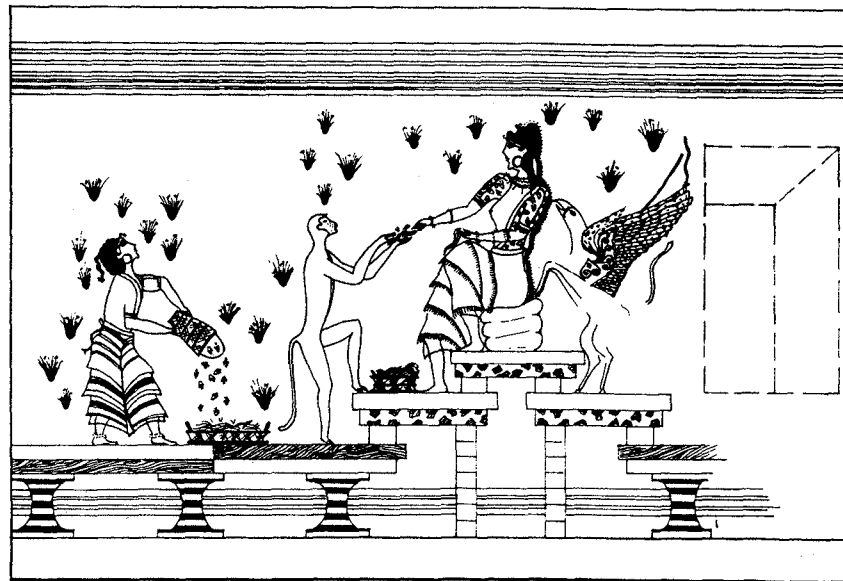
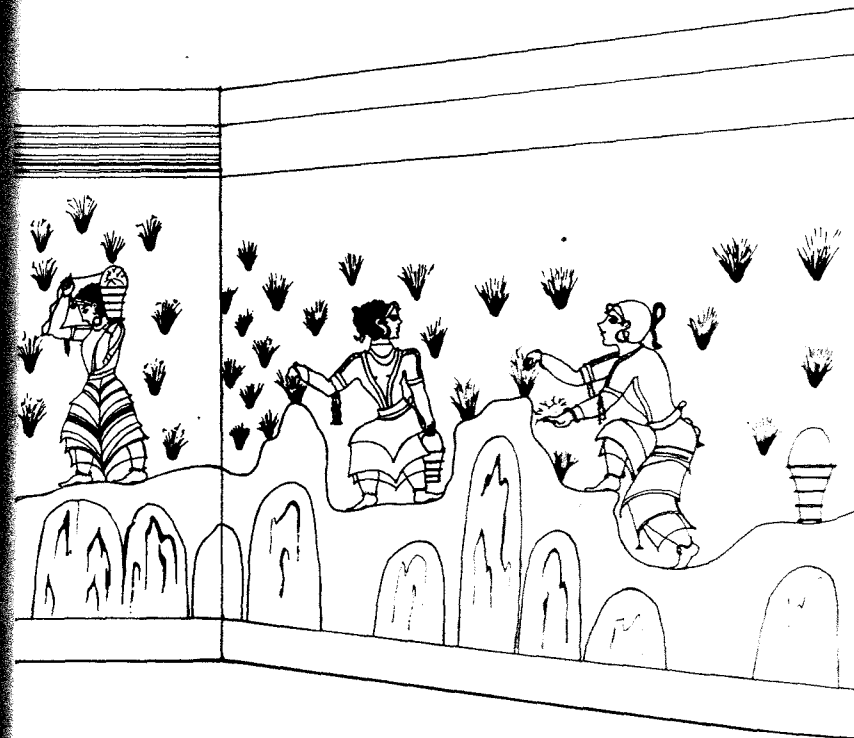


Fig. 213. Akrotiri, Xeste 3. Sketch of the Crocus Gatherers and goddess on upper story

consists of a blouse and a skirt, which reaches just below the knees, and a veil which covers her completely. Her body language indicates excitement and surprise, if not outright shock: she has just drawn her veil away from her head; she is walking on tiptoe; her head is turned backwards, looking toward the east wall. It is what she sees there that has caused her startled reaction: a shrine, topped with sacred horns from which blood is trickling down (fig. 214). On the cultic level we must imagine that a blood libation, following sacrifice, was poured over the horns of the shrine.²⁶ But on the symbolic level blood means something more. It evokes scary but tangible associations pertaining to the girl's fu-

ture role as a woman: blood alludes both to menstruation and childbirth. The painting thus compresses in one image a process which we may reconstruct as a first phase of initiation: knowledge is acquired through a visual acquaintance with blood, not by an actual painful experience.²⁷

The central girl, on the other hand, experiences pain and blood directly. She is differentiated from the other two because she and only she is associated with landscape. She is seated on a rock, and craggy cliffs are shown above her, indicating more rocks in the distance. (In Minoan art inverted landscapes suggest depth.) This girl is also older, as we can see by the fully grown long hair and



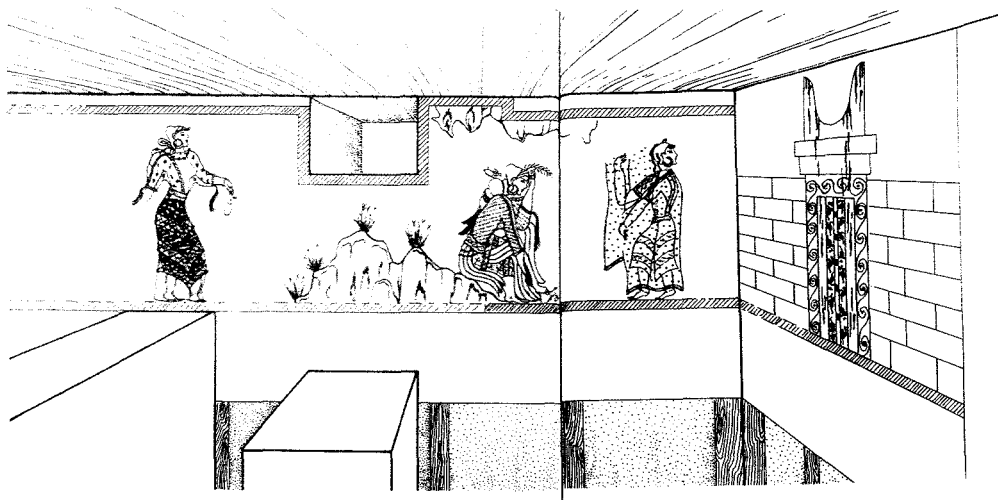


Fig. 214. Akrotiri, Xeste 3. Sketch of the shrine topped with horns from which blood is dripping

a sizable breast visible beneath her right armpit. She is adorned with an olive twig on her forehead, and an iris pin holds her braid together. The forelock of youth has been replaced by the knot of a scarf.²⁸

The girl is wounded in the foot and her posture betokens drama. Seated on a rock, she touches her forehead with her left hand;²⁹ the gesture shows pain. With her right hand she touches her wounded foot, from which blood is dripping. Fallen from her hand, a single crocus blossom has not yet reached the ground.

What is the meaning of this? It is clear that the two figures so far discussed do not interact in a meaningful way and that the scene has no narrative unity. The youngest girl is not aware of the pain of the older one in the center; she is wrapped up in her own drama. I therefore came to the conclusion that the wounding had a ritual significance and

that it was not alluding to a myth. Two stages of an initiation ordeal are represented by two different actors belonging to different age groups.³⁰

But how was the wound inflicted on the initiate and by whom? The answer is contained in the painting itself in the form of two subtle but unmistakable visual clues: the rock on which the girl is seated and the crocus which she was holding prior to the accident and which fell to the ground. Through these signs a visual link is established with the painting of the Crocus Gatherers above. The scenario now becomes clearer.

On the occasion of a festival to the goddess, girls were sent out to the hills to collect large numbers of blossoms for the divinity. This exodus from the city corresponds to the period of seclusion that we so often meet in rites of passage. But this excursion was also an ordeal because, if the girls were required to be barefoot, sooner or later they would get

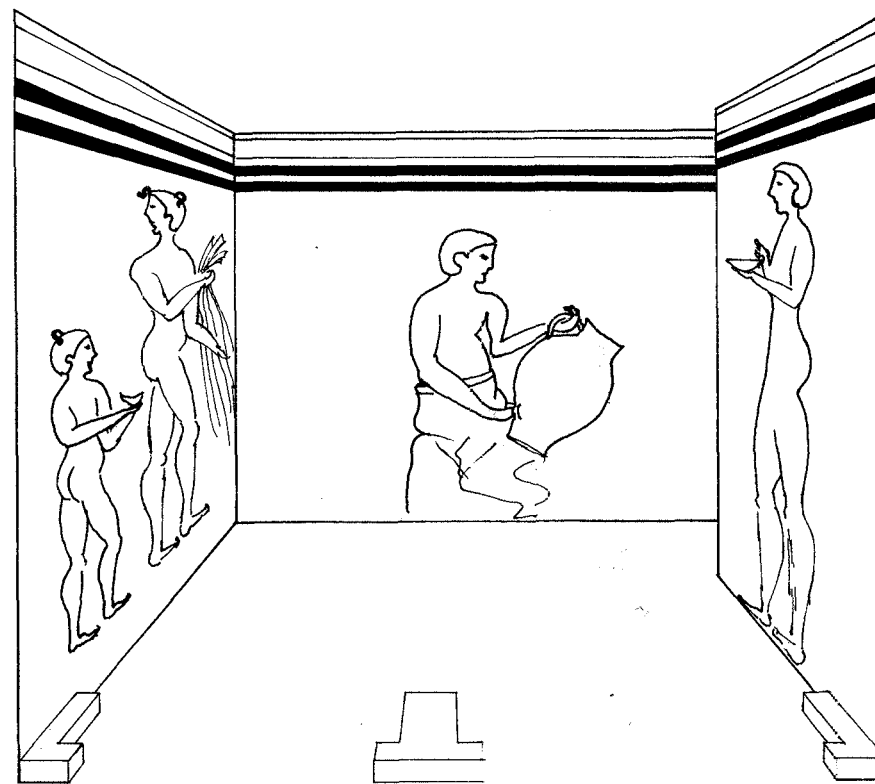


Fig. 215. Akrotiri, Xeste 3. Conjectural reconstruction of the frescoes in the western compartment of room 3

bloody feet. Walking on wounded feet causes pain—which is precisely the purpose of the ordeal: to teach endurance of pain and familiarization with one's own blood. The cause of the wound of the initiate in the adyton fresco can thus be linked with the crocus gathering depicted on the level above.³¹

The third girl, to the left, is outside the area of the adyton. This in itself is not without symbolic significance, because she is the oldest of all and fully initiated. She has long hair, without the forelock of youth, and full breasts. She is carrying a necklace, a dedicatory offer-

ing, probably to be deposited inside the adyton.

Let us now look at the frescoes of the western compartment, which constitutes the second secluded area in room 3 (fig. 211). It will come as a surprise that all the paintings from there depict males. Here also distinct age groups are represented.

The paintings consist of three different panels (fig. 215) arranged in such a way that the most important panel, depicting a seated man, would be on the line of vision of the spectator standing outside the pier-and-door (fig. 216).³²



Fig. 216. Akrotiri, Xeste 3. Sketch of the seated man from west wall of the western compartment

This seated man is also the oldest of the group and seems to be an adult. He has full but short hair and a slight paunch, and he is dressed in a kilt. (It will be remembered that male children and adolescents are shown naked.) He is holding a metal pitcher of a type that is actually attested in archaeological finds,³³ and he is tilting it so as to pour its liquid content. Since the pitcher is of a large size, it must have contained water and not a more valuable liquid. That the man is performing some kind of purification ritual is likely. We can be even more specific: if the girls' ordeal involved bloody feet, the culminating ritual would have included washing of the blood and preparation for their final appearance to the public outside the building.

Of the other two panels, one was probably placed on the south wall. It has two naked boys with shaved heads and scalp locks, one leading, the other following (fig. 217). The direction of move-



Fig. 217. Akrotiri, Xeste 3. Sketch of two boys from the south wall of western compartment

ment must be toward the seated man. The boy ahead is older because he is larger; the one following is not only smaller but chubby as well and is painted in a yellowish brown. The older boy, who is looking backward toward his companion as though to urge him on, is holding four long strips of cloth, two patterned and two white. It is impossible to think of these strips as belonging to male attire;³⁴ rather, they must be part of the girls' costume. It is possible that they belong to the unusual dress of the wounded girl of the adyton fresco, whose skirt is composed of such strips. The small boy is bringing a bowl.

The final panel was probably placed on a clay partition which extended from the northernmost pier of the pier-and-door system toward the west wall (fig. 218). It depicts a solitary figure also directed toward the seated man. This figure is an adolescent, but he is shown in the stage of transition: he is being transformed from a boy to a man. He is

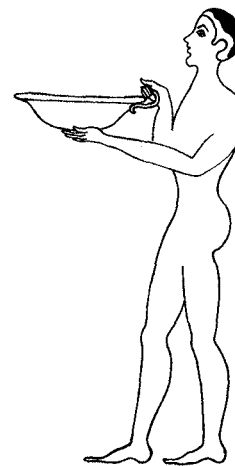


Fig. 218. Akrotiri, Xeste 3. Sketch of an adolescent boy from a clay partition of the western compartment

naked, but his hair is in a growing stage. The artist has achieved this by showing the lower half of the head shaved and the upper half with hair. This boy is holding a large metal bowl.

Thus, in addition to the mature man, there are three different ages represented, ranging from a small boy to an adolescent about to turn to an adult. It is evident that the seated mature man is a "master of ceremonies," while the boys function as acolytes. The man will perform the washing, and the youngsters most probably will supply aromatic oils and ointments in the bowls and the strips of cloth for a new costume.

Granted the role of these figures in assisting the girls during initiation, it is still puzzling as to why it is males, rather than females, that have supporting functions in a puberty rite for girls. One explanation would be that the interaction smooths and facilitates contacts between the sexes at a period when the consciousness of sexual and role identity is most acute. By juxtaposing them-

selves to these males (who may well be relatives), the girls become most aware of their solidarity and social position as women. It is no accident that in an African society, a "fruitful contest of the sexes" takes place during a girls' puberty rite.³⁵ In the Thera case there is no contest but rather support; still, the reinforcement of one's image by a counterimage can be achieved even without competition.

It remains to explore the relationship of the paintings to the space in which they were placed. It is certain that the frescoes allude to activities that were related to the building, but we should not expect one-to-one correspondence between the iconography and the cult practices. For example, there are outdoor scenes: the crocus gathering, the wounded girl, the shrine with the bloody sacred horns on top. These scenes, of course, do not take place inside the building, but they constitute indispensable visual references which explain the activities that are associated with it. Such would be the washing up and dressing of the initiates and the deposition of offerings within the adyton. A selected number of participants, such as family members of the initiates, would perhaps be allowed within the building, but a wider public may have participated indirectly from the outside. These are considerations dictated by probability, given the size of the rooms, which could not have contained more than a dozen people at a time.

The frescoes from Xeste 3, Thera, allow as complete a reconstruction of a puberty rite as one might hope in the absence of meaningful texts. Questions still remain, but the great emphasis the Thera placed on young members of their society is a fact which remains as firm as any written evidence.

Contests and Scenes of Combat

It is well known that male roles in most non-technological societies cluster around war and hunting. In Minoan Crete war was marginal, although certainly not totally absent, as the occurrence of weapons in graves and caves testifies. In addition, combat scenes with warriors are far from absent in the iconography. It is not certain that these combats reflect actual fighting, however. Aggression can be sublimated and symbolized in another form of conflict: ritualized contest.³⁶ Indeed, the contest can be seen as a form of play that prepares for war. They are also tests of strength which help establish dominance hierarchy of the most primeval sort within the group. Even in urban cultures the victors in athletics can aspire to high social status. In Classical Greece, for example, the Olympic victors were or became rulers of state; at any rate, they often were members of the aristocracy.³⁷

A seeming paradox is that it is precisely in relatively warless societies that the most violent combats flourish.³⁸ They constitute an alternate form of aggression which provides for release of tension at a relatively low cost to the community.³⁹

Since war appears to have been relatively scarce in Minoan Crete, it should not come as a surprise that contests, often of a violent character, took place. Whether or not they were connected with initiatory practices remains an open question.

Yet, we have some clues. Sometimes we can see that the participants were very young men (with long hair and codpieces) and that they were members of the aristocracy, to judge from the jewelry that they wear.

From Thera comes a fresco which depicts two boxing children recognizable by their nudity and blue, shaved heads.⁴⁰ The iconographical context of

the scene (the rest of the wall decoration depicted competing antelopes) shows that the message of the painting is "competition through play, as opposed to serious fighting."⁴¹ That the boxing match had an initiatory character is likely because of the young age of the children. Interestingly enough, the artist has hinted that the child on the left will be the eventual victor. He wears jewelry, earrings, armlets, and anklets; the other boy does not. His face is painted in a lighter tone, possibly suggesting higher status.⁴² That the boy on the left is the aggressor can also be shown by his eyes, which are rolling up. Most importantly, he has blocked the arm of his opponent, whereas he himself may be either delivering a blow (note that the right hand is restored) or intending to grab his opponent's hair with his free hand. Indeed, the explanation for wearing only one glove must be that the contestants needed one hand free to grab the opponent by the hair or the belt.

Finally, the body postures show differences. The aggressor has complete control and balance over his body and movements and seems more stable than the other child.⁴³ The message of the painting is firstly competition through play and secondly establishment of hierarchy: the victor is obvious through posture and adornment with jewelry.

A similar phenomenon, namely, a clear designation of the victors, can be observed in the scenes on the so-called Boxers' Rhyton (fig. 219, 220): a stone vase found at the mansion of Hagia Triada.⁴⁴ The vase was a ceremonial vessel and it is reasonable to assume that the choice of iconography is related to its function. A ceremonial context for the depictions may thus be inferred.

The surface of the vase is divided into four registers, each depicting matches between young men, with one exception



Fig. 219. The Boxers' Rhyton from Hagia Triada; boxing youths

showing bull leaping. The youths have long hair with the forelock of youth,⁴⁵ and they wear jewelry and codpieces. They are, therefore, not children but young men.

Different competitions are shown on each zone, but a problem is whether they constitute a unified pictorial program and in what order the friezes should be read. Säflund has produced convincing arguments to the effect that the reading should start from below, and has drawn attention to the convention of Near Eastern art where registers are read from bottom to top.⁴⁶

The lowest zone shows pairs of youths (fig. 219); we have a standing victor and a fallen opponent. The contest looks like boxing, but it may be some other form of match, because the victor is holding an oblong object (a weapon?) in his right hand. Perhaps the idea was to hit the opponent with this weapon and render

him prostrate. Like the boxing children from Thera, the victors are wearing necklaces, but not enough is preserved of the defeated to see if they, too, had jewelry.

Moving upward, the second register shows boxing contests, to judge from the gloves which the men are wearing. Once more we have pairs of victors and losers; once more necklaces can be discerned around the necks of the victors. An interesting feature is that the men are wearing helmets, which are, of course, used for protection, but which also introduce a military aspect into the game. In the background can be seen rectangular pillars which have been included to define the space as architectural, perhaps even as a religious setting; the possibility that a place or a mansion is hinted at is very likely.

The third register depicts two charging bulls (fig. 220). The first bull is in-

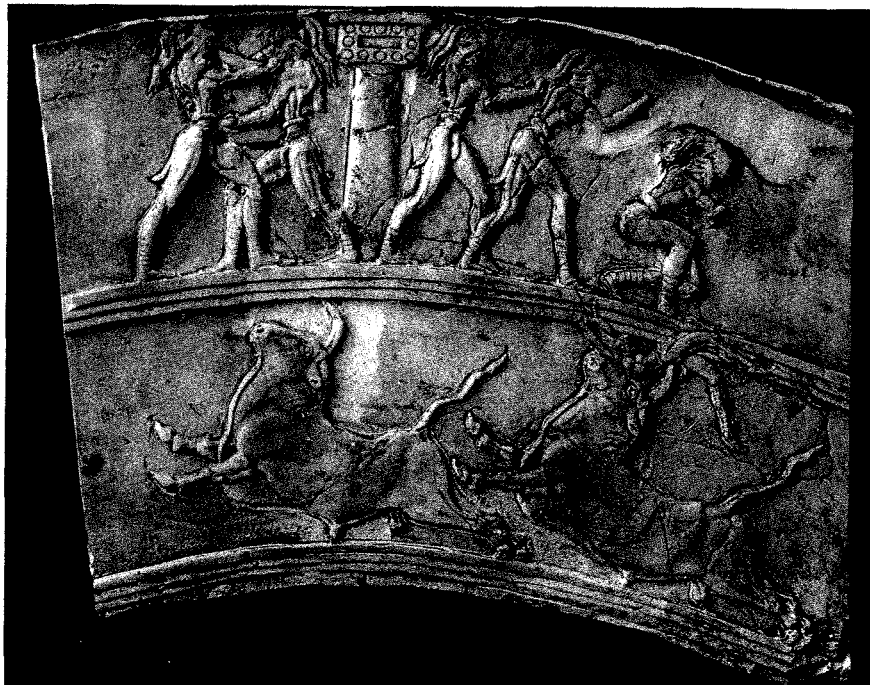


Fig. 220. The Boxers' Rhyton; charging bulls and wrestlers

completely preserved, but the second is shown in the process of goring an unfortunate bull leaper. That bull leaping is shown in such a context is worth noting, because it shows that this activity was classified by the Minoans in the same category as athletic matches. Bull leaping was thus perceived as a contest, the difference being that the contest was not between man and man but between man and animal. The scheme remains the same; there is a victor and a loser, but the loser pays with his life.

Finally, the top register depicts some form of wrestling, the exact significance of which is not fully understood. Säflund discerns a military character, "a commando raid with assault," because the contestants seem to be wearing plumed helmets.⁴⁷ Once more, the

victors and defeated are clearly distinguished. Note that, as on the Theran fresco of the boxing children, the victor is always on the left, the defeated on the right.

It is a pity we cannot fully understand the significance of the last match, nor indeed the ultimate purpose of the games. It is, however, likely that the order of the zones represents an ascending scale, that each contest entailed more difficulties and higher danger for the athletes. Because of the youth of the men, an initiation scenario with different ordeals of increasing difficulty is very likely, but we cannot be absolutely certain.

A scene of contest may be depicted on another fragmentary stone vase, which probably came from a conical stone rhyton:⁴⁸ two figures, one on his knees

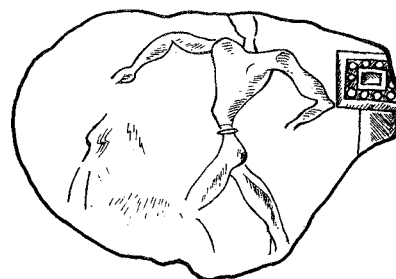


Fig. 221. Seal-impression from Knossos depicting a match

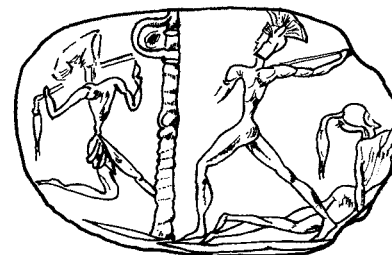


Fig. 222. Seal-impression from Hagia Triada depicting a contest

as though climbing, the other in what seems to be a running position, are preserved. What is important here is the religious setting, which is clearly indicated by an altar topped with sacred horns and a fig tree. Finally, let us repeat that most boxing scenes here discussed decorated stone rhyta, so that the association of games with ceremonies can be deduced also because of the medium of the representations.⁴⁹

Matches between men appear on rings or ring-impressions, as well. I shall discuss a specialized type of scene here which seems to me to constitute a category different from typical warrior combat scenes. The main features are

contestants wearing only codpieces and helmets (these point to warrior status but not necessarily in a war context), and the presence of a column (suggesting that the setting is urban/architectural) (fig. 221). The affinities of the scene with the friezes on the Hagia Triada rhyton discussed above are obvious.

On one seal-impression from Hagia Triada (fig. 222)⁵⁰ the contestants are fighting on either side of a column or shaft. Dominant is a man on the right of the column. No trace of clothing is preserved, but a helmet is clearly discernible. He is holding a spear which he is directing against his opponent, on the left side of the column, who is dressed in a loincloth; the latter is apparently running or proceeding toward his enemy. On the far right is another helmeted man with a loincloth who has fallen to the ground; his lifeless posture makes it certain that he is defeated and it is very likely that he is dead. The combat on the sealing, involving a spear and contestants with helmets, looks both violent and dangerous—it is almost reminiscent of gladiatorial games—yet the column suggests that it is not an abbreviated war scene. One other detail is interesting. The seal-impression gives the mirror image of the figures on the original ring. Thus, on the ring, the victor would have been on the left.

Another seal-impression from Hagia Triada testifies to an equally violent scene. Here there is no column and we cannot be sure that it is not war that is depicted. A man wearing a loincloth and a necklace is grabbing a fleeing opponent by the hair. In his pursuit he is aided by a dog. Some bodies on the ground are presumably fallen enemies. More combat scenes from Crete have been discussed by Pini.⁵¹

Bloody matches and abbreviated war scenes: our view of the Minoans as flower children needs to be revised.

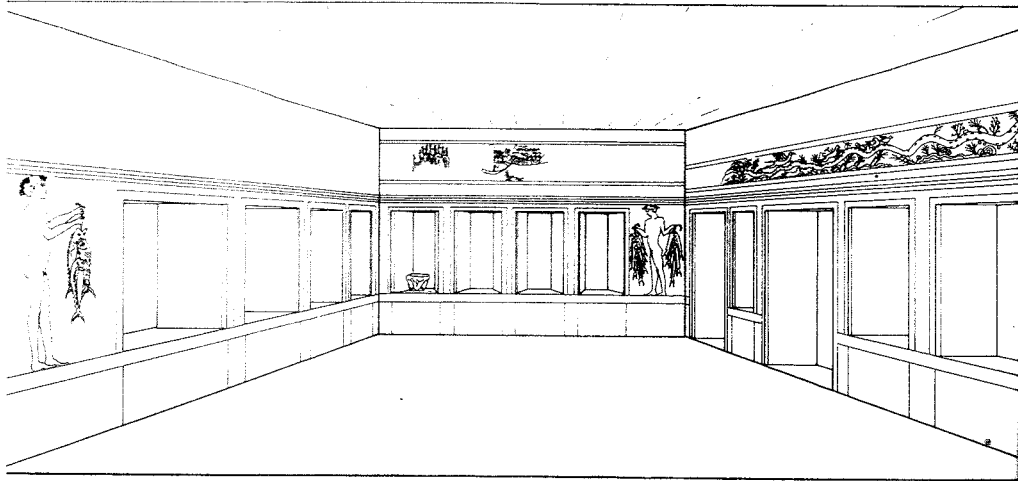


Fig. 223. Akrotiri, West House. Sketch of two boys carrying fish

What concerns us here, however, is simply the fact that such feats presuppose trained athletes or warriors. Were the occasions that inspired the engravings on the seals and rings performances during a festival in which the military elite displayed its force, as happened later in the Athenian Panathenaia? Or was the context a rite of passage? Or was it a combination of both? Whatever the case may be, we can guess that rites of passage may well have involved *hard training* with possible casualties. Winning a contest must have been a sign of status. This would explain why scenes of combat have an *emblematic value* and were engraved on seals and rings. The emphasis on the victor further supports the theory that these contests reinforced hierarchy of power.

A ritual context for some of the occasions, at least, is indicated by the occurrence of such scenes on the stone rhyta.

It can be further ascertained that the Minoan athletes, like the Greek ones of later times, belonged to the aristocracy;

no commoner would be wearing such jewelry. In this way the youths of the ruling families could aspire to high status.

Fishing and Hunting

I suspect that the most common pursuits associated with rites of passage would have been fishing and hunting.

Two fresco panels from Thera each depict a naked boy with a shaved head carrying bunches of fish (fig. 223).⁵² The position of the figures on the wall shows them as proceeding toward a focal point which was in the corner of the room. There a small circular offering table with marine decoration was found *in situ*.⁵³ It is thus possible to arrive at an understanding of the function of the paintings within the room: the fish were meant as offerings to be deposited on the altar table. But the fact that they are brought by young boys is not without significance. The boys must have caught the fish

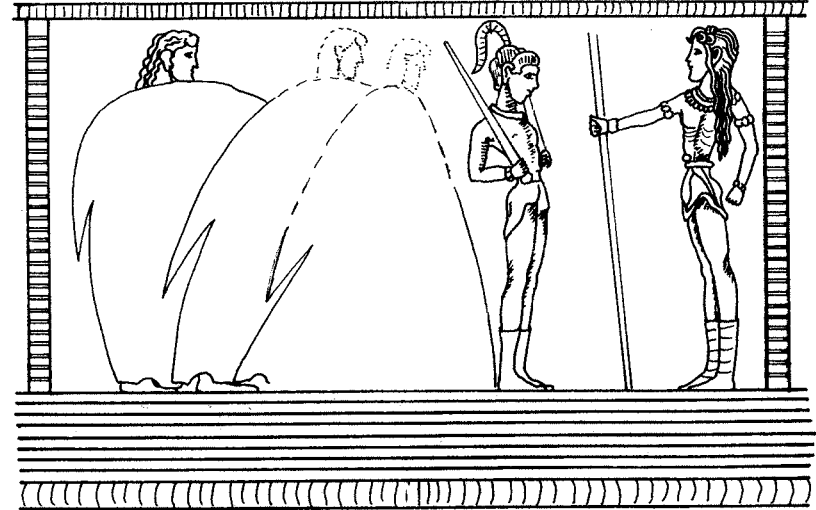


Fig. 224. The Chieftain's Cup from Hagia Triada, reconstructive sketch

themselves; a feat, however minor, has been accomplished.⁵⁴

Scenes of hunting are frequent in Crete and are depicted on various objects such as seals, daggers, and vessels. Ritual hunting certainly existed. It will be remembered that both the Minoan Young God and the priests are represented as hunters with a bow (figs. 88a, 163, 166). Yet, full discussion of hunting would go beyond the scope of this work. Only a few types of hunting, which may have been connected with rites of passage, will be treated here.

One interesting case is the representation on the so-called Chieftain's Cup, already mentioned in previous chapters (fig. 224).⁵⁵ The scene can be described as one of presentation. A young man on the right, often referred to as the chieftain or prince, receives a procession of men carrying animal hides, possibly of bulls.⁵⁶ The procession is led by a youth,

who, on account of his short hair and hairstyle with a top-notch, can be identified as younger than the chieftain.⁵⁷ The hides are thus presented to the chieftain. We have already observed in chapter 6 that the latter is identical in appearance to the Minoan Young God: he has the same long, flowing hair, the staff, the jewelry, the commanding gesture of authority. This does not necessarily mean that he is a divine figure; it is possible that he is a member of the ruling class who has assumed the guise of the god.⁵⁸

The youth who does the presentation, on the other hand, seems smaller and less imposing. He is holding a sword and a crooked instrument.⁵⁹ There must be a relation between him and the men carrying the animal hides. The most likely explanation is an initiation scenario:⁶⁰ the youth has led a hunting expedition; he and his team have killed

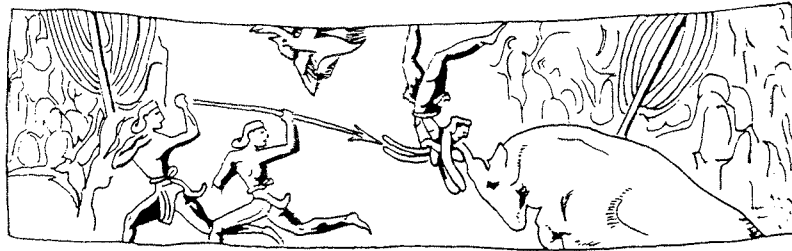


Fig. 225. Scene of bull hunt: from an ivory pyxis; from the cemetery of Katsambas

wild bulls. The ordeal accomplished, he is now presenting the evidence of the successful hunt to the chieftain or god, at the same time offering him the hides as a gift.

Hunting of bulls must have been of major importance, which is hardly a surprise. In the absence of lions and the fantastic predatorial creatures at the top of the animal hierarchy (see chapter 9), the bull was the most formidable animal indigenous to Crete.⁶¹ That it was perceived as an adversary⁶² can be seen from the figurines found in the circular tombs of the Mesara. Human figures, small in comparison to the bull, are hanging from the horns of the animal (fig. 17).⁶³ The size of the bull emphasizes its imposing nature. As to the men hanging from the horns, the iconography can be best understood not as realistic, but rather as a symbolic rendition of action, the message being that the animal is overcome through the superior cunning and skill of the human opponent.

Bulls were obviously also caught in nets⁶⁴ so as to be captured alive, but this subject will not be our concern here. More relevant is a representation on a Neopalatial ivory vessel⁶⁵ which depicts young men with long hair armed with spears engaged in a bull hunt (fig. 225). Again the animal looms large and is

shown in an aggressive, charging position: one gets the impression of a dangerous adversary. The most interesting detail is that one of the hunters has got hold of the bull's horns and is being tossed upward. This shows that the purpose of the hunt was not only to kill the bull but somehow to manipulate him by use of skill. Most striking is the combination of hunting by spear and catching the bull by the horns, because it establishes a connection between bull hunting and bull leaping.

Bull Leaping

How bull leaping was performed is a subject of great controversy.⁶⁶ Evans thought that the iconography reproduced the activity realistically and attempted a reconstruction of the procedure.⁶⁷ But nowadays few would believe that it is possible for an acrobat, no matter how skilled, to catch a charging bull by the horns, perform a leap over his back and land on his feet, as Evans assumed. In my opinion, the iconography has elements of symbolic exaggeration. Rather than showing the process in a realistic, step by step manner, the artistic depictions concentrate on the essence of the feat, which consists of outwitting the bull, rendering him al-

most ridiculous by turning his potency into a vehicle for display of human skill. The existence of some kind of acrobatics performed over the bull's back (probably sideways) is not to be doubted, but we must not take art at face value; its primary purpose is communication, and communication makes use of symbolism and hyperbole. Already in the figurines from the Mesara there is a lack of realism, since the bull is made disproportionately large in comparison to the humans.

I have suggested elsewhere⁶⁸ that bull leaping was connected with bull hunting, that it indeed developed out of it. It can be regarded as a transformation of hunting transferred into an urban setting. Most bull leaping scenes come from frescoes in the palace of Knossos⁶⁹ and from seals and rings⁷⁰ where they seem to have had an emblematic character, like human contests. Both media express official art and ideology and it is clear that the activity was connected with the ruling elite and that it was controlled by it.

What seem to me even more significant are the ideas behind bull leaping: the conception of the bull as an adversary, the need to prove superior human skill, the opposition between man and nature. Most importantly, bull games provide an arena for display of the young men of the aristocracy. Again an initiation framework is very likely, especially if we remember that bull leaping is performed only by young persons. That the activity entailed great dangers for the acrobats can be shown from the scene on the Boxer Rhyton, where a young man is transfixed by the horns of a bull (fig. 220).

If bull leaping and hunting represent two sides of the same coin, as I have argued, there is an anomaly that needs to be explained; female bull leapers. Ever since Evans excavated the frescoes at

Knossos, he assumed that there were female as well as male leapers.⁷¹ He came to this conclusion because some of the figures engaged in jumping the bull were white and the convention red/brown for male, white for female, seems to always hold. However, there are problems with this assumption, which, incidentally, is almost never challenged,⁷² so that it is better to revise our notions of the meaning of the color code.

One major problem pertains to artistic conventions of rendering males and females. It is a paradox that so much emphasis has been placed on color when there are other, equally valid criteria for male-female distinctions, such as anatomy and clothing. Indeed it is the latter two features that enable us to differentiate between the sexes in media other than painting, such as engravings and reliefs, where color cannot be used. If we look at such features, the supposed female bull leapers look definitely male. They have broad torsos with articulated chest muscles and no breasts. They wear male codpieces with pronounced phallus sheaths and boots.⁷³ Compare the leaper on figure 226 with a typical male such as the chieftain in figure 224. An objection could be raised that girls could not wear a skirt while performing. This may be valid, but I do not see why a codpiece with phallus sheath (the latter is an unmistakable mark of manliness⁷⁴) is the only and obvious alternative to the skirt.

A second problem is this: what is the ritual logic behind girls leaping over a bull? If the connotations were sexual (which is a conceivable hypothesis),⁷⁵ then the male leapers would be out of place. If, on the other hand, the idea is that the bull is an adversary to be hunted or outwitted, as I have suggested, then it pertains to a domain which belongs exclusively to the male sphere.⁷⁶ Women, as far as I know, are normally not hunters, except in myth.⁷⁷



Fig. 226. Knossos. Bull Leapers fresco

Add to these a third point, that in Minoan ritual art the sexes rarely mingle.⁷⁸

If bull leaping was performed only by young men, what could be the significance of the white color? Let us first observe that in the artistic conventions of other ancient Mediterranean cultures, color was used to express distinctions of hierarchy (white are those people less exposed to the sun, hence superior in status) or age (those of more tender years have whiter skin),⁷⁹ even within the same gender. It is significant that in the extant frescoes of bull leaping it is only the dark figures that are actually shown as performing the vault; the white ones are shown as either hanging from the horns or as standing on the ground.⁸⁰ Moreover, only the dark ones wear boots. The iconography thus alludes to a differentiation of tasks, if not of status. One possibility is that the white figures are younger, less skilled. Being younger, they are also more "female". This would make particularly good sense in an initiation scenario. Compare this with those Greek myths which make references to initiation by dramatizing the emergence of the young man from a "feminine" guise.⁸¹

Thus hunting, contests, and ordeals played an important part in the life of the Minoans. What is interesting is the major role allotted to the bull. That an animal adversary was chosen as one of the more frequent motifs in the iconography is not fortuitous. More than its Oriental neighbors, Crete remained particularly close to nature.

11

MINOAN RELIGION AFTER THE FALL OF THE PALACES

Shrines and Cult after the Fall of the Palaces

Around 1450 (the end of the LM IB period) an untoward event led to the destruction of virtually all palaces and mansions with the exception of Knossos, which survived in a remodeled form until about 1375–1350 (LM IIIA/B).¹ It is certain that sometime within this period (LM IB–LM IIIA/B), the inhabitants of the mainland, the Greek-speaking Mycenaeans, arrived and took over the Knossos palace;² they also introduced their own language, which is attested on tablets inscribed with Linear B. The language of the latter is Greek. The burning of the palace resulted in the accidental preservation of the clay Linear B tablets; they were "baked" by the fire. Thus, when the Knossos palace was destroyed, *the Mycenaeans were already there.*

Questions remain: what was the original untoward event that led to the destruction of most palaces? Theories range from natural catastrophes, such as earthquakes or the eruption of the volcano of Thera,³ to invasions by the Mycenaeans.⁴ What complicates the

matter is the issue of absolute versus relative chronology.⁵ I am inclined toward a more complex view: a combination of various factors, such as economic impoverishment (which could have been caused by a natural disaster), a famine or a plague,⁶ social unrest, and social rebellion. If we accept a combination of causes, rather than a monolithic explanation, we can more easily envisage the collapse of the *entire system*. For it is surely the system collapse that needs explanation, rather than the mere physical destruction of buildings.⁷

Whatever happened, one thing is certain: the upper classes lost credibility with the populace. The mansions and the palatial culture were gone. And yet, since Knossos survived, it perhaps emerged as a winner and ruled over the entire island for a while.⁸ Perhaps the cause of its survival is to be found in the presence of the Mycenaeans. Did they come peacefully, perhaps invited? Were there dynastic intermarriages? Or did they come as conquerors?

An accurate historical picture is difficult to reconstruct, but this issue is not of major concern for a work dealing with

religion. What matters is that the collapse did occur and that a new configuration of social institutions emerged.

It should be emphasized that the end of the palaces was not the end of Minoan civilization. On the contrary, some towns, such as the coastal settlement of Kommos in southern Crete, experienced a new flourish, for some time at least.⁹ Trade went on.¹⁰ It is only the three palaces and the mansions that faded out of the picture. The destruction of the palatial theocracy coupled with the arrival of the Mycenaeans resulted in an introduction of new features even in the field of religion.

Postpalatial religion (I essentially refer to the period after 1450 here, without attempting further differentiation) is as yet insufficiently explored and would perhaps deserve a monograph in its own right. I shall attempt no thorough investigation here, but merely a sketch of the main issues.

The first question is to what extent there is continuity with the Palace era. This can be answered easily: the continuity of the symbols and attributes of the goddesses show that there is essential unity in the beliefs.¹¹ What changes is the external manifestation of the cult; there is an alteration in those components which are more susceptible to and dependent on social change.

Let us start with the observation that, with the end of the palaces, adyta and pillar crypts fall out of use. Many adyta are filled in and reused, while others are abandoned entirely.¹² Pier-and-door systems are no longer constructed. There is an impoverishment in the repertoire of the imagery, especially since the production of frescoes and high-quality rings diminishes. The materials used are poorer, too, whereas style becomes more crude and expressionistic. The most striking of all innovations are clay

figures of females of varying sizes, often found in groups. They seem to represent goddesses. There is also a new type of shrine.

This new type of shrine can be defined as a relatively small room containing a bench, directly accessible from the outside. Sometimes it has annexes or storage rooms. Not all Postpalatial shrines conform to this type, of course, but these features deserve emphasis, as they constitute a departure from the typical Neopalatial units with adjacent halls or pier-and-door systems. Nor is the presence of the bench new. The novel feature is that, in some few cases, it is situated across the doorway¹³ and, as the evidence of objects left *in situ* suggests, it was used either for the deposition and display of clay idols or the placement of cult implements.¹⁴ Finally, the accessibility of these shrines directly from a square or street is worth stressing. I have argued that during the Palace period there were hardly any genuine public town shrines, and that cult rooms were incorporated into the mansions or the houses of the local rulers (see chapter 5). It is only after the fall of the palaces that we can perhaps talk of real town shrines.

At Gournia, for example, a shrine of small dimensions stood at the end of a paved lane. Note that the public shrine functioned in this form only *after* the abandonment of the palace of Gournia. Fragments of clay figures, an offering table, tubular stands¹⁵ decorated with sacred horns, small clay birds, etc. were part of the finds (fig. 227).¹⁶ A plausible reconstruction, on the analogy of the Shrine of the Double Axes to be discussed below, is that the figures stood on the bench on display and that the offering table and tubular stands were placed around them or on the floor. Note that one preserved goddess is smaller than the tubular offering stands

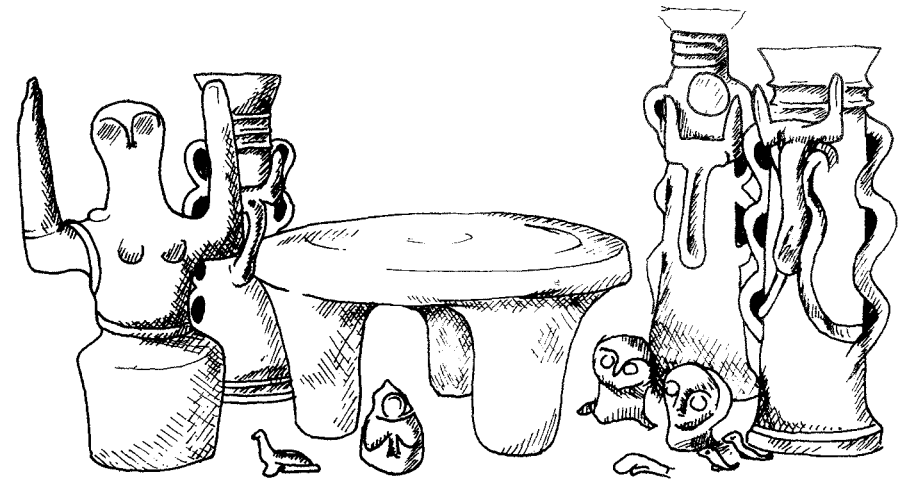


Fig. 227. Cult objects from Gournia

which presumably stood in front of her; this implies that the goddess figures must have been on the bench. Interesting is the emphasis on snakes: one of the clay figures had a snake entwined around her body and arms, whereas the tubular stands also had snakes around the handles. As we shall see, snakes are featured prominently in Postpalatial cult; there are now several "snake goddesses."

Another public Postpalatial shrine was situated near the mansion at Hagia Triada, which, by this time, would likewise have been abandoned. The shrine was square and of relatively small dimensions, accessible through a paved court. It had a broad double-bay door and a marinescape floor.¹⁷ Conical cups and miniature vessels were found upside down on the bench, a typical position of offering. On the floor were tubular stands. No figures have been recovered from this shrine, but it is likely that, had they existed, they would have stood on the bench. Because a great

variety of figurines were found in the adjacent square, another open-air sanctuary with an obviously public character can be safely postulated in the immediate vicinity.

We now move to southern Crete, to Kannia near Gortyn. There, within a large building, were found numerous clay figures of goddesses. They were not concentrated within one room, but were spread throughout the building. The latter was constructed during Neopalatial times. Its plan suggests that it was originally a local ruler's house with numerous storage areas for the agricultural produce. However, in Postpalatial times some of the rooms in the building were reused as repositories for cult equipment. As this area was accessible directly from the outside, it appears to have functioned as a public shrine.¹⁸ The most interesting of the finds, apart from the clay goddesses, are libation tables, tubular stands, a male figurine, a plaque with relief sphinxes, a plaque with a goddess frontally depicted, and



Fig. 228. Knossos. The Shrine of the Double Axes with objects as found on the bench

several others items.¹⁹ Some of the rooms had benches where the clay figures could have stood, although only a few of those and two stone vases were found *in situ*.²⁰ No less than five rooms contained cult material and Gesell is right in noting that some of these must have been used only for storage and preparation. The fact that some of the female clay figures have handles suggests that they may have been carried out in the open, perhaps to be displayed during processions.

The most telling of all the shrines is the Shrine of the Double Axes, because the cult objects were found *in situ* (fig. 228). It was incorporated within the palace of Knossos during its "reoccupation" phase of decline, to use Evans's terminology.²¹ The shrine was small and modest; Evans speaks of "poor materials" and "barbaric shapes."²² Across from the doorway was a raised dais strewn with stone pebbles on which were found miniature vases, bowls, and a tripod table of offerings. On a higher

level still was a bench which contained the main cult items:²³ a female figurine with her arms folded on her chest (the gesture of "self-containment"), showing that she is a votary; horns of consecration; a small steatite double axe; a female votary holding a bird;²⁴ more horns; another female votary similar to the one furthest left; a larger figure with upraised arms and a headdress with a bird. In this last figure most scholars since Evans recognize the goddess.²⁵ This is quite a remarkable assemblage of cult figures. They constitute a tableau in which the act of worship is frozen in time: the worshipers and the deity are shown together.

There was a shrine at Gazi, west of Herakleion, but we do not know if it had any relation to a settlement. It is not inconceivable that it was a rural shrine; what remains is a rectangular room, but no firm conclusions about its character can be drawn. It included five goddess figures, a tubular stand, an offering table, drinking cups, and other pottery.²⁶

From the end of the Postpalatial era, a period often also referred to as Sub-Minoan, comes a shrine situated at the settlement of Karphi in the mountains of eastern Crete. The shrine (often, but misleadingly, called a temple) was public, because it was directly accessible from the outside. It, too, had a bench and yielded cult objects, including at least five goddess figures, the largest ones measuring some 0.85 m. in height. Some of the figures were apparently found on a bench. The shrine had storage rooms, in one of which another goddess was found.²⁷

The Postpalatial shrines with public or semi-public characters have certain common features: benches, clay goddess figures, and sometimes votaries, tubular

offering stands, and cups. It is worth noting that they have a general resemblance to shrines on the Mycenaean mainland. It can thus be plausibly argued that they are characteristic of the later phases of the Aegean Bronze Age.²⁸

The most important issue here, of course, is not the shrines themselves, nor their equipment, but the ritual process for which they were designed. We shall return to this subject later. Now a few words must be said about the goddess figures, which are the most conspicuous feature of Postpalatial cult.

Despite variation in height from approximately 0.10 to 0.85 meters, the figures have some common characteristics. One striking feature is their frontality. This is well worth noting because frontal images of two-dimensional goddesses appear also in other media, such as on a mold from Palaikastro and on a plaque from Kannia, in the same period.²⁹ Frontality as an artistic expression has the advantage of directness, and is thought to typify cultures which stress communication rather than aesthetic complexity.³⁰ The modeling of the figures is simple, dictated by a shape imposed by the wheel (figs. 229-31). The skirt is not at all articulated and resembles a pot. The breasts are small but clearly indicated. The gesture is one of upraised arms, but the position of the palms varies: the idols may be facing the spectator, interacting with him or her, or they may be directed upward, as though communicating with powers above. The heads are by far the most conspicuous feature: large, with round, bulging eyes; they sometimes are crowned with elaborate headdresses. The eyes probably would have been painted: the faces evoke feelings of awe. The figures are of



Fig. 229. Goddess idols from Gazi

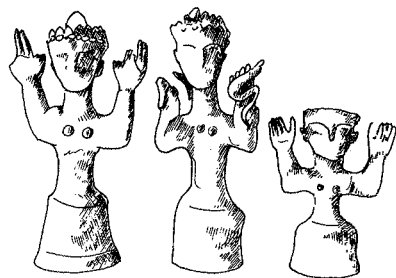


Fig. 230. Goddess idols from Kannia



Fig. 231. Goddesses from Kannia

ten adorned with objects which are attributes of the divinity: snakes may be entwined around the body and arms (Gournia, Kannia); birds may be perching on the face (Kannia, fig. 230-31); birds, snakes, poppies, and elliptical objects³¹ may be on the headdress. All these elements are attributes or cult objects associated with the goddess in Palatial religion; it is thus natural to assume that there is continuity of belief with the preceding era and that the figures do, in fact, represent goddesses. The alternative is that the idols are priestesses masquerading as goddesses, which amounts to the same thing.³² A problem remains: the significance of the variation in the gestures.³³

The conclusion that the figures are representations of divinities does not say much about how they were used in the ritual. Were they cult images in which the potency of the divinity resided? Was food and clothing brought to them? Where were they displayed?

Before any answer is attempted, a few observations might prove useful. One question pertains to the individualization of the goddesses. Most of the shrines here reviewed include several rather than one single figure (except for the Shrine of the Double Axes at Knossos, which has one goddess and three votaries). One might therefore expect that the figures represent the female pantheon of Minoan religion. Male gods are lacking.³⁴ There is, however, a problem: if the figures are goddesses with distinct identities, we would expect them to also have distinctive attributes. This is not so; instead, the cult symbols appear in just about every possible combination, so that one gets the impression that the attributes accorded to the idols were drawn from a pool of symbols applicable to any deity; perhaps the choice was ultimately dictated by artistic idiosyncrasy. Take for example the group from Gazi (fig. 229). One goddess has

poppies on her head, another has birds and horns, a third birds and disks, still another a single bird. In the group from Kannia (figs. 230-31) two figures have snakes on the head, another has a disk; a fourth is of smaller dimensions and has only an indented headdress without ornaments. One of the goddesses is adorned with two different creatures: she has snakes on the headdress and around her arms, whereas a bird is perched on her cheek. Thus, creatures of the earth and sky, respectively, are combined in one figure. For this reason it is impossible to distinguish a celestial goddess, whose attribute would be the bird, from a chthonic one, who would have the snake as the characteristic symbol. Here, too, we must postulate that a general goddess of nature furnished the iconographical prototype.

A second observation relates to the style of most figures, especially those from Gazi. After looking at them carefully at the museum at Herakleion, I got the impression that they were not made by the same workshop. There are details in the molding of the face, lips, and eyes which betray different artists. This means that *they were not designed as a set*. Either they were dedicated by different people on the same occasion, or they accumulated in the shrine over some years. Gesell has also made the interesting remark that to each goddess belongs an offering table or stand. This can be deduced because each utensil set is made with the same clay or is painted with the same pigment.³⁵ The implication again is that the goddesses themselves were not thought of as belonging together; rather, each goddess had her own offering utensil, the two constituting a nexus. The figures from the other shrines also display stylistic differences.³⁶

A third point is the placement of the statuettes. Only those in the Shrine of the Double Axes were found on the



Fig. 232. Frontally depicted idol of a goddess; mold from Palaikastro

bench, the others were on the floor or in storage. The benches themselves were not always axially placed opposite from the doorway, it is thus not certain that the primary purpose of the ledges was the display of the idols. And yet, the frontality of the figures suggests that they were designed for frontal viewing. This argues in favor of the hypothesis that they were set up on the benches.

Let us now return to the appearance of the idols. It has been observed above that the lower part is roughly modeled and has hardly any articulation. Could it be that the figures were dressed with real dresses on ritual occasions? This hypothesis finds support in the frontal image of a goddess on a mold from Palaikastro (fig. 232). On the mold, the goddess is depicted as an idol. (Note especially the absence of feet at the bottom.) And yet she wears an elaborate flounced skirt! The dressing and adornment of the clay figures would have en-

hanced their appearance; at least they would have looked more festive and impressive than they do now.

A final point: the smallest figure from Kannia (fig. 230) has a handle on the back which suggests that it was carried. It is tempting to postulate processions during which the idols would be paraded around. Their bell-shaped bottoms and hollow forms would facilitate rather than impede transportation. The multiple numbers would enhance the prestige of the occasion, but it is doubtful that individual deities were recognizable. Perhaps each figure represented an individual dedication by an important family or clan in the community.

As mentioned above, shrines with benches were found also on the Mycenaean mainland. A further similarity is that clay female figures occur there as well. The Minoans had influenced the Mycenaeans, but the Mycenaean presence in Crete during the Postpalatial period must, in turn, have affected religious expression in Crete.³⁷ Some kind of religious *koine* was probably operative in the whole Aegean. For this reason it is worth looking at Tiryns, where the excavations have thrown new light into the procedures of Mycenaean religion of about 1250–1100 BC.

K. Kilian, after having studied both the architectural articulation of the shrines and their relation to the town and the cult equipment, came to the conclusion that one of the principal activities was the carrying of idols in procession.³⁸ The deposition of the idols within the shrine, on the bench or on the altar, constituted the final act of dedication after processions and sacrifices. Clay figures were found also in storage areas within the shrines at Mycenae. It is a plausible hypothesis that the Minoan shrines also were designed for the final deposition of the figures after they were used in ritual activities carried out



Fig. 233. Procession of standards from the festival of Sokaris at Medinet Habu

in the open. The idols may have remained on display for some time after the festival, to be eventually cleared or stored away to make room for a new set. The shrines can thus be regarded as the spatial terminal point of a procession during which the goddesses would be paraded, much like images or icons of saints are paraded today in the Catholic and Orthodox churches. Closer to Minoan times were the processions of standards or of the images of the gods themselves in Egypt (fig. 233).³⁹

Many features of Postpalatial cult remain elusive; and yet the differences with Palatial religion are striking. No evidence for goddess impersonation exists; but the clay idols, crude as they may appear in comparison with the faience snake goddesses from the temple repositories at Knossos, have an expressiveness and an immediacy which is impressive. Impersonation by some privileged priestess was not possible any longer, but there remained the need for concreteness which the clay images were now required to fulfill.

Postpalatial Funerary Art

Funerary painting is conspicuous only for its rarity during the Palace period. This may have to do with the remarkable and as yet inexplicable fact of the scarcity of Neopalatial burials.⁴⁰ On the other hand, one would expect that funerary buildings, such as the Temple Tomb at Knossos, would have been decorated with frescoes; none have been found, although the ceiling of one of the crypts was painted blue.⁴¹

One type of funerary art flourished at the end of the Palace era, however: painting on clay coffins (the technical name is *larnakes*). Figurative scenes make their appearance already around 1400 with the sarcophagus from Hagia Triada (figs. 27–32). In LM IIIA–B (1400–1220 BC) the tradition continues, but the subjects as well as the iconography undergo a transformation.⁴² There is a remarkable change of style after about 1400–1375 BC. The impression is of a crude, childlike execution, especially when it comes to human and animal fig-



Fig. 234. Larnax from Pachyammos

ures. The explanation is not difficult to find. At this time wall paintings were hardly being produced any more, and the painting tradition had to divorce itself completely from this art, the rules of which had been evolving for at least two centuries. Instead, the inspiration for the images on the larnakes came from pottery, rich in ornamental motifs of the floral and marine repertoire.⁴³ For this reason, the plant and marine designs on the larnakes display a certain sophistication and stylization in contrast to the much cruder human and animal figures, for which there was no tradition in vase painting.

A characteristic feature of the style is the lack of naturalistic proportions and the seemingly disorderly arrangement of the figures in space. Ground lines are often ignored and there is a mixing of profile and bird's-eye view perspectives; it is the kind of art that Egyptologists often call *aspective*. This term implies a combination of different vantage points for the same figure: profile, frontality, or bird's-eye view. The adoption of this idiom is not fortuitous: the Minoan artists certainly had definite ideas to get across.

Now there arose the need to represent an all-encompassing view of large field or space. In order to achieve this, they had to depart from the precedents set by the vase painters whose task was only to ornament the convex surface of a pot. The larnax artist had to indulge in bold experiments and to invent a pictorial mode which would be suitable to scenes of a semi-narrative character.

There is another peculiarity in this style of painting: there are incongruent iconographical elements which appear nonsensical. An octopus beneath a chariot (fig. 242), the combination of fish and plants (fig. 234), a chariot riding among sea creatures (fig. 238). The reason for this apparent incoherence lies in the symbolic nature of the scenes; naturalism has been sacrificed to an art form that is primarily conceptual. The trend is not new (see chapter 9); here we only see the logical outcome of the Minoan tendency toward symbolic expression.

The repertoire of themes on the painted clay coffins is restricted and, despite the regional variation between east and west Crete, the themes display a certain uniformity. Predominant is the

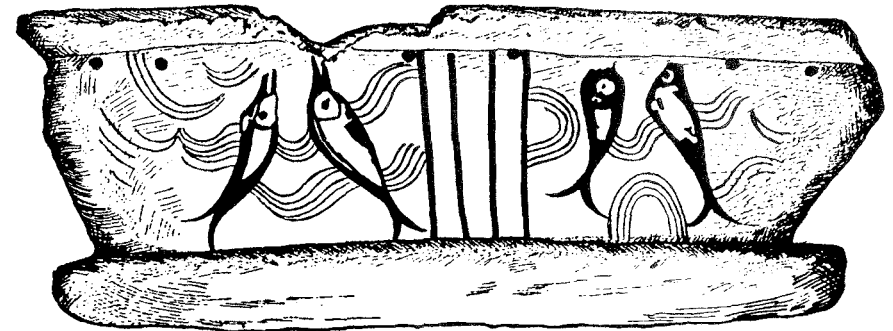


Fig. 235. Lid of a larnax from Messi, western Crete

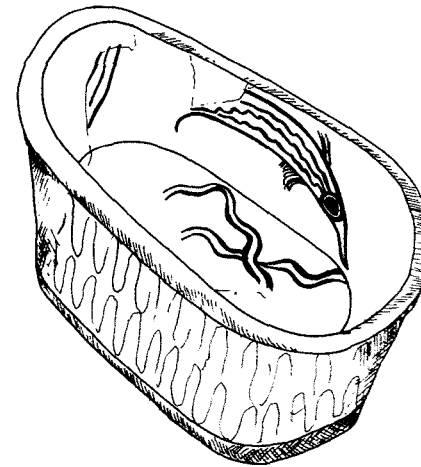


Fig. 236. Interior of a larnax from Piskokephalo

sea and its creatures: octopuses, squids, fish, argonauts, even ships.⁴⁴ The ship, of course, is the means of transportation to the beyond, rather than a reference to the occupation of the dead.⁴⁵

Most clay coffins are simply decorated with fish, octopuses, or other creatures of the sea (fig. 235). The explanation is firstly that mollusks have a regenerative quality which makes them appropri-

ate symbols in a funerary context (see chapter 9). Secondly, they enrich the seascape, the marine counterpart of terrestrial fecundity (figs. 234–35). Just as the earth is a tomb that receives the corpse and, at the same time, sends forth crops which are necessary for sustenance, likewise the sea can be regarded as a source of life and a final resting place for the dead. Marine motifs abounded already during the New Palace period in religious and even tomb contexts;⁴⁶ in Postpalatial art the association becomes explicitly funerary.

That the sea is meant to receive the dead is shown by the fact that fish are painted on the interior surfaces of the larnakes (fig. 236).⁴⁷ Thus, the inside of the coffin imitates the sea. Perhaps this is a clue to understanding the paradox of the scarcity of Neopalatial burials.⁴⁸ Could it be that the dead were at that time placed in boats and carried away by the waves? Burial at sea, suggested to me by E. Davis, is a tempting hypothesis. If that was the case, the custom was abandoned after the fall of the palaces, but the iconography of the larnakes is a symbolic reference to this practice.

Also important are plants, especially those that had sacred associations already during the Palace periods, such as

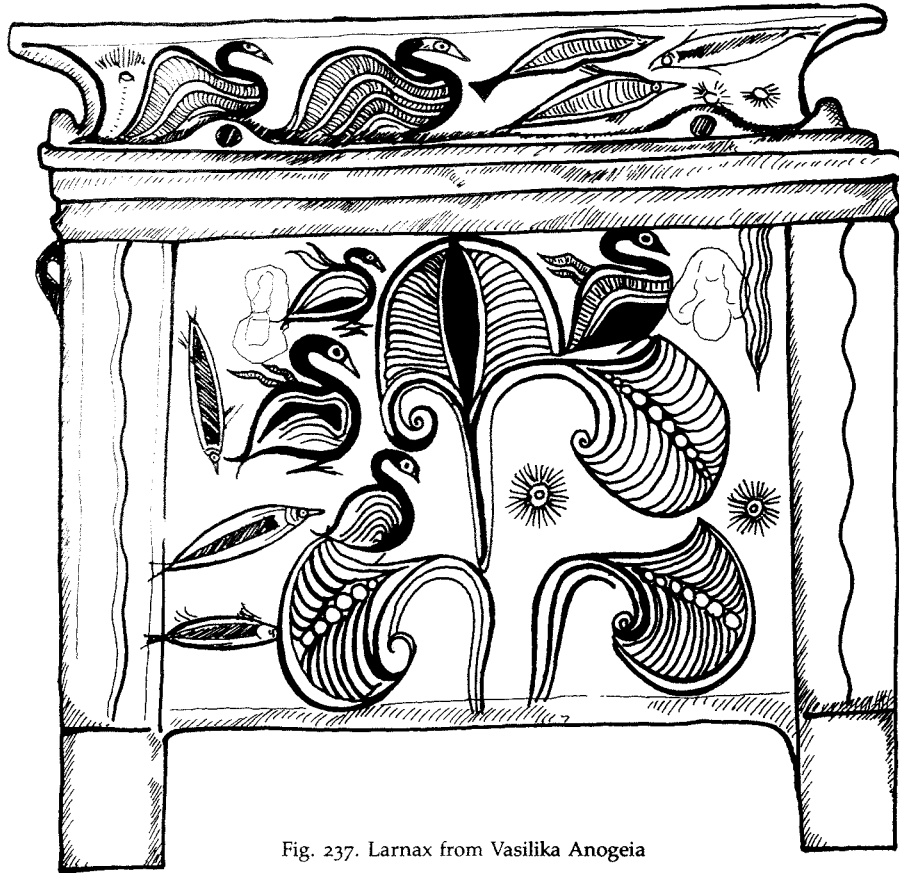


Fig. 237. Larnax from Vasilika Anogeia

papyri and palms (fig. 237).⁴⁹ There are other species as well, often stylized beyond recognition. The sacredness of the plants is shown by the fact that they are mixed with cult implements as on a larnax from Palaikastro.⁵⁰ Sometimes the plant scenes are enriched with birds, which makes for a more lively picture (fig. 237).⁵¹ Plants allude to regeneration and fertility; we have seen that this symbolism had emerged already during the Palace period (see chapter 9).

Startling are those scenes in which there is a mixture of birds with marine creatures such as fish and octopuses.⁵² Perhaps the most bizarre and "surrealistic" of all the larnakes is the one from Kavrochori (figs. 238-39), in the vicinity of modern Herakleion.⁵³ We find there the full repertoire of motifs: animals whose horns turn into branches(!), papyrus plants, birds, fish, octopuses, nautili, a snake, double axes, and sacred horns. The deliberate mixing of environ-



Fig. 238. Larnax from Kavrochori

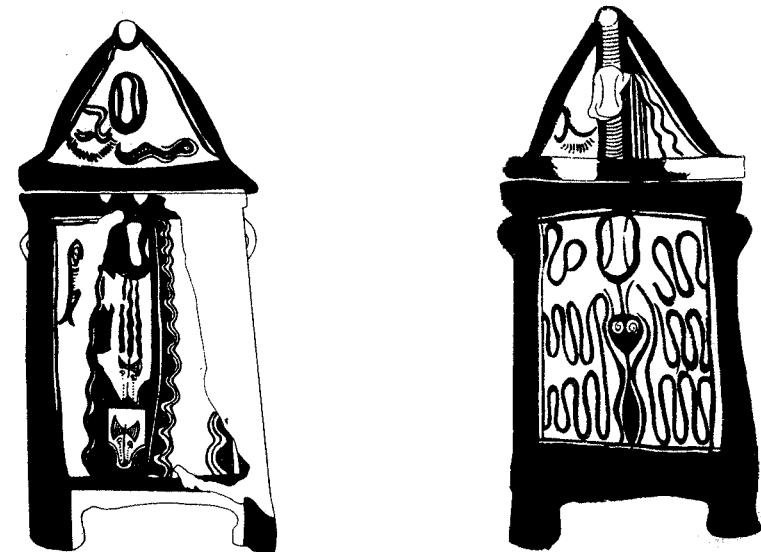


Fig. 239. Larnax from Kavrochori. Short sides

ments that should logically remain separate finds its boldest expression here: a bird is about to perch on a sea creature (nautilus). A chariot traverses a fantastic landscape consisting of a bird on a papyrus plant on the left and creatures of the sea on the right. The chariot is seen from above, but the horses are shown in profile. This aspective view, which combines different types of perspective as we noted earlier, aims at representing a field, as if seen from above.

The chariot is the strangest element. It is empty of passengers; moreover, the horses are unyoked and are depicted at the rear end of the chariot! The whole scene is characterized by a contrived unreality. The idea that the chariot is a vehicle for the invisible dead, riding through the fantastic landscape of the beyond, is an attractive one.⁵⁴ There may even be a hint at an actual cult practice, the transference of the corpse in a chariot to its final resting place.

The double axes mixed with fish on one of the short sides bring us back to the more familiar world of ritual.

This Postpalatial "surrealism" is not entirely new in Minoan art. Its origins lie already in the art of the Palace era, where there was a deliberate mixing of biotopes to produce a landscape infused with fertility. The idea behind the mixed motifs of the larnakes is to create a composite environment, a symbolic landscape in which creatures from all the realms are represented—land, sea, and air.

Sometimes the principal subject consists of horned animals, such as bulls, wild goats, and deer. In my view, they, too, can be considered as parts of the landscape of abundance, especially since females suckling their offspring are common (figs. 240–41).⁵⁵ Animal heads, especially those of bulls, appear as terracotta attachments on the lids of



Fig. 240. Larnax from Armenoi

some coffins, which implies that they have an emblematic function (fig. 244);⁵⁶ on one of the lids a bucranium is painted.⁵⁷ The religious associations are most evident in the cases where the animals encounter sacred symbols such as double axes or sacred horns.⁵⁸

We now turn to scenes of a semi-narrative character, where we have a story rather than mere pictorial statement. These deal almost exclusively with hunting (figs. 240–44), the animals being hunted either by humans, or by dogs, or by both.⁵⁹

On a larnax from Armenoi in western Crete, one of the long sides is taken up by a hunting scene (fig. 240).⁶⁰ Wild cows and a goat are hunted. All three animals are suckled by young, and this must be a reference to fertility. Of the human figures one is holding leaf-shaped objects which may be nets. Another holds a sword with which he pierces the head of one bull. A third is displaying a small double axe. The field is interspersed with ovoid loops. Perhaps they are rocks; at any rate, they

the larnax, the artist may be attempting a combination of viewpoints: the scene can be equally well comprehended whether we look at it straight up or upside down. A bird's-eye view of space is achieved and thus the scope is broadened, and nature is viewed in its totality.

The same artist, using the same idiosyncratic medium, has painted the short side of another larnax, from Maroulas (fig. 241).⁶² Here, likewise, the horned animal is struck by a spear as a hunter is piercing it with a sword.⁶³ A second animal (a goat?) is shown in a different spatial setting as it is enveloped by the ovoid loop. Vegetation at the upper left and right-hand corners of the panel frames the picture and suggests a landscape seen from above.

That the hunting scene on the larnax from Armenoi is ritual in nature is suggested by the double axe held by the principal figure. It will be remembered that there is a large double axe on the other side of the larnax: a deliberate visual echo. The figure must be a priest; his status is emphasized by his placement inside the loop. Are we to imagine a priest within a cave? At any rate, he is displaying the double axe, and it is very likely that his gesture is related to the hunt. A similar priestly official displaying a sort of mace is depicted on the short side of a larnax from Vatheianos Kampos.⁶⁴

The function of the hunting scenes is usually assumed to have a connection with sacrifices performed during funerary rituals; one of the main scenes on the sarcophagus from Hagia Triada depicts the sacrifice of a bull (fig. 30).⁶⁵ However, here we are not dealing with sacrifice, but rather hunting under the auspices of ritual. In this context, a role for the priestly figure holding up the double axe might emerge: to ensure success in the hunt. Is that why animals

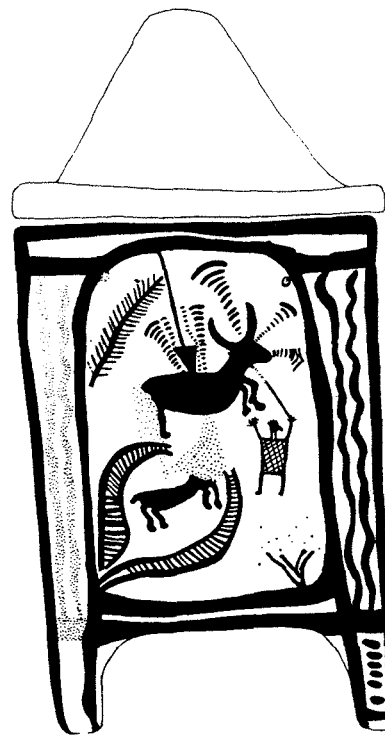


Fig. 241. Larnax from Maroulas, western Crete

must be landscape features. Two birds and a plant complete the picture. On one of the other sides of the larnax, there is a double axe between sacred horns.

At first there is seeming disorder in the disposition of the figures in space. One of the hunters is in a horizontal position, and one of the birds at the lower end is upside down.⁶¹ This peculiar position of the figures is analogous to the inverted landscape scenes in Palatial art. There, rocks hanging from the upper border of the picture suggest depth and consequently a wider field. In the case of

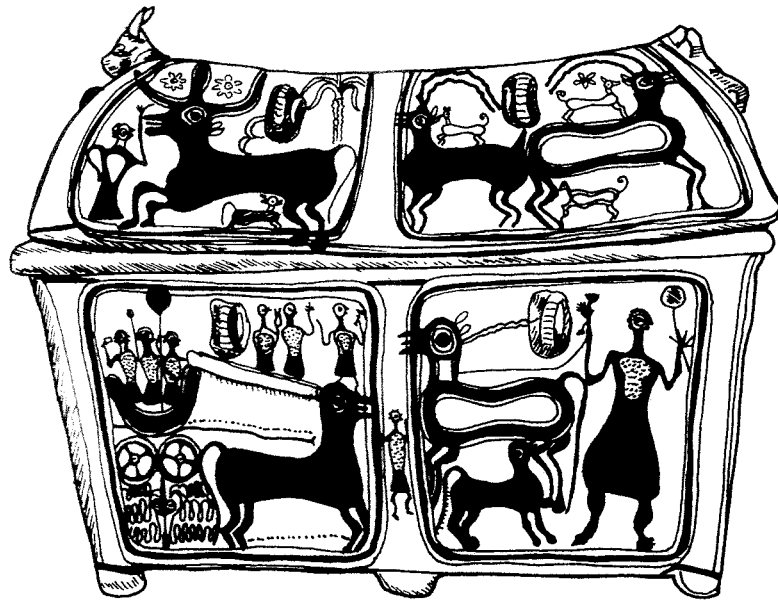


Fig. 242. Larnax from Episkopi. Side A

and sacred symbols are intermixed on other larnakes? More about hunting later.

A larnax from Episkopi in eastern Crete is decorated on all its four sides; its lid is painted as well (figs. 242–44). The result is several panels constituting an iconographical program which revolves around hunting.⁶⁶

Side A of the larnax is divided into two distinct panels which are linked by a small human figure between them. The scenes, therefore, though independent, are definitively related. In the left panel there is a chariot drawn by a horse recognizable by the long tail. Beneath the vehicle is an octopus, the significance of which is symbolic; I would suggest that the octopus acts as a sign suggesting the sea and the beyond, thus defining the scene as funerary.

In the chariot are three men carrying standards which end in disks. Three more men are walking next to the chariot; they seem to be holding stemmed cups and other small objects which cannot be securely identified; they may be mirrors or parasols. The scene depicts some kind of ceremony; a reasonable hypothesis is that the procession is related to a funeral or the cult of the dead, in which case ritual drinking was involved.

The right panel of side A has a single man. In one of his hands he holds a mirror(?), in the other a drinking vessel(?); he is thus holding the same set of objects as the men in the procession of the previous panel. Attached to the same hand is a rope, the other end of which is tied around a horse. It is important to note that the animal is female and is being suckled by its young. The solitary man

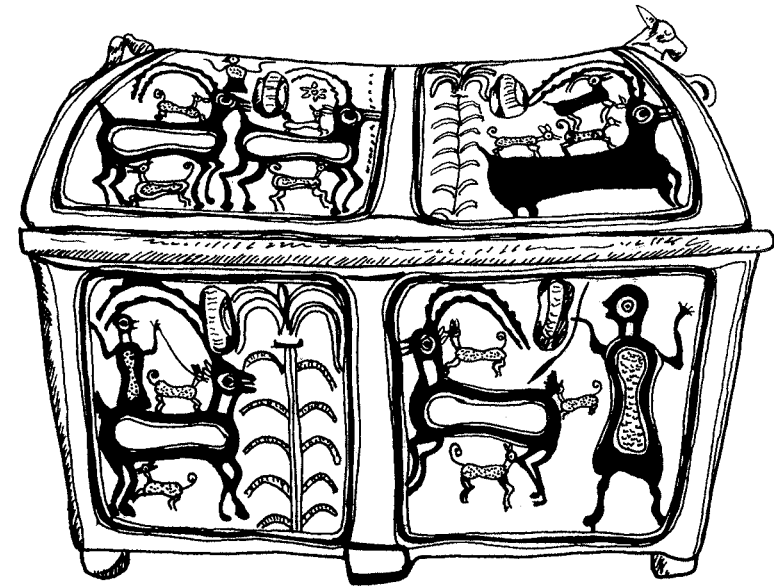


Fig. 243. Larnax from Episkopi. Side B

in this scene, occupying the whole panel, must be important. Is he the dead himself or is he a priest, like the one on the larnax from Armenoi (fig. 240)? Whoever he may be, he has a special link with the animal world. Although he is not a hunter, he controls the suckled animal. We may proceed one step further and say that he controls fecundity. This is indicated by the rope, one end of which is tied around the neck of the beast, the other around the man's wrist. Can we venture the hypothesis that the dead is depicted as a Master of Animals?

The lid above side A is also divided into two panels. The left one shows a man before a deer that is being suckled; the landscape is designated by palms. The right panel depicts two wild goats attacked by dogs. Hunting by predators and animal fecundity are here juxtaposed and combined.

The two scenes of side B on the Episkopi larnax, as well as those on the lid, deal exclusively with hunting. The hunters are either men with spears, or dogs, or a combination of both; the animals are wild goats.

Goats attacked by dogs are shown also on one of the short sides, whereas the lid above depicts an octopus with spiral and flower motifs.

The decoration is completed by terracotta attachments on the lid. On one side is the head of a bovid, its tail appearing at the other end. Below the tail is the body of a woman with knees slightly bent as though she is giving birth.

What is the message of the iconographical program? It is clear that hunting is the predominant theme, but what is its significance?

I venture to suggest that the hunting

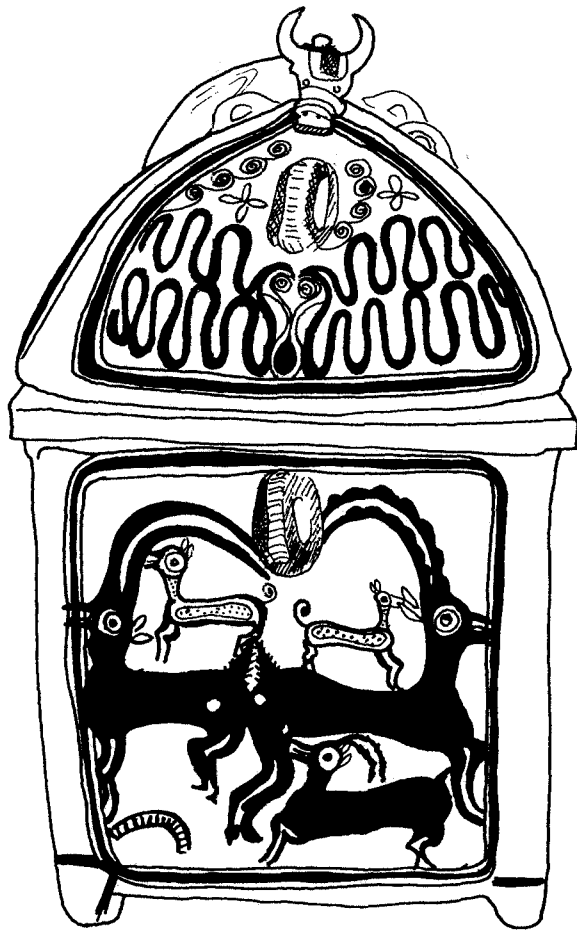


Fig. 244. Larnax from Episkopi. Short side

in this case, as well as on the previously discussed larnakes, is related to the procuring of food. One important detail: the hunters here are not shown as adversaries of the animals. The hunt is not represented as being dangerous to the humans, in which case the artistic message would have emphasized the prow-

ess and bravery or even the aristocratic descent of the hunters. Instead, men are shown as being *completely in control* while the animals are passive. One goat on the right panel of side B turns its back to the human hunter. The protagonist of side A, be he a priest or the deceased, holds an unresisting animal on a leash.

Thus, the artistic code unambiguously stresses that man is a master of nature, able to utilize it for his own purposes. Further signs indicate that the animals are related to fecundity and abundance. Firstly, some animals are suckled by their young. Secondly, the attachments on the lid of the Episkopi larnax are in the form of a bovid and a woman. The combination suggests an affinity between the two, the common denominator being fecundity/fertility. The logic is actually simple, if not primeval: abundance of food can be obtained only through hunting.

Funerary scenes including chariots and cattle also exist outside Crete. Noteworthy is a special class of Cypriot pottery found in tombs; they are commonly called Cypro-Mycenaean chariot kraters, and it has been observed that their style betrays Minoan influences.⁶⁷ One of these vases in particular deserves our attention. It has been named the Zeus-krater, because one of the figures holds scales, thus reminding one of the famous scene in Book 22 of the *Iliad*, where Zeus weighs the "scales of destiny" in order to decide the fate of Hector.⁶⁸

The scene (fig. 245) can be described as follows. Two huge symmetrical octopods, flanked by large birds and small palms, frame the main subject. Two men with long spotted robes stand in a horse-drawn chariot. They are met by a similarly clad figure holding what looks like a pair of scales. Below is a vegetation motif and a man carrying a strange double-triangle object which has not been satisfactorily identified.⁶⁹ Above the chariot is a bull.

It should be stressed that the iconography is not purely Minoan; the code is similar but distinct from that of the Cretan larnakes. A wide range of interpretations has been proposed for the

Zeus-krater. Some have seen a purely secular transaction, while others have focused on the figure with the scales and deduced a last judgment. Others yet have identified the same figure with Zeus himself.⁷⁰ None of the above views takes into account the bizarre but not unimportant octopuses looming large between the main scene and the landscape with the birds and palms. And yet, it is precisely the octopods that specify the meaning of the representation as funerary. There is more to be said about them. It has been observed that the two creatures are not identical, but that the left one has an additional tentacle which is the male reproductive organ.⁷¹ The two polypods then could be identified as male and female, which would be an obvious reference to regeneration/fertility, along with the palm, papyrus, and water bird motifs.

As for the pair of scales held by the figure facing the chariot, they point in a funerary direction. Actual scales have been found in Mycenaean graves; they are also commonly depicted in Egyptian scenes of the underworld and are held by the god Anubis.⁷²

What is not clear is whether the scene takes place in this world or in the beyond. Is the figure with the scales pronouncing a last judgment, or is he deciding about life and death? Both interpretations are possible, but the connection with afterlife beliefs seems rather probable. The suggestion that the chariot is a vehicle for the transportation of the dead is a plausible one;⁷³ perhaps the octopus below the chariot on the Episkopi larnax (fig. 242) signifies that the chariot traverses the sea to reach the other world. Yet it is not the last judgment that is our main concern here, but the presence of the bull above the chariot. Thus, animals are seen again in connection with the dead and the otherworld.



Fig. 245. Cypro-Mycenaean chariot krater from Enkomi, Cyprus

Hunting connected with sustenance finds its parallels in other cultures. Such motifs appear on the larnakes from Tanagra on the mainland.⁷⁴ But the clearest statements are encoded in the iconography of Egyptian tombs. Although no direct influence from pharaonic to Minoan funerary art is likely, it is worth stressing once more that the mental frameworks of the Minoans and Egyptians were not very different. Several tombs, from the Old Kingdom onward, depict suckling or birthing animals in nature. These animals, however, are frequently shown as hunted or attacked by predators or human hunters.⁷⁵ One way in which the iconographical program could be organized was to show hunting and fishing at the entrance corridors of the tombs, whereas food offerings would be more frequent in the funerary chapel proper. The implication is that hunting and fishing turn into victual offerings.⁷⁶ It is to be further noted that the owners of the tombs are commonly shown as hunters and fishermen themselves; they are not embarked on pleasure trips, but are rather the utilizers of the resources of nature.

Even some Etruscan tomb paintings depict hunting and fishing. It is hardly an accident that above the scene of hunt-

ing and fishing in the tomb of the same name in Tarquinia there is a banquet scene!⁷⁷ Behind these schemata lies the awareness that sustenance, hunting, and death are interlinked. At the same time, the procuring of food is defined as a polarity to death because it emphasizes the continuation of life. As H. A. Groenewegen-Frankfort aptly put it for Egyptian art, "abundance meant throughout not only possessions and a surfeit of food, but a joyful awareness of earth's fecundity, of beasts and plants. . . . These scenes contain an implicit but emphatic denial that death should be a tragic and violent negation of life. . . ." ⁷⁸

Despite its occasional clumsiness, the art of the Postpalatial larnakes must be counted among the most remarkable achievements of the Minoans. With the departure from naturalism, the disregard of reality, and the creation of fantastic landscapes, the paintings constitute a world of their own permeated by abstract concept and symbol. Unlike the scenes on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus, the pictures on the later larnakes are not reflections of actual experience; instead, they consist of a series of pictorial statements which deny the illusion



Fig. 246. Seal from Knossos

of life by stressing what was obviously thought to have been a more permanent reality.

We can hardly characterize this artistic code as primitive; on the contrary, it possesses all the marks of sophisticated abstraction. In this sense its closest successors are the Post-impressionists of the twentieth century who discarded logical relationships as illusory and substituted for them pure "pictorial essence."

The main themes are the trip to the beyond with a chariot, the ideal landscape, and hunting for the procuring of food. There is a distinct role division among the sexes. Females are in charge of fertility and conduct the relevant rites. The terracotta attachment in the form of a woman on the lid of the Episkopi larnax is a most obvious female fertility symbol. Men, on the other hand, are hunters, procurers of food. Even on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus it is the men who bring offerings to the dead.

Hunting or capturing of cattle in connection with afterlife beliefs may seem

like a paradox. And yet in many cultures the function of shamans or priests was precisely this: to retrieve cattle from the "other world."⁷⁹ Perhaps, then, the hunting on the larnakes was conceived not for the benefit of the dead only, as in Egyptian and Etruscan tombs, but as a symbolic quest designed to help the living as well. It is possible that the dead were the mediators.

Of course, the Postpalatial repertoire also displays features that are traditional. The emphasis on hunting is not new, although its ostentatious connection with funerary iconography is. The paintings of the Hagia Triada sarcophagus, in fact, contain many of the elements that recur in the later larnakes. The hunting of cattle has its antecedents in the offering of calves to the dead. The marine symbolism is foreshadowed in the pottery decoration of the New Palace period and in the boat offered to the dead on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus. What is more: on a Palatial seal from Knossos (fig. 246), mollusks, insects, and birds are shown together. The connecting thread is that they are all elements of regeneration (see chapter 9).

The conceptual frame which was manifested in the later larnakes was already formed during the Palace period, and the symbolic world of the larnakes does not represent an entirely different cycle of ideas, but is rooted in Minoan traditions. It is nevertheless remarkable that, even in the twilight of their civilization, the Minoans proved capable of such inventiveness and richness in symbolic thought.

12

CONCLUSIONS

The conceptual framework of Minoan religion, to the extent that it can be deduced from the iconography, has certain similarities with Egyptian and Near Eastern beliefs. The emphasis on death and regeneration; the concept of a fertility goddess and the young hunter/warrior god; sacred marriage of a divine pair; the use of nature imagery as a framework for cyclical regeneration; ritual hunting and animal-based metaphors are at home in both Crete and the Orient. On the social level, the use of monumental visual art (mostly wall paintings in the case of Crete) for the propagation of official ideology is common to Crete and its neighboring civilizations.

It is not my intention to oversimplify the picture and suggest that Oriental religions can be used as models for comprehending the Minoan belief system. The similarities are of a general nature and are useful only insofar as they help us place Minoan Crete within the eastern Mediterranean context in which it belongs.

It is in the sphere of ritual and social organization that the distinctiveness of Minoan Palatial religion makes itself

mostly felt; here there is a notable departure from the Ancient Orient. The Minoan palaces are the case in point: neither the term *palace* nor *temple* accurately describes these buildings which were the heart of the religious and administrative life of the towns. Indeed, palace and temple make sense only in societies where kingship and priesthood are distinct and sometimes rivaling bodies. It is the complete fusion of the sacerdotal office with the ruling class in Crete which, in my view, resulted in a social system and a set of institutions peculiar to the Minoans. If the latter remain inarticulate, it is because we lack the precise vocabulary to describe them. I have attempted to redefine the royal palaces of Sir Arthur Evans as cult centers which controlled and inspired official art and architecture. If this is correct, the conventional distinction between religious and secular art becomes nonsensical. To the extent that art expresses state ideology and social status, it is intimately bound with religion.

The uniqueness of Minoan culture is manifested also in the architectural form of the cult centers. It is not startling that the latter have extensive storage rooms,

workshops, and administrative quarters; the same features recur in Oriental and Egyptian temples. But the absence of architecturally definable focal points situated in the core of the building, inside which would be the cult images or other symbols of the deity, is indeed a departure from the Oriental models. The lack of cult statues as principal *foci* of the cult during the Palace period is also an anomaly. My explanation is that they were rendered unnecessary by the god/goddess impersonation ceremonies.

The evidence for goddess or god impersonation, it will be remembered, is twofold. Firstly, there is architecture: within cult buildings such as the House of the High Priest, the Royal Villa, and the House of the Chancel Screen, not to mention the palace of Knossos itself, there were focal points designed for a seated personage to be displayed. The setup suggests that this personage received almost divine honors. Similar display arrangements recur in the loggia at Malia and the platform stands (conventionally known as theatrical areas) at Knossos and Phaistos.

Secondly, there is the iconographical testimony: the goddess is depicted on several occasions as seated on a platform with an elevated center. I have argued that these platforms mirror real constructions, the implication being that the iconographical type was inspired by cultic performances.

Another unique feature of Minoan cult is the ecstatic visionary epiphany, where the deity appeared to the high priestess, or to a young man, as a vision. Although it is difficult to tell under what circumstances these persons saw the god, this much at least seems clear: claiming a vision must have constituted a mark of status for a privileged elite. The suggestion is prompted by the observation that the vision is never witnessed by a crowd in the pictures; on

seals it is only *one* person who perceives the divinity.

The presence of mansions in the architectural landscape of Palatial Crete also fits well into the social picture. I have tried to argue that the mansions, by imitating the most salient features of the palaces, namely, distinctive architectural units and frescoes, were religious-administrative outposts of the palaces. This delegation of authority shows that the Minoan ruling class was not monolithic but multifarious and flexible. The number of mansions or large buildings, even from the First Palace period, is remarkable and suggests a complex hierarchy and a large number of administrators with a certain amount of autonomy and their own clientele.

As to the absence of ruler iconography to which E. Davis has drawn attention, I can think of only one possibility: the ruling class had such an investment in portraying itself in a divine form that the imagery of the ruler(s) and gods fused. Thus, on the Chieftain's Cup (fig. 100), it is impossible to tell if the so-called chieftain is a mortal or a god. Note that, although there is a distinct iconography for the male bearded priest, young men of the nobility and the Young God are identical; the same holds true for the females and the goddess.

The greatest departure from Oriental models is the absence of the pictorial formula of the "king as a warrior smiting enemies," which is so common in Egypt and the Near East. Obviously, the Minoan rulers had less of an investment in being presented as warriors/conquerors than their Oriental counterparts. Nor is there an emphasis on one single personage, who would be repeatedly portrayed or stand out conspicuously among the crowds, so as to be identified as a king. Crete shows itself peculiar in this respect also. Some aspects of the social structure remain vague and intangible

as yet, but one is led to think that the ruler did not possess the absolute power of an Egyptian pharaoh or a Near Eastern king. At any rate, although neither the warrior imagery nor violence are absent, it looks as if prestige was expressed mostly through religious office.

If the picture that I have attempted to sketch has some truth in it, it follows that the palaces were the backbones of the religious system and that some radical transformations would have occurred after their dissolution. This is indeed what happened. We have seen that in the Postpalatial period, when mansions and palaces fell out of use (it will be remembered that Knossos survived longer than the other palaces but

mansions did not), there were new features in the expression of the cult, although the essential beliefs were retained. The combination of new burial customs, a new type of iconography, and shrines with large clay figures shows that new *foci* and symbols were developing in the socio-religious sphere. No doubt much of the change was due to the Mycenaean presence in Crete in the later phases of the Bronze Age.

Soon the Dorians would arrive and a new kind of syncretism combining Minoan, Mycenaean, and Greek elements would emerge. But by that time, the twilight of the splendid and unique Minoan culture had arrived.

The abbreviations of periodicals are, in general, those listed in the *American Journal of Archaeology* 90 (1986), 384–94 and 92 (1988), 629–30.

AA = *Archäologischer Anzeiger*.

AAA = *Athens Annals of Archaeology*.

'Αρχαιολογικά ἀνάλεκτα ἐξ Ἀθηνῶν.

Aegaeum = Aegaeum. *Annales d'archéologie égéenne de l'Université de Liège*.

AJA = *American Journal of Archaeology*.

AJP = *American Journal of Philology*.

Alexiou, Thea = S. Alexiou, Ἡ μινωική θεὰ μεθ' ὑψωμένων χειρῶν (Herakleion 1958) = *KrChron* 12 (1958), 179–301.

AM = *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung*.

ANET = *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, ed. J. B. Pritchard, 3rd ed. (Princeton, N.J. 1969).

AntK = *Antike Kunst*.

AR = *Archaeological Reports*.

ArchDelt = Ἀρχαιολογικὸν δελτίον.

ArchEph = Ἀρχαιολογική ἐφημερίς.

ArchHom = *Archaeologia Homerica*, ed. F. Matz & H. G. Buchholz (Göttingen 1967–).



ABBREVIATIONS

ASAtene = *Annuario della Scuola Archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni Italiane in Oriente*.

BABesch = *Bulletin Antieke Beschaving*.

Banti, "Culti" = L. Banti, "I culti minoici e greci di Haghia Triada (Crete)," *ASAtene NS* 3–5 (1941–43), 9–74.

BAR = *British archaeological reports*, Oxford.

BCH = *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*.

BdA = *Bolletino d'Arte*.

BICS = *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies of the University of London*.

Bleeker, *Festivals* = C. J. Bleeker, *Egyptian Festivals* (Leiden 1967).

Branigan, FPC = K. Branigan, *The Foundations of Palatial Crete* (London 1970).

Branigan, Tombs = K. Branigan, *The Tombs of Mesara* (London 1970).

BSA = *Annual of the British School at Athens*.

Burkert, GR = W. Burkert, *Greek Religion, Archaic and Classical* (Oxford 1985).

Burkert, HN = W. Burkert, *Homo Necans. Interpretationen altgriechischer Opferriten und Mythen* (Berlin 1972); Engl. transl. *Homo Necans. The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth* (Berkeley 1983).

- Burkert, *S&H* = W. Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley 1979).
- CMS = *Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel*, ed. F. Matz, H. Biesantz & I. Pini, Akademie der Literatur und Wissenschaften, Mainz (Berlin 1964-).
- Davaras, *Guide* = C. Davaras, *Guide to Cretan Antiquities* (Park Ridge, N.J. 1976).
- Doumas, *Thera* = Ch. Doumas, *Thera, Pompeii of the Ancient Aegean* (London 1983).
- ÉtCrét = *Études crétoises*.
- Evans, *PM I-IV* = A. J. Evans, *The Palace of Minos at Knossos I-IV* (London 1921-36).
- Evans, *TPC* = A. J. Evans, "The Mycenaean Tree and Pillar Cult," *JHS* 21 (1901), 99-204.
- Festòs I = L. Pernier, *Il palazzo minoico di Festòs I* (Rome 1935).
- Festòs II = L. Pernier and L. Banti, *Il palazzo minoico di Festòs II* (Rome 1951).
- FMP = *The Function of the Minoan Palaces. Proceedings of the Fourth International Symposium at the Swedish Institute in Athens* (1984), ed. R. Hägg and N. Marinatos (Stockholm 1987).
- Fragen und Probleme* = *Fragen und Probleme der bronzezeitlichen ägäischen Glyptik. Beiträge zum 3. Internationalen Marburger Siegel-Symposium*, 5.-7. September 1985, *CMS Beiheft* 3 (Berlin 1989).
- Frankfort, *Art & Architecture* = H. Frankfort, *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (Harmondsworth 1954).
- Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult* = G. Gesell, *Town, Palace and House Cult in Minoan Crete*, *SIMA* 67 (Göteborg 1985).
- Gifts to the Gods* = *Gifts to the Gods*, ed. T. Linders and G. Nordquist, *Boreas* 15 (Uppsala 1987).
- Graham, *PoC* = J. W. Graham, *The Palaces of Crete* (Princeton 1962; rev. ed. 1987).
- Hägg, "Epiphany" = R. Hägg, "Die göttliche Epiphany im minoischen Ritual," *AM* 101 (1986), 41-62.
- Hood, *Arts* = S. Hood, *The Arts in Prehistoric Greece* (Harmondsworth 1979).
- Hood, *Minoans* = S. Hood, *The Minoans* (London 1971).
- Huntington & Metcalf = R. Huntington and R. Metcalf, *Celebrations of Death* (Cambridge 1979).
- L'Iconographie minoenne* = *L'Iconographie minoenne. Actes de la table ronde d'Athènes* (1983), ed. P. Darceque and J.-C. Poursat, *BCH suppl.* XI (Paris 1985).
- JdI* = *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*.
- JHS* = *Journal of Hellenic Studies*.
- JNES* = *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*.
- JPR* = *Journal of Prehistoric Religion*.
- JRGZM* = *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz*.
- Keel, *SBW* = O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World* (New York 1978).
- KrChron* = *Κρητικά χρονικά*.
- Levi, "Cretule" = D. Levi, "Le cretule di Haghia Triada/Zakro," *ASAtene* 8-9 (1925/26).
- Long, *ATS* = Ch. R. Long, *The Ayia Triada Sarcophagus* (Göteborg 1974).
- Lurker, *Gods & Symbols* = M. Lurker, *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt* (London 1980); original publication in German (1974).
- Mallia, Maisons I* = P. Demargne and H. Gallet de Santerre, *Mallia, Explorations des maisons et quartiers d'habitation* (1921-1948) *ÉtCrét* 9 (Paris 1953).
- Mallia, Maisons II* = J. Deshayes and A. Dessenne, *Mallia. Exploration des maisons et quartiers d'habitation* (1948-1954) *ÉtCrét* 11 (Paris 1959).
- Mallia Maisons III* = O. Pelon, *Mallia. Exploration des maisons et quartiers d'habitation* (1963-1966), *ÉtCrét* 16 (Paris 1970).
- Mallia, Nécropoles* = P. Demargne, *Mallia. Exploration des nécropoles* (1921-1924), *ÉtCrét* 7 (Paris 1945).

- Mallia, Palais I* = F. Chapouthier and J. Charbonneau, *Mallia. Premier rapport* (1922-1924), *ÉtCrét* 1 (Paris 1943).
- Mallia, Palais II* = F. Chapouthier and R. Joly, *Mallia. Deuxième rapport* (1925-1926), *ÉtCrét* 4 (Paris 1936).
- Mallia, Palais IV* = F. Chapouthier and P. Demargne, *Mallia. Exploration du palais. Quatrième Rapport* (1929-1935 et 1946-1960), *ÉtCrét* 12 (Paris 1962).
- Mallia, Palais V* = O. Pelon et al., *Le palais de Malia V. ÉtCrét* 25 (Paris 1980).
- N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion* = N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion in Thera* (Athens 1984).
- N. Marinatos, *MSR* = N. Marinatos, *Minoan Sacrificial Ritual. Cult Practice and Symbolism* (Stockholm 1986).
- Marinatos-Hirmer = Sp. Marinatos, M. Hirmer, *Kreta, Thera und das mykenische Hellas* (München 1974).
- Matz, "Götterscheinung" = F. Matz, "Götterscheinung und Kultbild im minoischen Kreta," *Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz*, 1958:7.
- Minoan Society* = *Minoan Society, Proceedings of the Cambridge Colloquium 1981*, ed. O. Krzyszkowska and L. Nixon (Bristol 1983).
- Minoan Thalassocracy* = *The Minoan Thalassocracy, Myth and Reality. Proceedings of the Third International Symposium at the Swedish Institute in Athens* (1982), ed. R. Hägg and N. Marinatos (Stockholm 1984).
- MonAnt* = *Monumenti antichi*.
- Nilsson, *MMR* = M. P. Nilsson, *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and its Survival into Greek Religion*, 2nd ed. (Lund 1950).
- OpAth* = *Opuscula Atheniensia*.
- Persson, *RGPT* = A. W. Persson, *The Religion of Greece in Prehistoric Times* (Berkeley 1942).
- Platon, "OI" = N. Platon, *Οἰκιακά ἱερά*, *KrChron* 8 (1954).
- Platon, *Zakros* = N. Platon, *Zakros, The Discovery of a Lost Palace in Ancient Crete* (New York 1971).
- Prakt* = *Πρακτικά τῆς ἐν Ἀθήναις Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἐταιρείας*.
- Preziosi, *MAD* = D. Preziosi, *Minoan Architectural Design, Formation and Signification* (Berlin 1983).
- Proc1* (2, 3, 4, 5, 6) *CretCongr* = *Πεπραγμένα τοῦ Α', Β', Γ', Δ', Ε', ζ' Κρητολογικῶ Ἐπιμεδρίου (Proceedings of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th International Congress of Cretan Studies)*.
- PZ* = *Prähistorische Zeitschrift*.
- RA* = *Revue archéologique*.
- Rutkowski, *Cult Places* = B. Rutkowski, *The Cult Places in the Aegean* (New Haven 1986).
- Rutkowski, *Kultdarstellungen* = B. Rutkowski, *Frühgriechische Kultdarstellungen*, *AM Beiheft* 8 (Berlin 1981).
- SCABA* = *Sanctuaries and Cults in the Aegean Bronze Age. Proceedings of the First International Symposium at the Swedish Institute in Athens* (1980), ed. R. Hägg and N. Marinatos (Stockholm 1981).
- SIMA* = *Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology*.
- Système Palatial* = E. Lévy, ed., *Le système palatial en Orient, en Grèce et à Rome* (Strasbourg 1987).
- TAW I-II* = *Thera and the Aegean World I-II*, ed. Ch. Doumas (London 1978-80).
- Temples and High Places* = *Temples and High Places in Biblical Times*, ed. A. Biran, *Proceedings of the Colloquium in Honor of the Centennial of Hebrew Union College, Jewish Institute of Religion* (Jerusalem 1981).
- Thanatos* = *Thanatos. Les coutumes funéraires en Égée à l'âge du Bronze. Actes du colloque de Liège* (21-23 avril 1986), ed. R. Laffineur, *Aegaeum* 1 (Liège 1987).
- Thera I-VII* = Sp. Marinatos, *Excavations at Thera I-VII* (Athens 1968-76).
- Transition* = *Transition. Le monde égéen du Bronze Moyen au Bronze Récent. Actes de la*

deuxième rencontre égéenne internationale de l'Université de Liège (18-20 avril 1988), ed. R. Laffineur, *Aegaeum* 3 (Liège 1989).

TUAS 1-10 = *Temple University Aegean Symposium 1-10* (Philadelphia 1976-85).

Warren, *Minoan Religion as Ritual Action* = P. Warren, *Minoan Religion as Ritual Action* (Gothenburg 1989).

Warren, *Myrtos* = P. Warren, *Myrtos. An Early Bronze Age Settlement in Crete, BSA suppl. vol. 7* (London 1972).



NOTES

Chapter 1

1. Nowadays the firmness of absolute chronology is disputed in itself: G. Walberg, "Middle Minoan Chronology: Relative and Absolute," in *High, Middle or Low*, Part 1 (Göteborg 1987); W. Hankey, "The Chronology of Aegean Late Bronze Age," in *High, Middle or Low*, Part 2 (Göteborg 1987); Ph. Betancourt, *Archaeometry* 29 (1987), 212-13; P. Warren, *Archaeometry* 29 (1987), 205-11. Recent dendrochronological dating seems to vindicate Betancourt's ideas about an earlier absolute dating (A. Chen, *Discover* [1989] 77ff.). I have kept the conventional chronology in this book, although I by no means take a stand on the issue.

2. This chronology is adopted by two eminent archaeologists: D. Levi, excavator of Phaistos (*Festós e la civiltà minoica* II [Rome 1981], esp. 27-75), and N. Platon, excavator of Zakros (*KrChron* 1 [1949] 150-66; idem, *Crete* [Geneva 1966], 206-7 with chronological table). Recently, E. Hallager, in *Studies in Ancient History and Numismatics presented to R. Thomsen* (Århus 1988), 11-21, adopts still another term for the period between 1400 and 1250: Monopalatial. This is because during this period the palace of Knossos alone is thought to have exercised control on the island.

3. This introduction is meant for the non-specialist. For a good introduction to Aegean civilizations see P. Warren, *The Aegean Civilizations*, in the series: *The Making of the Past* (Oxford 1975).

4. C. Renfrew, *The Emergence of Civilisation* (London 1972) 50, 280ff.; Warren (supra n.3), 35ff.

5. For a summary see J. Waller and M. Edwardsen, "Evolutionism," *The Encyclopedia of Religion* 5 (New York 1987), 214-18.

6. J. Harrison, *Themis: a Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion* (Cambridge 1912), XIII; (1972²), XVII.

7. A. J. Evans, *JHS* 21 (1901), 99-204.

8. M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* I, (Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft, V.1.3) (Munich 1967), 1.

9. Cf. B. Dietrich, *The Origins of Greek Religion* (Berlin 1974); idem, *Tradition in Greek Religion* (Berlin 1986).

10. Nilsson (supra n.8), 37-50.

11. W. Burkert, *Homo Necans*; idem, *Greek Religion, Archaic and Classical*; idem, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual*.

12. See for example the characteristic collection of essays by M. Detienne, L. Gernet, J.-P. Vernant, and P. Vidal-Naquet in *Myth, Religion and Society. Structuralist Essays*, ed. R. L. Gordon (Cambridge 1981).

13. S. Piggott writes in a review of a book where religion is minimized (*Antiquity* 59 [1985], 145). "Evidence of religious beliefs gets an apologetic little box . . . , as it were a bit of technology such as bronze working or cattle domestication, but embarrassing because it can lead to acts wholly irrational within the tidy models of modern theory. But this completely obscures the fact that in all ancient and pre-industrial societies religion and life are indivisible, the one giving meaning and coherence to the other in a way unknown to Western secular society today but fundamental to even a rudimentary understanding of the earlier 'world we have lost.' "

14. Burkert, *S&H*, 35–58. Most recently "Tracks of Biology and the Creation of Science," Gifford Lectures (Univ. of St. Andrews, Scotlar.d 1989).

Chapter 2

1. Warren, *Myrtos*, 84–87; A. Zoes, *vaslike I* (Athens 1976; in Greek); idem, *Prakt* (1972), 272–309; 1976, 440–59; 1978, 300–8. For the Prepalatial town of Gournia: J. Soles, "The Early Gournia Town," *AJA* 83 (1979) 149–67. In general see Branigan, *FPC*.

2. Warren, *Myrtos*, 84ff; idem, "The Beginnings of Minoan Religion," in *Antichità Cretesi, Studi in onore di D. Levi I* (Catania 1977), 37–47; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 7–8, 114; idem, in *Minoan Society*, 93–94.

3. Branigan, *Tombs*, ch. 7.

4. Similar definitions in Nilsson, *MMR*, 585–86.

5. For the correlation of the cult of dead kings and social structure see the penetrating analysis of Huntington & Metcalf, part 3: *The Royal Corpse and the Body Politic*.

6. Burkert, *GR*, 203–8, points out that the Greek hero cult is not cult of the ancestors, but one which develops along with the social evolution of the Greek polis (204).

7. Of the many studies dealing with religion in African societies, suffice it here to mention B. Malinowski's analysis of the social components in religious celebrations where the dead receive offerings and libations, in *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays*, ed. R. Redfield (Glenoe, Illinois 1948), 36; E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Nuer Religion* (Oxford 1956). Recently: A. Jacobsson-Widding, in *Gifts to the Gods*, 101–6.

8. Bleeker, *Festivals*, 124–39.

9. For example, the Ndembu in Africa feel that any kind of reproductive anomaly is caused by the anger of some ancestor: V. Turner, *The Ritual Process* (London 1969), 1–43.

10. R. B. Seager, *Excavations on the Island of Mochlos* (Boston, New York 1912). Seager calls the monumental rock-cut tombs "chamber-tombs."

11. *Ibid.*, 17.

12. Seager does not discuss this structure outside tomb VI but I noticed it when visiting Mochlos. It is visible on a photograph, however. Seager (*supra* n.10), fig. 16.

13. Seager (*supra* n.10), 20. Interesting is the history of J. Soles, who argues that the monumental ossuaries at Mochlos show evidence of social ranking already in EM II. Soles, in *Problems in Greek Prehistory*, ed. E. B. French and K. A.

Wardle (Bristol 1988), 49–61, esp. 58. His hypothesis does not conflict with mine, although I would prefer to explain the monumentality of the tombs by their use as ossuaries.

14. Notable is the head of a figurine of MM III date, which belongs to the Palatial era. Such figurines are common in sanctuaries. This in itself points to the continual use of the cult. Note that the figurine was lying on top of Early Minoan objects and bones. Seager (*supra* n.10), 45, fig. 21.

15. Seager (*supra* n.10), 37.

16. Seager (*supra* n.10), 28, fig. 9.

17. Seager (*supra* n.10), 37, fig. 13; Pini, *Beiträge zur minoischen Gräberkunde* (Wiesbaden 1968), 24.

18. Pini (*supra* n.17), 21.

19. Seager (*supra* n.10), fig. 34; K. Branigan, "The Genesis of the Household Goddess," *SMEA* 8 (1969), 35, identifies the figure as a deity although he distinguishes her from the snake vessel from Koumasa to be mentioned further on.

20. Seager (*supra* n.10), 60–61.

21. On this problem: O. Pelon, *Tholoi, tumuli et cercles funéraires* (Paris 1976), 55–63. A very good synthetic work on the tombs of the Mesara is Branigan, *Tombs*.

22. Branigan, *Tombs*, 93ff.

23. *Ibid.*, 97.

24. Amphorai in Kamilari annexes: D. Levi, *ASAtene* 39–40 (1962), 59. For a general description of finds: Branigan, *Tombs*, 98ff.

25. Branigan, *Tombs*, 99–101. At Lenda there were more than 700 vessels stored in the annexes. The latter were free of skeletons: S. Alexiou, *KrChron* 13 (1959), 371. Branigan, *Tombs*, 99–101, suggests that the toasting ritual was moved outside the tombs into the chambers in EM III. I am not sure this is the case; it seems more plausible that the ritual in question pertains to the cult of the dead, in which case it is independent of funerary rites.

26. At Vorou, Kamilari, Hagios Kyrillos: Branigan, *Tombs*, 100.

27. P. Åström, *JPR* 1 (1987), 7–16.

28. *Ibid.*, 98. Various other cult implements, such as offering tables or *kernoï*, were found inside the burial chamber. This implies that they were used in connection with the funeral or given as gifts to the dead. See Pini (*supra* n.17), 27.

29. Thus Branigan, *Tombs*, 132; idem, in *Aux origines de l'hellénisme, la Crète et la Grèce*, *Festschrift H. van Effenterre* (Paris 1984), 29–37, esp. 34.

30. Branigan, *Tombs*, 132 with plan on page 133 and idem, *Aux origines*.

31. Sp. Marinatos, *ArchDelt* 13 (1931), 137–70, esp. 148ff. The "sheep-bells" will be subsequently discussed.

32. *Ibid.*, 148; votive deposit: Branigan, *Tombs*, 114.

33. Thus called by Evans, *PM I*, 175.

34. S. Xanthoudides identified them as votive robes, especially since one specimen he found at Tyllissos has something resembling folds: *ArchEph* (1912), 229. Because of the specimen with eyes and nose, N. Platon, *RA* 31–32 (1948), 833–46, proposed they were masks.

35. In addition to those mentioned above see also Nilsson, *MMR*, 191–92; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 17; K. Polinger Foster, *Aegean Faience in the Bronze Age* (New Haven 1979), 117–18.

36. A. Peatfield, Ch. Morris, *Proc6CretCongr* (Chania 1986).

37. S. Xanthoudides, *The Vaulted Tombs of Mesara* (1924), pl. 37; Branigan, *Tombs*, 114.

38. This can be considered a precursor of the so-called pillar crypts of the Palace period. See chapter 4, under Pillar Crypts. Publication of Apesokari by A. Schörgendorfer, in *Forschungen auf Kreta 1942*, ed. F. Matz (Berlin 1951), 13–22.

39. *Ibid.*, 18–19.

40. *Ibid.*, 19.

41. *Ibid.*, 20–21.

42. Levi (*supra* n.24), 80, fig. 106; Åström (*supra* n.27).

43. Branigan, *Tombs*, 98–99; toasting rituals; Pini (*supra* n. 17), 29, suggests that the annexes were used for "Trankopfer." A reexamination of the annexes and their finds has been recently conducted by Fr. Petit, in *Thanatos*, 39ff.

44. Although the sacred horns and the columns are broken off and are not visible on the model now, they were there originally, as clearly stated by Levi (*supra* n.24), 123.

45. Levi (*supra* n.24), 123. Ch. Long, *ATS*, 46, and Pini, (*supra* n.17), 65, also accept cult of the dead. However, V. La Rosa, in *Ancient Crete. A Hundred Years of Italian Archaeology 1884–1984* (Rome 1985), 142, is skeptical as to the interpretation of the deified dead. Further discussion in Branigan, *Tombs*, 117, who also advances a secular interpretation.

46. It is therefore difficult to understand how Branigan, *Tombs*, 117 can suggest "marriage" or "a contest between two clans" for this scene.

47. Note that the models date to LM I, a period with well-defined types of divinities in the iconography.

48. Levi (*supra* n.24), 139ff. and 145ff.; La Rosa (*supra* n.45), 142; Branigan, *Tombs*, 116.

49. Suffice it to mention here a few arbitrary examples: the connection of the Egyptian god

Osiris with grain; the Greek goddesses of grain, Demeter and Persephone; and the association of Persephone with the underworld god Plouton. Note also the position of the granaries in the west courts of the Minoan palaces (ch. 3), as well as the connection of pillar crypts with the store-rooms of the magazines of the palaces. See also chapter 4, note 95. In this context it is worth mentioning certain objects found at Koumasa and Platanos which were identified as phalli by Xanthoudides (*supra* n. 37), 97, pl. LL.b (identification accepted by Branigan, *Tombs*, 134). However, the shape of the clay objects is not at all phallic; to me they look like models of actual pestles which could be connected with the bread making activity depicted on the Kamilari model. Note that the phallus is not otherwise attested as a fertility symbol in Minoan culture. The pestle was also the actual "synthema" of Eleusis: Burkert, *HN*, 301. Here again it is a symbol suggestive of agriculture bridging the polarity of life and death.

50. Levi (*supra* n. 24), 139ff.; La Rosa (*supra* n.45), 142; Branigan, *Tombs*, 116; Pini (*supra* n.17), 65. Note that the clay model of women dancers from Palaikastro (Evans, *PM III*, 72, fig. 41) shows the dancers on a ring, not inside an enclosure.

51. The festival of the Anthesteria. The role of the dead is stressed by J. Harrison, *Themis* (Cambridge 1927), 275–77. Harrison is perhaps right in noting the double meaning of the jars which are used both to store wine and to contain bodies for burial. For an analysis of the meaning of the festival stressing ambivalent feelings and guilt: Burkert, *HN*, 236ff.

52. A short summary in English: J. A. Sakellarakis, *Archaeology* 20 (1967), 276–81.

53. J. Sakellarakis, *Prakt* (1974), 205–12, esp. 211f.

54. See the convenient summary by Sakellarakis (*supra* n.52) although many more buildings have come to light since then. Short but recent summaries in English by H. W. Catling in *AR* (1983–1984), 61; (1986–1987), 54–55.

55. For example, building 16 included sarcophagi with assembled bones: *Prakt* (1974), 392–93. A telling picture is published in *AR* (1986–1987), 54, fig. 95, which shows a clay larnax with the skeletons of 19 adults and children. The skulls are separated from other bones in the container. The inclusion of children may indicate that the larnax contained members of the same family.

56. Sakellarakis (*supra* n.52), 277, fig. 2. Also noteworthy is an infant burial in a cooking pot: *Prakt* (1976), pl. 216c.

57. The finds from 21 include cups, bowls, stone grinding vessels part of a "sheep-bell." Sakellarakis correctly compares it with the "Lustral Basins" (in my terminology *adytia*) that are found in palaces and mansions of the New Palace era: *Prakt* (1982), 478ff.

58. Sakellarakis (supra n.52), 276. See also chapter 4, Pillar Crypts.

59. Sakellarakis, *Prakt* (1974), 205-12; J. and E. Sakellarakis, *Prakt* (1977), 461-82; (1980), 391-92.

60. J. and E. Sakellarakis, *Prakt* (1982), 484-85, fig. 6, pl. 257a. The excavators suggest that the figure may be a man because of the peaked cap, which normally characterizes males in Minoan art. This is not an absolute rule, however. The goddess from Pankalochori in the Rhethymnon museum (Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, pl. 47a) also has a peaked cap.

61. Sakellarakis, *Prakt* (1976), pl. 218a; (1982), 482, 484; (1981), 429.

62. Petit (supra n.43), 40-41.

63. By "early" the periods MM I and II are meant: Soles (supra n.1) 149-67, esp. 166-67.

64. Soles (supra n.1), 167.

65. On the rise of important families toward the end of the Prepalatial era the works and perspectives of two different scholars, P. Warren and J. Soles, seem to converge. Warren in *FMP*, 53: "What appears to have been happening after EM II is the emergence of the family as a more individual distinct and powerful social unit than it was during EM II and earlier." J. Soles bases his analysis on burial gifts (supra. n.1), 166-67; idem (supra n.13).

66. Branigan, *Tombs*, 131: "The breakdown of the clan tradition is . . . clearly revealed in the gradual abandonment of the circular tombs during the Middle Minoan period for individual burials in pithoi and larnakes." Pini (supra. n.17), 34; Warren (supra n.65), 52.

67. The Royal Tomb at Isopata, the Temple Tomb at Knossos, and the Tomb of the Double Axes at Knossos would be such examples. Summary with bibliography in Pini (supra n.17), 39-40, 43, 47, who accepts cult of the dead for the Temple Tomb (71). For further information see chapter 4, Pillar Crypts.

68. It is a large rectangular building, "the earliest monumental architecture of cut stone in Crete," J. Shaw, *Proc3CretCongr* (1973), 320-31 (quote p. 320). Original report: P. Demargne *Mallia, Nécropoles I*.

69. Demargne, *Mallia, Nécropoles I*, 32.

70. G. de Pierpont, in *Thanatos*, 79-94; Cl. Baurain, in *Thanatos*, 69-72.

71. Demargne, *Mallia, Nécropoles I*, 35-38. Especially important is a polygonal structure on a

raised level in the room which the excavator identifies as an altar. Because of the fragility of the construction, a practical function is excluded. Cupules were made in the stucco around that "altar." On the pottery and its connection with funerary ritual: V. Stürmer, in *Thanatos*, 75-77. Some objects identified as hearths (P. Muhly, *AJA* 88 [1984], 114) could have functioned as braziers or lamps in a ritual context, as Demargne originally suggested, and cannot be used as an argument that the building had a domestic purpose. Besides, no household has yielded so many hearths. A non-domestic mortuary function is accepted by Pini, (supra n.17), 31. See also H. van Effenterre, *Mallia, Nécropoles III*, 241-46, who disagrees with some aspects of Demargne's interpretation.

72. *Mallia, Nécropoles I*, 52-57.

73. *Ibid.*, 14, pls. XXXI-XXXII.

74. Branigan, *Tombs*, 68; Pini (supra n.17), 23-24.

75. Pini (supra n.17), 24; cups with pigment from Archanes: *Prakt* (1982), 483.

76. Branigan, *Tombs*, 89-90.

77. L. M. Danforth, *The Death Rituals of Rural Greece* (Princeton 1982), 19-20, 61, pl. 30.

78. Branigan, "Ritual Interference with Human Bones in the Mesara Tholoi," in *Thanatos*, 43-52. Skulls in cooking pots: at Vorou, Sp. Marinatos (supra n.31), 151. At Archanes, see note 52 above.

79. R. Hertz, "Contribution à une étude sur la représentation collective de la mort," *Année Sociologique* 10 (1907), 48-37. Discussed and expanded in Huntington & Metcalf, 61ff.

80. Huntington & Metcalf, 68-92.

81. Branigan, *Tombs*, 109.

82. *Ibid.*, 117. Similar reasoning in Seager (supra n.10), 38, who rejects the possibility of ancestral worship at Mochlos.

83. Branigan (*Tombs*, 118) does, however, infer the cult of a deity, a predecessor of the Household Snake Goddess in connection with funerary ritual. See also Branigan 1984 (supra n.29), 35. I agree with Branigan in tracing the origins of Palatial religion in the communal rituals around the tombs; I also agree that the Minoan goddess was first conceived in connection with these rituals. But he does not believe in the cult of the dead which, in my view, gave Minoan religion some of its distinctive characteristics.

84. Huntington & Metcalf, 82.

85. *Ibid.*, 90.

86. The Bara celebrate secondary burial after the harvest in the year following the death. Huntington & Metcalf, 102. See also notes 7-9 above.

87. Such as noise and drumming. Fecundity/fertility symbols abound: Huntington & Metcalf, 46-50, 98-101.

88. *Ibid.*, 104.

89. Depicted in graves at Meir from the Middle Kingdom: Bleeker, *Festivals*, 134.

90. Xanthoudides (supra n.37), pls. II, VII.

91. Bull and Rites of Passage: N. Marinatos, "The Bull as an Adversary. Some Observations on Minoan Bull-Leaping," in *Ariadne, Festschrift Stylianos Alexiou* (Rethymnon, 1989), 23-32. See also chapter 10, Rites of Passage. Funerary associations of the bull: Long, *ATS*, 61-68; Branigan, *Tombs*, 119; idem (supra n.19), 31-32. R. Laffineur, "Weitere Beiträge zur Symbolik im mykenischen Bestattungsritual," in *Kolloquium zur Ägäischen Vorgeschichte. Schriften des Deutschen Archäologen-Verbandes IX* (Mannheim 1987) 125-32, esp. 128.

92. E. Vermeule, *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry* (Berkeley 1979), 68. See also her discussion of the symbolism of the iconography of the sarcophagi, esp. death by hunting, 66ff.

93. Branigan, *Tombs*, 119; idem (supra n.19), 29.

94. The bird is an image of the fleeing soul in funeral laments of rural Greece, for example: Danforth (supra n.77), 60ff. Vermeule (supra n.92), 23, argues that the winged figure, represented on a Mycenaean sarcophagus from Tanagra, is the departing dead. Note also that the Egyptians depicted the soul as a bird with human face (Bah-bird).

95. Bleeker, *Festivals*, 134.

96. P. Warren, *Myrtos*, 86; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 114, cat. 89.

97. Warren, *Myrtos*, 87; idem (supra n.2), esp. 137-41.

98. Branigan (supra n.19), 34ff. traces the genesis of the Household Snake goddess to the vessel from Koumasa. I have difficulties with the concepts of both a household goddess (Nilsson, *MMR*, 321, 325-29) and a Snake Goddess (for snake cult see Evans, *PM IV*, 152-54 and chapter 7). I thus disagree that "there can be little doubt that the vessel represents the Snake Goddess, as she is seen in the temple repositories at Knossos" (Branigan, [supra n.19], 34).

However, Gessell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 7, calls the Myrtos figure a fertility goddess. Female figurines of Cycladic and local origin found in tombs are probably not goddesses but amuletic dolls signifying regeneration (because women are the ones who reproduce). Noteworthy also is a clay model of a couple found in a Mycenaean tomb: Vermeule (supra n.92), 54, fig. 10.

99. Burkert, *SH*, 42.

100. Huntington & Metcalf, 13-17.

101. See note 49 above.

102. Bleeker, *Festivals*, 131-32.

103. Branigan, *Tombs*, 119; Long, *ATS*, 61-71.

104. J. Sakellarakis, *PZ* 45 (1970), 135-218, not only discusses this particular sacrifice but also puts it into the perspective of Minoan sacrificial ritual. Note that the horse and bull sacrifice date from the Postpalatial period, whereas this chapter concentrates on Prepalatial times. There is no doubt about the continuity of such customs, however.

105. Burkert, *HN*, 61ff.

106. See chapter 2, under the heading "The Hagia Triada and Knossos Sarcophagi."

107. This conclusion has been reached by Branigan (supra n.19) and Warren in *Antichità Cretesi* (supra n.2).

108. Of the very rich bibliography, I shall mention the most important and recent treatments. Original publication: R. Paribeni, *MonAnt* 19 (1908), 5-86. Discussion in Nilsson, *MMR*, 426-43. Nilsson does not think it possible to unite cult of the dead and divine cult (433) and concludes that the dead was deified. Very penetrating analysis by F. Matz, "Göttererscheinung," 402ff.; cf. J. Sakellarakis, *Tieropfer*, 178-92. Most recent and thorough treatment: Ch. Long, *ATS*, who divides the scenes by the four sides of the sarcophagus. She concludes (74) that the scenes on the panels of the long sides are rites performed during the funeral of the person for whom the sarcophagus was intended. The goddesses on the short sides are taken to escort the spirit of the dead. This does not explain why two distinct pairs of goddesses are represented.

109. Long, *ATS*, 47, argues that the calves are not alive but statuettes.

110. J. Harrison, *Themis* (Cambridge 1927), 158-62.

111. Paribeni (supra n.108), 33 ff. noted red lines under the bucket which would indicate that the liquid poured into the vessel was blood. The traces are not visible today, though. Note that the bucket is placed on a base which is balanced between the stands. The latter taper upward so that the impression of a channel, narrowing at the bottom, is created. It is very likely that the structure here represented was especially constructed for libations and that the base, on which the bucket stands, was perforated, also.

112. The terms altar and shrine have been used indiscriminately to describe and confuse both structures (cf. Paribeni in Nilsson, *MMR*, 429, who calls the taller structure an altar); yet terminology is important because misuse of it, as well as loose definitions, can lead to serious misconceptions. I use the term "shrine" for the higher structure which is topped by sacred symbols and a tree (see chapter 8), but on which no

offerings are put. "Altar" is appropriate for the lower structure on which offerings are placed. The latter is a deposition altar.

113. General discussion with previous bibliography in Matz, "Götterscheinung," 398-99. While most scholars have seen either a cult of the dead (*Totenkult*) or divine cult (*Götterkult*), Matz rightly thinks that both are represented. Modifying B. Schweitzer's ideas of vegetation cycles, he proposes a reading of the sarcophagus: he divides side A in the middle and assigns the procession of the bucket libation scene to side B (my "regeneration" cycle). I don't think that this total disregard of the natural structure imposed by the object is the obvious way to divide the scenes. Moreover, in that case we would have two libation scenes with different utensils within the same system. My own view presented here is closest to that of Matz, but our reading differs.

114. Long, *ATS*, 32, also thinks they are goddesses and aptly points out that divine figures are paralleled on the short sides of other Minoan sarcophagi.

115. Long, *ATS*, 57, regards the females as goddesses, the males as mortals.

116. In an amusing but serious book, N. Barley observed that the Dowayos in Africa used circumcision as a primary ritual, after which most of their other rituals were modeled: *The Innocent Anthropologist* (London 1983), 172: "most other ceremonies were 'quotes' from circumcision, reproducing exactly what happened on that occasion." Among the Berawan in Borneo, funerary jars and wine jars are identical and the meaning of the process of fermentation is transferred from wine to the corpse: Huntington & Metcalf, 56.

117. Recent and thorough publication with comparanda by L. Morgan, *BSA* 82 (1987), 171-200.

118. *Ibid.*, 183.

119. *Ibid.*, 185, fig. 9; 198. My interpretation of the scene differs only slightly from that of L. Morgan and we are in general agreement about the purpose of the ritual which has the tree as its focus.

120. *Ibid.*, 191-92, interprets the figure as a war-goddess; I would rather see a male deity on the analogy of the male figure with shield on the larnax from Milatos, Evans, *TPC*, 174, fig. 50.

121. Y. Tzedakis, *AAA* 4 (1971), 221, fig. 9.

Chapter 3

1. C. Renfrew, *The Emergence of Civilisation* (London 1972), 476ff.

2. P. Warren, in *FMP*, 47-56. Emergence of religious ideology together with the palaces has been argued by J. F. Cherry, "Generalization and the Archaeology of State," in *Social Organization and Settlement*, ed. D. R. Green, C. C. Haselgrove, and M. J. T. Spriggs (1978), 429; O. Pelon, in *Travaux de la Maison de l'Orient* No. 7. *Séminaire de recherches 1981-83 sous la direction de G. Roux* (1984), 64-65. A. Pilali-Papasteriou, in *Ametos. Festschrift M. Andronikos* (Thessalonike 1986), 665-79.

3. H. van Effenterre, *Le palais de Mallia et la cité minoenne II* (Rome 1980), esp. part III, "Le palais dans la ville," 289-422; *idem*, *Les Égéesns* (Paris 1986), 120-41, esp. 133-34. The same thesis is developed by S. Damiani Indelicato, *Piazza pubblica e palazzo nella Creta minoica* (Rome 1982). Most recently: J. C. Poursat, "La ville minoenne de Mallia: Recherches et publications récentes," *RA* (1988), 61-82.

4. Renfrew (*supra* n.1), 297.

5. P. Halstead, "From Determinism to Uncertainty: Social Changes and the Rise of the Minoan Palace," in *Economic Archaeology*, ed. A. Sheridan and G. Bailey, BAR International Series 96 (Oxford 1981).

6. K. Branigan, "Towards a Dynamic View of the Minoan Palaces," in *Proc6CretCongr* (Chania, Crete, 1986), forthcoming.

7. Some argue that there was an increase in storage capacity, most evident in the palaces of Knossos and Phaistos, which implies tightening of control of the surplus produce. K. Branigan, "The Economic Role of the First Palaces," in *FMP*, 245-49, says that storage capacity increased from the first to the second palaces but J. Moody, "The Minoan Palace as a Prestige Artifact," in *FMP*, 235-41, arrives at the opposite conclusion: storage capacity decreased and cult areas increased.

8. For temples in the Near East, a fundamental work remains that of B. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien II* (Heidelberg 1925), 52-101. For the Hittites: O. R. Gurney, *The Hittites* (Harmondsworth 1952), 144-55. For Biblical times: A. Biran, ed. *Temples and High Places in Biblical Times* (Jerusalem 1981). General: A. Badawy, *Architecture in Ancient Egypt and the Near East* (Cambridge, Mass. 1966), 97-107; Frankfurt, *Art & Architecture*.

9. Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 19-40, esp. 32f.; S. Hood, "Minoan Town Shrines?" in *Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean in Ancient History and Prehistory: Studies Presented to Fritz Schachermeyr*, ed. K. H. Kintzl (Berlin 1977) 158-72.

10. Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 229.

11. House cults have been postulated, for example, by Nilsson, *MMR*, 77-116; Rutkowski,

Cult Places, 135ff. esp. 149. Rutkowski makes a distinction between "domestic sanctuaries" and "palace-sanctuaries." But the distinction remains blurred in his treatment of the material, since both types are discussed in the same chapter without a clear classification. Note that some of the shrines in the palaces open up to the west and central courts; they thus obviously have a public character. For this aspect of palace shrines see G. Gesell, "The Minoan Palace and Public Cult," in *FMP*, 123-28.

12. S. Hood (*supra* n.9) is bothered by the lack of temples in Minoan Crete and argues that this function was fulfilled by small independent town shrines. However, small shrines fulfill quite a different function from temples and can coexist with them as among the Hittites. See K. Bittel, in *Temples and High Places*, 65.

13. Graham, *PoC*, 84-113; Platon, *Zakros*, 174-84.

14. O. Pelon, "Réflexion sur la fonction politique dans un palais crétois," in *Minoan Society*, 251-75; N. Marinatos and R. Hägg, "On the Ceremonial Function of the Minoan Polythron," *OpAth* 16 (1986), 57-73; A.-C. Nordfeldt, "Residential Quarters and Lustral Basins," in *FMP*, 187-94.

15. On the Throne Room of Knossos and its function, most recently W.-D. Niemeier, "Zur Deutung des Thronraumes im Palast von Knossos," *AM* 101 (1986), 63-95; *idem*, "On the Function of the Throne Room at Knossos," in *FMP*, 163-68. Also: R. Hägg, "Epiphany," 41-62. See also chapter 4.

16. Evans, *PM I*, 4. Note, however, the skepticism expressed by L. Banti for the palace of Phaistos, *Festós II*, 582, who sees it as an entirely secular building.

17. Mesopotamian temples were viable economic units. They included large storage areas and provided labor for many people. H. Schmökel, *Das Land Sumer* (Stuttgart 1956), 81-100. Schmökel compares the organization of the temple to that of a medieval monastery (81). The view of the temple state has been recently modified but not rejected: B. Foster, "The Late Bronze Age Palace Economy: A View from the East," in *FMP*, 11-16.

18. Warren, in *FMP*, 47-56; J.-C. Poursat, "Town and Palace at Malia in the Protopalatial Period," in *FMP*, 75-76.

19. Knossos may have taken over administration of the entire island after the destruction of the other palaces in 1450 BC.

20. This is not to deny variation among the palaces, nor changes within the same palace from one period to the next, but rather to stress

that there was enough uniformity regionally and chronologically for the palace to belong to a recognizable architectural type.

21. M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane* (New Haven 1957), 39.

22. *Ibid.*, 58-62.

23. Graham, *PoC*, 73-82.

24. *Ibid.*, 78-83; *idem*, "A New Arena at Malia," in *Antichità Cretesi, Studi in onore di Doro Levi I* (Catania 1977), 65-73. Also in the same volume: H. van Effenterre, "Arène ou Agora?" 74-78.

25. O. Pelon, "Le Palais de Mallia et les jeux de taureaux," in *Rayonnement grecque, Hommages à C. Delvoye*, ed. L. Haddermann-Misguish and G. Raepsuet (Brussels 1982), 82ff. However, N. Platon, in *Minoan Society*, 275, suggests that the bull-games took place outside the palaces. For bull game iconography: J. Younger, *AJA* 80 (1976), 124-57. Most recently with bibliography: E. Davis in *FMP*, 157-61 with n. 34.

26. Graham, *PoC*, 7.

27. In Egypt, for example, sacred architecture was highly symbolic. Lurker, *Gods & Symbols*, 120: "The whole temple was a symbol of the world in stone."

28. Eliade (*supra* n.21), 46.

29. The orientation is stressed by J. Shaw, "The Orientation of the Minoan Palaces," in *Antichità Cretesi, Studi in onore di Doro Levi I* (Catania 1977), 49-59; "Also, it appears likely that the Minoan palaces were originally planned not with a north-south orientation foremost in mind, but rather with a primarily east-west orientation (58)"

30. Evans, *PM I*, 423ff.

31. Graham, *PoC*, 137-42.

32. Platon, *Zakros*, 101-14.

33. Evans, *PM III*, 481-525; R. Hägg, "Epiphany," 48.

34. Note, however, that there was a low wall delimiting the west court of the palace of Knossos to the east in the First Palace period (Evans, *PM IV*, fig. 30); Preziosi, *MAD*, 87; N. Marinatos, "West Courts," in *FMP*, 135-43.

35. On the ceremonial function of the west court at Knossos: Evans, *PM II*, 609-22.

36. The palace of Zakros alone does not totally conform. Its west court, not yet fully explored, was terraced.

37. K. Branigan, in *FMP*, 248-49.

38. Graham, *PoC*, 27; N. Marinatos, "West Courts," in *FMP*, 135-38.

39. N. Marinatos, "West Courts," in *FMP*, 135-43.

40. The function of these platforms is disputed. Traditionally they are referred to as "theatral areas" because they have steps, much like ancient theaters. Yet, the steps are too shal-

low to be well suited for seated spectators. L. Pernier, *Festòs* I, 185-90 calls the platform at Phaistos "gradinata" or "scalinata teatrale." Evans, *PM* II, 578-87, envisioned performances which may have partly hit the truth: "religious processions from neighbouring sanctuaries, including perhaps the annual Advent of the Minoan Goddess . . . could be marshalled into the presence of the Priest Kings, seated on the raised post of honour beneath a canopy of State" (585).

Less plausible is the suggestion by Graham, *PoC*, 28, that the "Theatral Area" was used for the dances of Ariadne!

41. Such a display may be depicted on the Grandstand fresco from Knossos dealt with in this chapter. For more details: N. Marinatos, in *FMP*, 135-43 and below. Built on the west court of the Knossos palace was another building, called by Evans the NW House. Nothing much about its function is known except that it contained a hoard of precious vessels (Evans, *PM* II, 637ff.). K. Polinger Foster, in *FMP*, 290-91, thinks it was a faience workshop. It would seem that the house was an official building connected with the ceremonies in the west court. This would not exclude a workshop for the production of precious objects to be used in the cult.

42. At Phaistos the old stand fell out of use when the level of the west court was raised in the New Palace period. The new platform is conventionally called a "Grand Propylon" (gateway) but it certainly is more than a monumental entrance. See Preziosi, *MAD*, 127. An impression of the new stand can be gained from Graham's reconstruction, *PoC*, fig. 48.

43. Eliade (supra n.21), 61. For Minoan palaces see J. Shaw (supra n.29). Shaw stresses the importance of the west in the orientation of the palaces.

44. K. Branigan, *Tombs*, 135, suggests that the west courts were the successors of paved areas adjacent to the monumental tombs of the Prepalatial era, where the cult of the dead was practiced. Interesting is also O. Pelon's comment, "Palais minoens," in *Système Palatial*, 200: ". . . il n'est pas impossible que la cour Ouest dans son premier état ait déjà existé à cette époque [Prepalatial].

45. For more extensive argumentation see N. Marinatos in *FMP*, 135-43.

46. Magazines existed in other parts of the palaces as well. Both Knossos and Malia, for example, had storage space in their east wings. The estimated storage capacity varies, depending on what one takes into account. See K. Branigan and J. Moody, especially the discussions, in *FMP*, 242, 249.

47. For types of produce stored see Branigan in *FMP*, 245-49.

48. Evidence for such use of surplus produce is furnished by the written documents of the Near Eastern palaces. For the palace of Mari see J.-M. Durand, in *Système Palatial*, 62-63, 74-80. For the economic role of the Minoan palaces in general see the section "The Palaces as Centers of Trade and Manufacture" in *FMP*, 245-49.

49. Branigan, in *FMP*, 245-49; K. Polinger Foster, "Reconstructing Minoan Palatial Faience Workshops," in *FMP*, 287-92; Platon, *Zakros*, 217f.

50. Platon, *Zakros*, 61.

51. Scholars differ on this point. Branigan, in *FMP*, 248, thinks the palaces did not have complete monopoly, a view which may be supported by the evidence from the Near East (see B. Foster in *FMP*, 12). On the contrary, S. Alexiou, "Minoan Palaces as Centres of Trade and Manufacture," in *FMP*, 251-53, believes in stronger palatial control of trade.

52. Seal-impressions at Knossos: Evans, *PM* IV, 601-10. Archive room at Zakros: Platon, *Zakros*, 151-54. For sealing administration see for example the articles by J. Weingarten and E. Hallager in *Problems in Greek Prehistory*, ed. E. B. French, K. A. Wardle (Bristol 1988), 101-12 and 113-14; J. Weingarten in *Tharatos*, 39-52; E. Hallager, *BSA* 82 (1987), 55-70.

53. Evans, *PM* I, 449-50.

54. Evans also found cists in the storage rooms, which means that this area was used also as a treasury, perhaps for the keeping of luxury cult paraphernalia of the adjacent shrines: Evans, *PM* I, 457-58.

55. Evans, *TPC*, 111; *PM*, I, 425, 441-42, 449; Platon, 'OI', 433; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 85, cat. 33; S. Hood, "Mason's Marks in the Palaces," in *FMP*, 205-12.

56. *Festòs* II, 80; Hood, in *FMP*, 205-12.

57. F. Chapouthier and J. Charbonneau, *Mallia, Palais I* (Paris 1928), 27-30; Platon, "OI," 450; O. Pelon, E. Andersen and J.-P. Olivier, *Mallia, Palais V* (Paris 1980), 18-19, 135-38; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 105, cat. 72.

58. Platon, *Zakros*, 101-14.

59. *Ibid.*, 104-14.

60. Hagia Triada: summary of the architecture of the villa and the distribution of finds within the rooms; L. V. Watrous, *AJA* 88 (1984), 128. The association of ritual equipment and storage is observed also in Thera. For concrete suggestions of how rhyta were used in connection with feasting see the paper by R. Koehl in *Thera and the Aegean World* III, 1, ed. D. A. Hardy (London 1990), 350-59.

61. F. Halbherr, *Memorie del Instituto Lombardo* 21 (1905), 237; Nilsson, *MMR*, 241; L. Banti, F. Halbherr and E. Stefani, "Hagia Triada nel Periodo Tardo-Palaziale," *ASAtene* 55, NS 39 (1977), 139-40; Watrous (supra n.60), 128.

62. See note 17 above.

63. For Assyrian palaces: I. J. Winter, "The Program of the Throneroom of Assurnasirpal," in *Essays on Near Eastern Art and Archaeology in Honor of Ch. Kyrle Wilkinson*, ed. P. O. Harper and H. Pittman (1983), 15-31.

64. The exception is M. Cameron in his unpublished dissertation (summary by L. Morgan is forthcoming). A short version of his ideas by N. Marinatos: "The Palatial Thematic System in the Knossos Murals," in *FMP*, 320-28. The problem of "theme" for wall-paintings in a room from Thera has been addressed by L. Morgan, "Theme in the West House Paintings at Thera," *ArchEph* (1983), 85-105; *idem*, *The Miniature Wall Paintings of Thera: A Study in Aegean Iconography and Culture* (Cambridge 1988).

There are reasons why more attempts have not been made. Firstly, with the exception of the palace of Knossos, the other palaces and mansions in Crete have yielded very few paintings. This may be due to accident or it may be that fresco painting was confined to very special rooms. It is important to stress, however, that the few frescoes outside Knossos do depict religious scenes. At Zakros, for example, the only painting that was found decorated a small shrine of the type I designate as *adyton* (ch. 4). For Zakros see Platon, *Prakt* (1965), 201-7; (1966), 163-68; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 140, cat. 135. At Phaistos there were only few painted scraps with floral motifs (*Festòs* II, 284, 299, Tav. 4, 6). Little has been reported from Malia. Mansions, too, had frescoes, but they were usually restricted to one area. Only one room yielded paintings in the "House of Frescoes" and the "Caravanserai" at Knossos; one in the mansions of Hagia Triada, Amnisos, and Tylissos respectively. Similarly, only one room was painted in a shrine at the small island of Pseira, off the coast of east Crete (Hood, *Arts*, 48-77; Hood also stresses the religious interpretation of the frescoes). It looks like wall painting was relatively rare and that it was put to specialized use.

Outside Crete, the Minoanized settlement of Akrotiri on the island of Thera produced many wall paintings, but these also were restricted to one room or suite in each building. The archaeological evidence suggests that these were shrines (N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*). Thus, the dearth of paintings discourages any study of themes.

Secondly, there are problems even with Knossos, the only palace to have yielded many frescoes.

Since Knossos survived longer than the other palaces, it was redecorated several times and the frescoes represent different chronological levels. It is therefore very difficult to know what existed together with what within a single period.

Finally, an additional difficulty is the fragmentary condition of the frescoes. Most have survived only in small pieces, which means that we know next to nothing about the compositional contexts.

65. E. Davis, "The Missing Ruler," *AJA* 90 (1986), 216 (abstract).

66. As shown recently by W.-D. Niemeier, *AM* 102 (1987), 65-97.

67. The question of "who was the patron" has been asked by R. Hägg, "Iconographical Programmes in Minoan Palaces and Villas?" in *L'Iconographie minoenne*, 209-17.

68. Evans, *PM* II, fig. 450. Groups B and C.

69. *Ibid.*, Groups A and B. Note the different lengths of the robes in Groups A and B respectively. See also Ch. Boulotis's reconstructions in *FMP*, 149, fig. 4.

70. Ch. Boulotis, "Nochmals zum Prozessionsfresko von Knossos," in *FMP*, 145-56. Boulotis is not certain who the recipients were; he suggests as a possibility that they were representatives of different deities of the Minoan pantheon.

There was an older decorative scheme of wall paintings which survived only in fragments: *PM* II, 679-81; C. F. Hawke Smith, "The Knossos Frescoes: A Revised Chronology," *BSA* 71 (1976), 65-76, esp. 70. This scheme involved females; no males have been found.

71. Note that one griffin only is preserved, the other is conjectural, Evans, *PM* IV, 915, fig. 889. See also Hood, *Arts*, 66; Niemeier (supra n.15), 85ff.

72. For the Near Eastern origin of griffins: A. Bisi, *Il Grifone. Studi di un motivo iconografico nell'Anico Oriente mediterraneo*, *Studi Semitici* 13 (1961), 167ff.

73. Griffin as a predator on Minoan-Mycenaean seals and rings: *CMS* II.3, 25b, 172; 334; *CMS* V, 216, 642; see also chapter 9.

74. Nilsson, *MMR*, 255; Rutkowski, *Kultdarstellungen*, 100ff. See also *CMS* I, 128; VIII, 95, 146. Niemeier (supra n.15), 75; N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, fig. 40. Often the goddess is flanked by antithetical griffins on seals. Collected by R. Hägg and Y. Lindau, *OpAth* 15 (1984), 67-77.

75. S. Alexiou, *AAA* 1 (1969), 429ff., fig. 2; *CMS* I, 223, 285; II.3, 328.

76. *CMS* I, Suppl., 114; For ritual associations of the palm: N. Marinatos, *OpAth* 15 (1984), 115-22, esp. 120 with fig. 12.

77. Niemeier (supra n.15), 84.
 78. Niemeier (supra n.15), esp. 89–92, with previous bibl.; see also chapter 4.
 79. Note that from this room cult vessels fell below into the magazines and were found there by Evans. This means that the room had some ritual use. Evans, *PM I*, 433, fig. 311; II, 605; *PM IV*, 359, 365; 379–96. Hood, *Arts*, 68.
 80. N. Platon, *KrChron* 13 (1959), 319–45; restoration corrected and supplemented by M. Cameron, *KrChron* 18 (1964), 38–53.
 81. See Cameron's restoration and reasoning, in *FMP*, 324–25, fig. 2.
 82. Mycenaean banquet scene from Pylos, M. Lang, *The Palace of Nestor at Pylos II* (Princeton 1969), pls. 125–26. For Near Eastern banquet scenes: Frankfort, *Art & Architecture*, pls. 33, 37.
 83. W. Burkert, "Oriental Symposia: Contrasts and Parallels," paper given at the 2nd Congress on *Symposium and Symposia* (MacMaster Univ. 1988), draws attention to the fact that there is a month *lechanasios* attested in Linear B tablets, which might mean the month when one invites the gods as guests.
 84. Evans, *PM I*, 525–26.
 85. N. Marinatos, *OpAth* 17 (1988), 137–41.
 86. Cameron, in *FMP*, 324.
 87. Evans, *PM I*, 442–47; 527–29; Hood, *Arts*, 50 with n. 33.
 88. Evans, *PM III*, 42ff.; 66ff., col. pls XVI, XVII, XVIII, figs. 45–46; Hood, *Arts*, 62–63.
 89. Two of the friezes have been restored by Evans and his artist Gilliéron, but the restorations can be questioned on several points. More extensive discussion of the problems of Evans's restoration in N. Marinatos, *FMP*, 141.
 90. To the left of the procession there exist, according to the restoration of Evans and Gilliéron, seated women situated right above or a causeway. The fragments, however, do not actually join and are placed there arbitrarily. It seems to me that, once they are removed, the scene makes better artistic sense. As things now stand, the women obstruct the path of the procession and it is hardly likely that the men would walk into them! I think, therefore, that the processional way has to be left free and that the fragments of the women have to be fitted somewhere else (see my restoration, plate 1). Since such a large part of the composition is missing, we need not worry about space.
 91. But not three as on the Evans-Gillieron restoration.
 92. Evans, *PM III*, 69ff. Matz, "Göttererscheinung," 388, but objected to by Sp. Marinatos in a review of Matz, *Gnomon* 32 (1950), 642–50, on the grounds that no vivid movement is indicated.

93. M. Cameron, "Notes on Some New Joints and Additions to Well Known Frescoes," *Europa, Festschrift Ernst Grumach* (Berlin 1967), 66–87, figs. 7 and 8. Cameron followed Matz ("Göttererscheinung," 388) in thinking that the subject of the Sacred Grove fresco was the epiphany of a deity depicted on a lost fragment. It is this epiphany that the crowds of the spectators would be watching. I am hesitant to accept this because I do not think that epiphany was ever witnessed collectively by a large crowd (for argumentation see chapter 7).
 94. Evans, *PM III*, 82–83. M. Cameron thought the men with the javelins were executed by the same hand as the rest of the figures of the Sacred Grove fresco. It is thus certain that they belong to the same composition.
 95. The Panathenaia, for example: H. W. Parke, *Festivals of the Athenians* (London 1977), 43.
 96. Evans, *PM III*, 46–65.
 97. E. Davis, in *FMP*, 157–61.
 98. The column capitals and the horns of the two flanking wings, do not match in size and style. Moreover, there exist additional architectural fragments which were not incorporated in the restoration (Evans, *PM III*, 84, fig. 47). I therefore think that the architectural facade was more complex and included many more wings.
 99. Evans, *PM III*, 47, says that the whole composition centers around the little temple. More recently, Davis (supra n.97) 159–60, argues for an indoor scene and suggests that the building is facing the central court.
 100. Evans, *PM III*, 52, fig. 30.
 101. Evans, *PM III*, 52: "May we venture to suppose that we have here a mother giving social advice to a debutante daughter?"
 102. E. Davis, *AJA* 90 (1986) 399–406; N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 37. See also chapter 10.
 103. For Egypt: L. Troy, *Patterns of Queenship in Ancient Egypt* (Uppsala 1986), esp. 73–102. For Mari: J.-M. Durand, in *Système Palatial*, 39–110, esp. 80–89. See N. Marinatos, "The Minoan Harem," *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne 1989: Hommage à Ettore Lepore*, 33–62.
 104. Durand, in *Système Palatial*, 90.
 105. Evans, *PM III*, 37ff. with n. 1, figs., 22, 25.
 106. Evans, *PM I*, 265ff. For the chronology see most recently G. Walberg, *Tradition and Innovation, Essays in Minoan Art* (Mainz 1986), 58–59.
 107. N. Platon, *KrChron* 1 (1947), 505–24. See also M. Cameron, "New Restorations of Minoan Frescoes from Knossos," *BICS* 17 (1970), 163–66.
 108. N. Marinatos, in *Gifts to the Gods, Proceedings of the Uppsala Symposium 1985, Boreas* 15 (Uppsala 1987), 123–32; *idem*, "The Monkey in the Shrine," *Eilapine, Festschrift for N. Platon* (Herakleion, Crete 1987), 417–21.

109. Evans, *PM III*, 481ff.; Hood, *Arts*, 73.
 110. The religious character of the East Hall is confirmed by a deposit of cult paraphernalia of an earlier period found in the basement (Loom Weight Basement) underneath it: Evans, *PM I*, 248ff., fig. 166; Nilsson, *MMR*, 86ff.
 111. B. Kaiser, *Untersuchungen zum minoischen Relief* (Bohn 1976), 287–95; C. F. Hawke Smith, "The Knossos Frescoes: A Revised Chronology," *BSA* 71 (1976), 67.
 112. Evans, *PM III*, 496, fig. 341 A.
 113. Evans, *PM III*, 497–509.
 114. Evans, *PM III*, 505, fig. 350 A.
 115. Kaiser (supra n.111), 280–81, pl. 49.
 116. Hägg and Lindau (supra n.74), 67–77, esp. 75–76.
 117. Evans, *PM III*, 510ff., figs. 355–56.
 118. The chronology of the frescoes is a major problem. Stylistic analysis is helpful but not utterly reliable and the stratigraphic evidence is far from clear. In addition there are historical problems to be solved which have a bearing on the issue. It is evident that several major catastrophes affected the palace around 1600, 1450 and 1375 BC (in ceramic terms MM IIIB, LM IB, LM IIIA1). Most of these would have resulted in redecorations.
 The nature of the last two destructions is not clear. Did Mycenaeans take over in 1450 or 1375? Was the palace occupied by squatters? Did it turn into a mere administrative center losing its "palatial" form? On these questions see Hood, *Minoans*, 56–60; E. Hallager, *The Mycenaean Palace at Knossos* (Stockholm 1977); W.-D. Niemeier, "The Character of the Knossian Palace Society in the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century BC: Minoan or Mycenaean?" in *Minoan Society*, 217–36, with table, fig. 43. Most recently: E. Hallager, in *Studies in Ancient History and Numismatics presented to R. Thomsen* (Arhus 1988), 11–21.
 For chronology of frescoes see: Hawke Smith (supra n.111) 65: "the stratigraphic evidence is indecisive, the structural phases are conjectural, and the stylistic considerations are open to doubt"; S. Hiller, "Dating Frescoes from Knossos: The Domestic Quarter Reconsidered," *ProcSocCongr* 1981 (Herakleion 1985), 155–69. Convenient chronological assortment of frescoes in Hood, *Arts*, 48–77.
 119. Evans, *PM III*, 299ff.
 120. M. Cameron, *TAW*, 588, pl. 4 on p. 587. The possibility that a bull's horn or elephant's tusk may have been carried was communicated to me personally by the author by letter shortly before his death. As regards the evidence for his reconstruction, we must await the summary of his doctoral thesis in preparation by L. Morgan.
 121. Evans, *PM III*, 307.
 122. *Ibid.*
 123. *Ibid.*, 314.
 124. That the shield played a ritual role can be inferred from the ring from Vapheio, *CMS I*, 219, among others. See N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 51–72.
 125. Discussion of the shield with previous bibliography: N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 52–58.
 126. Evans, *PM III*, 294, 339, fig. 225.
 127. *Ibid.*, 401, 428–35, figs. 294–302.
 128. *Ibid.*, 207–9.
 129. *Ibid.*, 208–9, fig. 143.
 130. *Ibid.*, 434–35.
 131. *Ibid.*, 209ff.
 132. Representations of bull leaping exist in other media. Seals and seal rings: Evans, *PM III*, 218–25; J. G. Younger, *AJA* 80 (1976), 124–57. Stone rhyton from Hagia Triada: Marinatos-Hirmer, pl. 106; Hood, *Arts*, 145, fig. 139. Bronze figurine: Evans, *PM III*, 221, fig. 155.
 133. Evans, *PM III*, 369–71.
 134. Niemeier (supra n.66), 88, 94, 97 with pl. 10.2.
 135. Evans, *PM III*, 377ff.; Hood, *Arts*, 77.
 136. Evans, *PM III*, 380, fig. 252.
 137. S. Hood, *Minoans*, 79; *idem*, *Arts*, 71. A similar opinion was held by Cameron. Recent discussion: R. Koehl, *AJA* 90 (1986), 407–17. Evans may have been wrong about the chronology assigning the fresco to MM III; a date in LM IB or LM IIIA seems more probable. The room is considered a shrine because valuable objects were found in it and its vicinity (Evans, *PM III*, 397–421). The ivory bull leapers, mentioned above, were among the finds. As to the location, Hood, *Arts*, 71, thinks that the marine scape floor belonged to a room above the "Queen's Megaron" whereas Koehl (above) ascribes it to Evans's treasury room situated nearby. Koehl thinks the latter was a shrine rather than a treasury.
 A similar marine scape floor decorated a shrine at Hagia Triada: M. Guarducci, *ASAtene NS* 1–2 (1939–1940), 232; L. Banti, "I culti minoici e greci di Hagia Triada," *ASAtene NS* 3–4 (1941–1943), 31–33. Recent discussion: E. S. Hirsch, *AJA* 84 (1980), 453–62.
 138. G. Gesell, "The Place of the Goddess in Minoan Society," in *Minoan Society*, 94–99, esp. 95. See also chapter 7.
 139. In addition to the symbolic aspect of the iconography, one might note that conch shells, which are often found in shrines, may have been used for libations. Marine-style vases are thought to have been used for cult: P. Mountjoy, "Ritual Associations for LM IB Marine Style Vases," in *L'Iconographie Minoenne*, 231–42.
 140. Identified as a bird in Evans's first report *BSA* 8 (1901–1902), 51–52.

141. Evans, *PM III*, 371.
 142. *Ibid.*, 330–31, fig. 220.
 143. *Ibid.*, 297, fig. 194.
 144. Evans, *PM II*, 702, fig. 490.
 145. *Ibid.*, 761.
 146. *Ibid.*, 771, fig. 502.
 147. M. Cameron, "Unpublished Fresco Fragments of a Chariot Composition from Knossos," *AA* 1967, 330–44.
 148. Evans, *PM II*, 770.
 149. Note the camp stool on a sealing from Crete: Evans, *PM II*, 763, fig. 491.
 150. As I. Kilian-Dirlmeier has shown by an analysis of grave goods: *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums* 33 (1986), 159–98, esp. 185–87, tables 5–6.
 151. M. Cameron (supra n.147).
 152. He thought that the men standing in front of this shrine (fragment A) wore swords, identifying the diagonal band on their torsoes as sword slings. On the basis of this he suggested a military parade. However, the bands are too thick to be sword slings (compare with the one on the seated man with the dagger) and are thus probably decorative borders of the robe. The mouths of the standing men are open which, as Cameron observed, would suggest chanting: M. Cameron (supra n.147), 340–43.
 153. Hood, *Arts*, 58.
 154. Evans, *PM II*, 774ff.
 155. Niemeier (supra n.66) 65–70.
 156. Evans, *PM II*, fig. 508.
 157. *Ibid.*, fig. 504b.
 158. *Ibid.*, fig. 511.
 159. *Ibid.*, fig. 510.
 160. *Ibid.*, fig. 513.
 161. *Ibid.*, fig. 514.
 162. The argument that the figure is female rests on the light color of the skin but the muscular development of the torso and the absence of breasts show that it is male. See Niemeier (supra n.66).
 163. J. Coulomb, *BCH* 103 (1979), 29–50; idem, *Proc5CretCongr* 1981 (Athens 1985), 67–76.
 164. Niemeier (supra n.66), 94, figs. 24–26.
 165. Frankfort, *Art & Architecture*, 76–77, 146, 148; R. D. Barnett, "Lions and Bulls in Assyrian Palaces," *Le palais et la royauté*, ed. P. Garelli (Paris 1974), 444–46; idem, "Bringing the God into the Temple," in *Temples and High Places*; see esp. the diagram of gate iconography of a Hittite temple: 14, fig. 1.
 166. Evans, *PM III*, 160–76, figs. 119–20.
 167. *Ibid.*, 176.
 168. *PM II*, 672ff.
 169. *Ibid.*, 676.

170. *PM IV*, 894, fig. 873. My reasons for this suggestion will be better explained in chapter 10. Briefly said, I believe that bull leaping had as its main purpose to show the superior ability of human males as compared to the bull. Thus, such an iconography would have diminished the emblematic character of the scene. Note that an earlier decorative program depicted females, Evans, *PM II*, 680–82.
 171. Knossos: Evans, *PM IV*, 904. Mari: Y. M. Al-Khalesi, *The Court of the Palms: A Functional Interpretation of the Mari Palace* (Malibu 1978), 18–23.
 172. Similar problems are encountered by Near Eastern specialists studying Mesopotamian palaces: J. Margueron, "Apparition du palais au Proche-Orient," in *Système Palatial*, 31, 36ff.
 173. N. Platon has consistently made a case for a theocracy. See, for example, "The Minoan Palaces: Centres of Organization of a Theocratic Social and Political System," in *Minoan Society*, 273–76.
 174. J.-M. Durand, in *Système Palatial*, 89ff. That the Minoan palaces were conceived under influences from the Near East is argued by V. Watrous in *FMP*, 65–70. S. Hiller similarly stresses the similarities between Minoan and Near Eastern monumental buildings and sees in the Minoan palace a combination of palace and temple: S. Hiller, in *FMP*, 57–64.
 175. P. Warren, in *FMP*, 47–56.
 176. Brief description in E. Brunner-Traut, *Ägypten*⁴ (Stuttgart 1982), 596.

Chapter 4

1. Architectural features determine Gesell's classification of sanctuaries: *Town/Palace Cult*, 19–33; see also discussion in *SCABA*, 209.
2. As for example in a Hittite shrine from the thirteenth century BC which contained a sunken floor. K. Bittel thinks that this room was a chapel for daily routine prayers, where votive offerings and libations took place: K. Bittel, "Hittite Temples and High Places," in *Temples and High Places*, 66.
3. Large windows are a feature of some shrines situated on upper storeys in Thera: N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 16, 34–35. Such a window may have existed, in connection with a shrine, at the palace of Knossos. On the reconstruction of the facade: R. Hägg, "On the Reconstruction of the West Facade of the Palace of Knossos," in *FMP*, 129–134.
4. Cupboards/repositories are attested in the Knossos "Temple Repositories," Evans, *PM I*,

- 463–85. Also in many shrines at Thera: N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 97.
 5. For frescoes in shrines: *SCABA*, 209; N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, ch. III.
 6. Nilsson, *MMR*, 77–116 (house sanctuaries), 236–45 (pillar rooms); Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 21–46, 119–53; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 19–33 (Neopalatial period).
 7. Rutkowski, *Cult Places* and most recently Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*.
 8. Discussion in Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 22ff.
 9. Sp. Marinatos, *Thera VII*, 24ff.; Ch. Doumas, *Thera, Pompeii of the Ancient Aegean* (London 1983), 54; N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 14ff.; 61ff. With reconstructions figs. 43, 44.
 10. J. MacEnroe, *AJA* 86 (1982), 3–19.
 11. Evans, *BSA* 6 (1899–1900), 38ff.; *PM III*, 8ff.
 12. Evans, *PM III*, 8ff.; R. W. Hutchinson, *Town Planning Review* 21 (1950), 209; Nilsson, *MMR*, 92–94.
 13. Evans, *PM III*, 381–86.
 14. Graham, *PoC*, 99–108 and idem, *AJA* 65 (1961), 189. Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 131–35, accepts a sacred character of only two "Lustral Basins," the rest he regards as bathrooms.
 15. Graham, *PoC*, 107.
 16. N. Platon, in his review of Karo, *Greifen am Thron*, *KrChron* 13 (1959), 238 cited by Graham, *PoC*, 107. His views are summarized in his description of the palace of Zakros: *Zakros*, 181.
 17. Graham, *PoC*, 100.
 18. *Ibid.*, 84–113.
 19. Gesell in her recent book *Town/Palace Cult*, for example, states (p. 22): "A room as distinctive as the Lustral Basin must have had some special use. A bath is the most attractive suggestion for several reasons." She concludes, however, that they were also used for cult purposes.
 20. Graham, *PoC*, 103; See also Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 22.
 21. For example the unit situated in the so-called Queen's Megaron in the palace of Knossos is very close to the major drainage system. At Palaikastro, another unit was not only located next to an existing drain, but the latter was blocked to accommodate the sunken chamber: H. Sackett and M. Popham, *BSA* 65 (1970), 204–7.
 22. Mostly N. Platon, "Bathrooms and Lustral Basins in Minoan Dwellings," in *Europa, Festschrift für Ernst Grumach*, ed. W. C. Brice (Berlin 1967) 236–45. See also Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 22.
 23. Graham, *PoC*, 107.
 24. Sp. Marinatos, "The Cult of the Cretan Caves," *Review of Religion* 5 (1941), 130; S. Alexiou, *KrChron* 24 (1972), 414–34.
 25. Evans, *PM I*, 405ff.
 26. The earliest datable example is thought to be a chamber with a very deep floor in Quartier Mu at Malia. It had an anteroom and contained an offering table: G. Daux, *BCH* 91 (1967), 822; J.-C. Poursat, *BCH* 95 (1971), 796–97; J.-C. Poursat, L. Godart, and J.-P. Olivier, *Mallia, Le Quartier Mu I* (Paris 1978), 23; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 112, cat. 86.
 27. Southeast sunken chamber (lustral basin) at Knossos: Evans, *BSA* 7 (1900–1901), 63; *PM I*, 574–75; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 92, cat. 38. South House sunken chamber: *PM II*, 378–80; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 96, cat. 52.
 28. Evans, *PM I*, 405ff.
 29. For example at Phaistos room 83 there were decorative border bands in the anteroom of the sunken chamber: *Festös II*, 281–304; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 130, cat. 110. At Malia, House Da there were similar red decorative borders: *Mallia, Maisons I* (1953), 46; *BCH* 110 (1986), 822. A newly excavated adyton at Chania (not yet published) has also furnished evidence of murals reaching all the way to the floor. This definitively proves that sunken chambers were not baths. Forthcoming publication by M. Vlasaki.
 30. Evans, *PM II*, 378–79.
 31. N. Platon, *Prakt* 1966, 163–68; idem, *Zakros*, 174–84; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 140, cat. 135.
 32. Regarding the Minoan character of the Thera cult practices: N. Marinatos, in *Minoan Thalassocracy*, 167–78. For a different opinion regarding the degree by which Thera was "Minoanized" see Ch. Doumas, *AA* (1982), 182–210.
 33. For a treatment of the chronology of the throne room at Knossos: S. Mirié, *Das Thronraumareal des Palastes von Knossos. Versuch einer Neuinterpretation seiner Entstehung und seiner Funktion*, *Saartrücker Beiträge zur Altertumskunde* 26 (Bonn 1979). See also the review by R. Hägg, *CJ* 78 (1982–83), 77–79 and cf. W.-D. Niemeier, *AM* 101 (1986), 63–95.
 34. *Festös II*, 284, 295, Tav. XL 4, 6.
 35. Alexiou (supra n.24) came to the conclusion that the cult in the sunken chambers had a connection with vegetation.
 36. For example, Malia, House Za: *Mallia, Maisons I* (Paris 1953), 86. Malia, House Da: *Mallia, Maisons I*, 44–46. Zakros palace: N. Platon, *Prakt* (1966), 163–68; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 140, cat. 35.
 37. *Mallia, Maisons II* (Paris 1959), 136.
 38. See note 36 above.
 39. *Festös II* 171–78. Nonetheless the author, L. Banti, speaks of "typical private apartments" (p. 163). Platon (supra n.22) 243–44 concedes a

cultic function connected with bathing; similarly Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 135.

40. Platon, *Prakt* (1963), 176–86; (1954), 144, 148–151; idem, *Zakros*, 127–48, 155–73; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 137, cat. 133.

41. Evans, *PM I*, 449ff. Designated on plan, fig. 322 as “cists.”

42. Evans, *PM III*, 9: “In the same deposit . . . seems to have belonged a kind of Sacristy or Treasury.”

43. The treasuries or repositories can be inferred from the architecture: cubicles formed by partitions (“cloisons”). Noteworthy is the presence of an adjoining workshop: *Mallia, Maisons I*, 72–73.

44. N. Marinatos, R. Hägg, “On the Ceremonial Function of Minoan Polythra,” *OpAth* 16 (1986), 57–74, esp. 59, fig. 2 and 73, table 3.

45. Recently by Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 149, Chart VIII.

46. Term used already by Sp. Marinatos in connection with the sunken chamber a: Thera: *Thera VIII*, 24–25. See also N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 14, 73ff. Not unimportant is a possible parallel from Greek temple architecture. G. Roux reconstructs the adyton of the temple at Delphi as a sunken chamber. The Pythia was thus separated from the people but could be seen by them. G. Roux, *Delphes, son oracle et ses dieux* (Paris 1976), 101ff. with fig. 8. Even more relevant may be a Hittite shrine with a *sunken floor*; see note 2 above.

47. Three examples of adyta with adjacent stairways and a direct connection with the upper story are clearly documented: the adyton inside the throne room of the palace of Knossos, the adyton in the north quarters of the palace of Phaistos, and outside of Crete, the adyton of building Xeste 3 at Akrotiri, Thera. These are the only ones out of a total of 28 cases listed by Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 149, Chart VIII; there is thus not an absolute rule.

48. Evans, *PM IV*, 922: “The upper chamber—so easily accessible—from that of the Throne, thus formed a kind of ‘loggia’ overlooking the ‘Lustral Basin.’”

49. *Festós II*, 254–304, esp. 291–303; Graham, *PoC*, 39ff., 89ff.; for criticism: N. Marinatos, R. Hägg (supra n.44), 62–63; A. C. Nordfeldt, in *FMP*, 187–194.

50. *Festós II*, 254ff.

51. Ch. Doumas (supra n.9), 51 with plan fig. 7; N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, fig. 51.

52. There are good reasons to think that the adyton was visible from the upper story, but this cannot be definitively proven by the excavation data. There apparently were no pavement slabs

above the adyton and this is what led Sp. Marinatos to dig down from the upper story at precisely this spot: “there existed a possibility to dig deeper. . . . As a result we came upon a room of mysterious and possibly mystical significance, of the type known as ‘lustral basin’ in Cretan palaces” (*Thera VII*, 24 with pls. 37b and 38a). In addition, the fresco fragments from the two floor levels were intermingled to such an extent, that it seems unlikely there was a floor in between them. On the other hand, the absence of slabs is not conclusive proof: the floor above the adyton could have been made of pebbles. I thank Dr. C. Palyvou for valuable discussions on the subject.

53. In the “Little Palace,” a mansion at Knossos, for example, a corridor runs parallel to the adyton on the E side. From there the participants could watch what was going on over the balustrade without having to enter the adyton itself. Evans, *BSA* 11 (1904–1905), 6–16; idem, *PM II*, 519–25 with fig. 321.

54. J.-C. Poursat et al. (supra n.26), 23.

55. Some adyta had unusually thick walls such as the one in Malia, House Da (supra n.29), 46, for example. Could this mean that there was an upper level?

56. For a good functional definition: C. Palyvou, in *FMP*, 195–203, esp. 198.

57. This is especially apparent at Xeste 3, Thera: this building suffered more than any other from the earthquake immediately preceding the volcanic eruption precisely because its eastern wing included many pier-and-door constructions.

58. J. Driessen *Acta Archaeologica Lovaniensia* 21 (1982), 34–37, suggests that some few buildings with pier-and-door exist even after the fall of most palaces in 1450. However, it is possible that these buildings survived from the previous era. I do not believe that new pier-and-doors were constructed after 1450 BC in Crete.

59. Graham, *PoC*, 87. Note that this does not differ much from what Evans had suggested in *PM III*, 340: “Infinite gradations might indeed be secured in regulating both temperature and ventilation.”

60. Palyvou, in *FMP*, 195–203.

61. Examples discussed in N. Marinatos, R. Hägg (supra n.44), 57–73, figs. 2, 5, 7–9, 14–15.

62. Pier-and-door systems are often connected to a spatial unit called the Minoan hall. Again the implication is one of domestic life; associations of modern day living rooms are invoked consciously or unconsciously. I have tried to show elsewhere (see notes 44, 57–74) that the architectural analysis points rather to a ceremonial usage.

63. Evans, *PM III*, 8–12.

64. Evans, *TPC*, III.

65. Platon, “OI,” 428–83. Note that L. Banti, *Festós II*, 751ff., shows excessive skepticism and rejects all pillar rooms as shrines, while Nilsson, *MMR*, 248, is reluctant to accept sanctity of the pillars. Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 37, is also skeptical.

66. Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 45: “Definition of the function of the crypts of the central Palace Complex at Knossos, for instance, depends on which general concept we accept as regards the character of the west part of the palace.”

67. G. Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 26–29, lists only those pillar rooms which can be identified as shrines by the objects they contain. I am in general agreement with her selection. Some of the crypts identified by Platon may have been only storage rooms in which cult objects were kept.

68. This is obvious from the collective plans of crypts produced by Platon, “OI,” tables on p. 440; Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, figs. 8, 9.

69. A. Schörgendorfer, in *Forschungen auf Kreta*, 1942, ed. F. Matz (Berlin 1951), 13–22; Platon, “OI,” 457; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 68, cat. 2.

70. Ch. Long, “Shrines in Sepulchres?” *AJA* 63 (1959), 59–65, esp. 59–60.

71. J. Sakellarakis, *Prakt* 1966, 174–84; *Prakt* (1967), 152ff. It appears that an ossuary had preceded the building of the pillar room (153).

72. *Ibid.*, 152, 153.

73. Evans, *PM IV*, 962–1018; Long (supra n.70), 60–63; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 99, cat. 61.

74. Evans, *PM IV*, 993–95.

75. *Ibid.*, 964ff. fig. 930; 1001. Evans thought that this sanctuary was dedicated to the goddess.

76. M. Popham, cited by Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 29, suggested that the building was designed as a shrine and was used as a tomb later.

77. Sherds point to a LM IA date. Evans, *PM IV*, 988ff.

78. *Ibid.*, 990.

79. As Long (supra n.70), 60–61, observes: “Had (the bones) been the remains of people killed in the fall of the building, as Evans suggested, more of the skeletons should have been found in order.”

80. The building was used again after this catastrophe. It was then that the inner crypt was turned into a burial chamber for the last king of Knossos, according to Evans: “It was impossible to doubt that we had here hit on the counter part of the secret sepulchre that, according to the tradition preserved by Diodoros, was constructed beneath the visible shrine of the Goddess to form

the last resting place of Minos” Evans, *PM IV*, 973.

81. Secondary burial for persons of very high status is not uncommon. At Bali secondary treatment of the corpse is reserved only for those who can afford it. Among the Sakalave in Madagascar only royal relics receive periodic secondary burial attention. Huntington & Metcalf, 85, 95. For ritual treatment of bones see K. Branigan, “Ritual Interference with Human Bones in the Mesara Tholoi,” in *Thanatos*, ed. R. Laffineur (Liège 1987), 42–51.

82. The earliest object is dated to MM I, the latest to LM III. basic literature: R. Paribeni, *MonAnt* 14 (1904–1905), 719–56; Nilsson, *MMR* (first edition 1927), 258ff.; Banti, “Culti,” 23ff.; Platon, “OI,” 455–56; Long (supra n.70), 61–63; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 28, 75, cat. 16.

83. Catalogue of objects in Paribeni, Platon and Gesell cited in the previous note.

84. The half meter of the fill above the floor of the room contained nothing. Directly above this level were found the bones of five individuals by the south wall: Long (supra n.70), 62. This suggests that the skeletons were *not* lying on the floor but possibly had fallen from above.

85. Tomb: Banti, “Culti,” 23ff., considers the room part of the necropolis and thinks that the objects intruded from a shrine situated on the slope. Long (supra n.70), 62, says that the skeletons prove conclusively that the pillar room was used as a sepulchre. Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 28, calls it a tomb.

Shrine: Nilsson, *MMR* (first edition 1927), 258ff.; Platon, “OI,” 455. Platon does not address the problem of the presence of the human bones.

86. Long (supra n.70), 62, plausibly conjectured an upper story shrine because of the existence of two narrow rooms, betokening a staircase, next to the pillar room. However, the recent excavations by V. La Rosa in 1989 have thrown doubt on this reconstruction. I thank Dr. La Rosa for sharing this information with me prior to publication.

87. Note however, that most of the objects seem to have fallen from above because the layer directly above the floor was empty of finds. See note 84 above.

88. A. Evans, “The Tomb of the Double Axes and Associated Group,” *Archaeologia* 65 (1913–14), 33–59.

89. For the possible symbolic meaning of the west as the realm of the setting sun and death see chapter 3 under “West Courts.”

90. As Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 15, notes, there are only three examples from the Protopalatial period.

91. A pillar crypt for the palace of Phaistos has been identified by some scholars including Platon and Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 130, cat. 112. The room is situated in the N. wing of the palace and some of its walls have eroded away. The pillar has an incised double axe and contained a bull rhyton, so that there are good reasons for identifying it as a shrine. On the other hand, its location in the N. wing of the palace does not conform to that of the pillar crypts at Knossos and Malia. I am therefore skeptical about it serving the same function as the Knossian and Malioite crypts.

92. Pillar crypts with anterooms: Knossos palace; Malia palace.

93. Pillar crypts with annexes, sacristies, treasuries: Knossos, palace (temple repositories); Knossos, South House (Evans, *PM II*, 386–89); Knossos, Southeast House; Tylissos, House A. For further information see the catalogue of pillar crypts in Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*.

94. Platon, "OI," *passim*.

95. Crypts in mansions associated with storage areas: *Hagia Triada*, room 17. Banti, "Culti," 18–19; Platon, "OI," 454–55; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 74, cat. 14. *Knossos, House of the Chancel Screen*, Evans, *PM II*, 392–93, fig. 224. Note that shrines and storage rooms are situated in close proximity in the Near East, in the palace of Mari, for example. This proximity can be explained by the fact that the storage areas supply the offerings for the festivities. See J.-M. Durand, in *Système Palatial*, 39–110.

96. The objects found in pillar crypts have been collected and charted by Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 148, chart VII. The reader can consult this chart for the ensuing objects discussed in the text.

97. The pillar crypts in the palace of Knossos; South House; Royal Villa; Little Palace and Temple Tomb. Outside Knossos: Room 17 of the mansion at *Hagia Triada*.

98. Knossos, Southeast House (circular stone slab); Evans, *PM I*, 427–30, fig. 306; Malia, House of Pillar Basement; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 112, cat. 85. Similarly Salle β at the palace of Malia had receptacle vases incorporated into the floor: O. Pelon, *BCH* 107 (1983), 694ff.

99. Bull's head rhyta were found in the Crypts of the Little Palace and the Tomb of Double Axes at Knossos; miniature vessels in the Temple Tomb and Salle β at Malia. See Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 148, chart VIII. For Malia: Pelon (supra n.98).

100. One male votary comes from Tylissos, which must have fallen from above. Gesell, chart VIII as above.

101. From the temple repositories close to the crypts at Knossos (Evans, *PM I*, 463ff.) and the pillar room with skeletons near the cemetery at *Hagia Triada* (above n.82; Platon, "OI," 480).

102. Platon, "OI," 450–51, 474.

103. A lamp was found in pillar crypts of the Southeast House, Evans, *PM I*, 429, and that of the House of the Pillar Basement at Malia, Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 112, cat. 85. Lamps in tombs: Branigan, *Tombs*, 84; A. Blasingham, *Proceedings of 6th International Colloquium on Aegean Prehistory, Athens 1987*, argues that they were used in connection with the cult of the dead. That was the custom in Egyptian festivals of the dead: Bleeker, *Festivals*, 124–39.

104. Although it is not, strictly speaking, a pillar crypt, a recently excavated room in the palace of Malia helps us further visualize cult activities. The meticulous excavation, the good documentation of the finds and the published reconstruction of the room by the excavator make this shrine a good case study. The room, which was of large dimensions and contained two pillars, was named "Salle β"; it dates to the First Palace period. The excavator assigns a religious character to it. It was located in the north wing; interestingly enough it lay in the area which became the adyton in the New Palace period. The two pillars were opposite the entrance; both were joined to the east wall by low ledges (a feature which recurs in the crypt of the SE House). Another ledge run the length of the east wall. The focal point of the room was marked by a vase embedded into the floor for the collection of liquids. It was situated in front of one of the pillars, on its west side. Moreover, a number of miniature vessels, containers of precious liquids, were concentrated near the same pillar. Across the entrance, on the ledge of the east wall, a channel was dug leading to a hole. The excavator reasonably postulated pouring of libations. This area is also a focal point for ritual action given its position. The evidence for a ritual involving mainly libations in front of the pillar is incontrovertible, whereas the concentration of the miniature vases in front of the pillar illustrates the importance of liquids in the cult. See O. Pelon (supra n.98); idem, *BCH* 106 (1982) 176ff.; N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 19–21.

105. Evans, *PM II*, 820ff. and fig. 537.

106. *Ibid.*, 386ff.

107. *Ibid.*, 527ff. with figs. 330–31; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 94, cat. 43.

108. C. Lévi-Strauss, *La pensée sauvage* (Paris 1962); idem, *The Raw and the Cooked* (London 1970). A short but penetrating analysis of Lévi Strauss's ideas by E. Leach, *Lévi-Strauss* (Glasgow 1970).

109. See for example the antithetical pair Osiris-Seth, or the complementary pair Osiris-Horus, in Egyptian religion. Greek religion also has chthonic deities in opposition to celestial ones. There are many examples (Apollo fighting the snake Python, Poseidon killing Erechtheus), but the most illuminating literary version is the contest between the Erinyes (chthonic female deities) and Apollo in the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus.

110. Burkert, *HN* (Engl. transl.), 96–103; 156 f.; 117–22; idem, *GR*, 199–203, esp. 202.

111. See the translation of Heidel and Speiser of the Assyrian version of the Gilgamesh epic, III ii, *ANET*, 81; supplemented by W. von Soden, *Das Gilgamesh-Epos* (Stuttgart 1982), 38. The polarity is attested also for the tomb of Minos in Sicily. Diodorus Siculus's account (I.IV.c. 79-4) is surely legend and should not (pace Evans and others) be taken as historical fact. Yet, he gives us a fascinating account of this exotic tomb which although not a historical document is a reflection of cultic realities. This tomb had an upper shrine dedicated to the Dove Goddess Aphrodite. The opposition between chthonic and celestial could not be clearer. Similar opposition in Egyptian festivals: C. J. Bleeker, *Festivals*, 57–60, 69, 139f.

112. Night and day are rituals in symbolic opposition to one-another. In Greek religion: Burkert, *HN* (supra n.110). The chthonic nature of the crypts may account for the fact that two of them are connected with caves. The House of the Pillar Basement at Malia had a crypt which the excavators called "cave au pilier," because it was an underground chamber and had a natural rock floor. G. Daux, *BCH* 88 (1964), 907. The SE House had a crypt which was built over a cave, Evans, *PM I*, 429.

113. Note that in Egypt, the vegetation mother-goddess Hathor presided over the festival of the dead and was a goddess of the necropolis thus uniting both aspects of death and fertility. Bleeker, *Festivals*, 133–39. An attempt to identify chthonic and celestial deities has been made by Nilsson, *MMR*, 324, 339–40, where he distinguishes between bird and snake attributes. Yet he himself admits: "it may be stated that this goddess appeared both as a snake and as a bird, a combination which we shall find also in the Greek religion." (340).

114. See chapter 1. For recent criticisms of these views: E. Leach, *Social Anthropology* (Glasgow 1982), 33–39. Good discussion also in Burkert, *S&H*, 35–45.

115. Genesis, 28: 10–22. The Greeks practiced occasional anointing of stones, see Theophrastus, *Charact.*, 16. The anointing of certain objects by oil libations (which leave marks) can be related to

a biologically determined urge for territoriality: Burkert, *S&H*, 34–45.

116. Lurker, *Gods & Symbols*, 41, under "column."

117. Nilsson, *MMR*, 248.

118. Warren, *Myrtos*, 78–87, 209–10, 265–66; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 114, cat. 89.

119. As has been argued by Burkert, *HN* (Engl. transl.), esp. 5f. who stresses how communal eating, following sacrifice, binds the community. Dining shrines are attested as early as the Neolithic. For instance in a shrine room of the Tisza culture in Hungary, there was found a cult assemblage with a figurine and an offering table together with a hearth, charred bones and a deer antler: K. Hegedus-J. Makkay, in *The Late Neolithic of the Tisza Region* (Budapest-Szolnok 1987), 92–103 with reconstruction on p. 87. In Greek religion: there was a special festival in which the gods were invited to dinner: Burkert, *GR*, 107. Dining facilities in Greek sanctuaries (hestiatoria) abound: B. Bergquist, *Herakles at Thasos* (Uppsala 1975); R. A. Tomlinson, *BSA* 75 (1980), 221–28. For early Christian rituals: W. A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians* (New Haven 1983), 157–61.

120. R. MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven 1981), 36.

121. As defined by Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 14–15, 19–22.

122. *Festös I*, 195–246; *Festös II*, 527–81; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 120, cat. 102; P. Metaxa Muhly (*AJA* 88 [1984], 107–22, esp. 116, 120) shows that the terracotta object in the main shrine VIII was a hearth and not an offering table.

123. Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 11.

124. For a possible application of red pigment on the face of a girl depicted on a painting from the West House, Thera: N. Marinatos, "Role and Sex Division in Ritual Scenes of Aegean Art," *JPR* 1 (1987), 23–34, esp. 30–31.

125. N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 41.

126. G. Gesell, "The Shrines in the Palaces," in *FMP*, 123–27.

127. The west court of the old palace of Phaistos was in two levels, of which the lower represents the first phase of the first palace, the upper the second phase.

128. D. Levi, *BdA* 4th Ser. 37 (1952) 322–29; 40 (1955) 152ff.; 41 (1956) 243–46. Discussion and description in Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 124, cat. 103, and idem. (supra n.126).

129. *Festös II*, 104–18, 582–83; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 127, cat. 104.

130. Kamilari model: D. Levi, *ASAtene*, 39–40 (1961/62), 7–148, esp. 122–39; Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 103, fig. 139; K. Branigan, *Tombs*, 115–16.

131. Festòs II, 118, 149–53; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 128, cat. 107.

132. Dining is inferred for this area by V. Watrous, *AJA* 88 (1984), 123–34.

133. *Mallia, Palais* IV, 9–13, 50–54, 58; *Palais V*, 28, 33, 213–21; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 106, cat. 74.

The first palace at Malia is not as well known as that of Phaistos. But a dining shrine existed in the town and was apparently an independent unit. It included a vestibule, a storeroom and a main shrine with a hearth in the middle and cultic vessels: J. -C. Poursat, *BCH* 90 (1966), 514–51; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 107, cat. 76.

134. Platon, *Zakros*, 101–73; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 137, cat. 132.

135. Graham, *PoC*, 125–28.

136. For Minoan sacrifice in general see N. Marinatos, *MSR*. As regards evidence of human sacrifice, perhaps even cannibalism, here are the facts. In his excavations in the town of Knossos, P. Warren found, within a house, bones of children with visible cutmarks (P. Warren in *SCABA*, 155–65; S. M. Wall, J. H. Musgrave, and P. M. Warren, *BSA* 81 (1986), 333–88). In the same deposit were found ovicaprid vertebrae (also with cut marks), conical cups and an usually brilliant set of cultic pottery. Warren excludes that the cutmarks were a result of interference in connection with secondary burial. I think this possibility merits further attention. Why else were some of the bones of the children stored in a jar?

On the other hand, the association of the human bones with those of sheep and goats does support the excavator's conclusion that there are suggestions of ritual cannibalism. Further support for cannibalism are the cut marks which are of such a nature as to suggest removal of flesh for eating (*BSA* 81 [1886], 386).

137. More detailed analysis in N. Marinatos, "West Courts," in *FMP*, 135–43.

138. For the constitution of the *harem* in the palace of Mari: J. -M. Durand, in *Système Palatial*, 80–89. For discussion of the Grandstand fresco, see chapter 3. See also N. Marinatos, "The Minoan Harem," in *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne*, 15 (1989), 32–62.

139. It is a plausible conjecture that across from the platform, there existed a large window on the upper story of the palace; we might postulate an official appearing in it and interacting with the public. At any rate, this person would be on the direct line of the platform. See R. Hägg, "On the Reconstruction of the West Facade of the Palace at Knossos," in *FMP*, 129–134.

140. Evans, *PM* II, 612.

141. Nilsson, *MMR*, 104–5; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 116, cat. 90.

142. Most of the buildings included storage rooms as well. We thus have the familiar shrine/storage association.

143. Evans, *PM* II, 391–95; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 95, cat. 48; Preziosi, *MAD*, 35–37; N. Marinatos and R. Hägg, *OpAth* 16 (1986), 68.

144. Evans, *PM* II, 396–413. Evans's view that beyond the balustrade sat the lord or prince of the house is unlikely. Given the sacred architecture of the rest of the building, it is more plausible that the throne was the seat of a sacerdotal personage. Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 94, cat. 45, 46; N. Marinatos and R. Hägg (supra n.143), 61, 70.

145. Evans, *PM* IV, 202–15; Nilsson, *MMR*, 92; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 95, cat. 50.

146. R. Hägg, "Epiphany," 48–55.

147. Bleeker, *Festivals*, 106–8.

148. Evans, *PM* IV, 902, dated it in the second half of the fifteenth century BC (LM II) and wrote that it was a "revolutionary intrusion, effacing all previous elements." One of the implications of this thesis, still held by many, is that it was the abode not of a Minoan but a Mycenaean ruler. That this is wrong has been shown by S. Mirié (supra n.33). The chronological phases of the throne room were actually four. During the first (MM II–MM III or LM I), the adyton was the main element and there was neither a throne nor benches; there was a connection with the inner sanctuary and the service section. In the second and third phases (LM I–LM III) the throne, the fresco decoration and the benches were added in that order. The final phase, LM IIIA²–LM IIIB(?), perhaps marks a change in function. The door to the service section was blocked and the erection of the large stairway leading to the *piano nobile* put the repositories out of use. Niemeier (see below) sees a possible Mycenaean intrusion during the last phase. This would be the phase after 1375, when the whole palace had changed function. It will be remembered that the so-called domestic quarters of the east wing had been turned into workshops with limestone kilns.

Discussion in Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 88, cat. 34; W. -D. Niemeier, "Zur Deutung des Thronraumes im Palast von Knossos," *AM* 101 (1986), 63–66 with bibl. Shorter, English version in *FMP*, 163–68.

149. Recently: B. Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 219ff. For a cogent criticism of his views, Niemeier (supra n.148), 71–72. See also the section on the frescoes of the throne room, above, chapter 3.

150. See Niemeier (supra n.148), 72.

151. See note 148 above.

152. The evidence for this is clear since the stucco ends of the fresco were "folded" where the throne began. Mirié (supra n.33) 54f.

153. It was almost empty of finds (except for a bangle) and the designation is based on the existence of a ledge and Evans's vision of sacral kingship.

154. Evans, *PM* IV, 924ff.; Niemeier (supra n.148), 77–78.

155. Mirié (supra n.33) also arrives at the conclusion that the service section was a kitchen and deduces agricultural products as offerings. The low plaster table with hollows is reminiscent of the structure within Dining Shrine 8 at the palace of Phaistos discussed above. New excavations in the service section may clear the stratigraphy: *AR* 34 (1987/88), 68.

156. I basically follow Niemeier's interpretation here with one slight difference: he sees the whole service section as a preparation area for the dressing of the priestess, while I would confine the dressing to the inner sanctuary.

157. Pace Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 219ff.: ". . . the Throne Room and its adjacent rooms were not used for a religious purpose at all." Rutkowski considers the adyton the bathroom of the king. Niemeier (supra n.148), 71 correctly observes that it would hardly be likely for a king to officiate in his own bath-chamber. For extensive discussion and comparison with Oriental throne rooms: Niemeier (supra n.148), 71–73.

158. H. Reusch, "Zum Wandschmuck des Thronsaales in Knossos," in *Minoica. Festschrift J. Sundwall* (Berlin 1958), 334ff. This interpretation has found acceptance by many, see Niemeier (supra n.148), 74 n.84 for bibliography. M. Cameron came to similar conclusions in his discussion of the thematic program of the paintings of Knossos: *FMP*, 320–28. J. Hooker, in *Minoan Society*, 139, thinks that the epiphany need not have been actualized by a living person, but by a cult image, or even an empty throne. But the traffic flow through the service section and the doorway to the inner sanctuary, flanked by griffins, argue in favor of the enacted epiphany. See also R. Hägg, "Epiphany," 47–48.

159. Niemeier (supra n.148), 85. For the religious associations of palms: N. Marinatos, "The Palm Tree in Minoan Iconography and Religion," *OpAth* 15 (1984), 115ff.; idem, in *Fragen und Probleme*, 127–43.

160. N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 100ff. Niemeier (supra n. 148), 78–81, with bibliography on parallels.

161. Bleeker, *Festivals*, 120–23.

162. *Mallia, Palais* I, 19ff. with plan on p. 25, fig. 3; pl. 13ff.; *Palais V*, 140ff.; Preziosi, *MAD*, 111; Niemeier (supra n.148), 90–91.

163. Marinatos-Hirmer, pl. 68. O. Pelon, who has conducted new excavations in the area, doubts, however, that the axe-head and sword

come from the same chronological level; the sword seems to be earlier: O. Pelon, *Proc5CretCongr* (1981), 276ff.

164. S. Alexiou, in *Antichità Cretesi. Studi in onore di Doro Levi* I, *CronAStorArt* 12, 1973 (1977), 60ff.

165. As Niemeier ([supra n.148] 91) poignantly observes.

166. Women with swords or double axes do appear in the iconography in Minoan, Mycenaean, and Near Eastern art (Chapter 6, n.82), but these are goddesses, rather than priestesses. I am more inclined to postulate a male person because, in Minoan iconography, it is mostly male priests who carry the axe. See ch. 6 with n.18.

167. For anthropomorphic cult images in Minoan Neopalatial Crete: N. Marinatos and R. Hägg, "Anthropomorphic Cult Images in Minoan Crete?" in *Minoan Society*, 185–201.

168. It is interesting that the earliest monumental structures in the Near East also defy definition: they can fit either of these two categories (they could be temples or palaces). It thus seems that the original monumental structures in the Near East were a combination of palace and temple. See J. Margueron, "Apparition du palais au Proche Orient," in *Système Palatial*, 9–38, esp. 11: "Car toutes les caractéristiques que l'on peu définir peuvent s'appliquer à un pouvoir organisé à partir aussi bien d'un temple que d'un palais." For an overview of Near Eastern temple architecture: E. Heinrich, *Die Tempel und Heiligtümer im alten Mesopotamien I–II* (Berlin 1982).

169. K. Branigan, *FPC*, 92–113; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 15–17.

170. Instead of "mansion" some scholars use the term "country house." It is not too dissimilar in concept, but it does not take religious administration into account. S. Hood, "The 'Country House' and Minoan Society," in *Minoan Society*, 129–34. Term used first by G. Cadogan, *AR* (1970–1971), 30–31; (1971–1972), 24–25; (1973–1974), 37–39; (1977–1978), 70–84 in connection with the mansion at Pyrgos, Myrtou, in eastern Crete. The latter mansion has many palatial features, including a west court with causeways and a granary (the excavator calls it a cistern); an impressive facade leading to the upper story which was devoted to cult; a "pavillion" which I would call a display area.

171. J. Driessen, *Acta Archaeologica Lovaniensia* 21 (1982), 27–92. Driessen calls fashion what I consider a necessary outcome of religious status. In other words, fashion is dictated by the need of the upper classes to hold ceremonies. A. Pili-Papasteriou arrives at conclusions similar to mine and sees the spread of palatial shrines in urban architecture as a sign of the influence of the reli-

gious palatial system: in *Ametos. Festschrift M. Adronikos* (Thessalonike 1986), 680.

172. N. Marinatos, in *Minoan Thalassocracy*, 167-76.

Chapter 5

1. Nilsson, *MMR*, 77.

2. Evans, *PM IV*, 143, for example, talks about little household sanctuaries. The "domestic shrine concept" is retained in Rutkowski's recent book, *Cult Places*, 9-17, where he distinguishes between "Domestic and Palace Sanctuaries," "Temples," "Lustral Basins" with a separate chapter on "Pillar Crypts." I do not follow this classification the criteria for which are hard to grasp.

3. Mostly S. Hood, "Minoan Town-Shrines?" in *Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean in Ancient History and Prehistory, Festschrift F. Schachermeyer*, ed. K. H. Kinzl (Berlin 1977), 158-72. Hood stresses that independent town shrines existed. He compares them to Near Eastern temples, but in my view, the latter are too monumental to have any similarity in character with the Minoan shrines. Some of the "Town-Shrines" that Hood lists seem to be rural ruler's residences (see below); it is rather the palaces that are the equivalents of Near Eastern temples. Notwithstanding these differences of opinion, Hood has made a valuable contribution by stressing the exterior clientele of some shrines.

4. Gesell, in *FMP*, 123-28. The title of her book *Town, Palace and House Cult in Minoan Crete*, also reflects her sound recognition of the fact that even palatial shrines had an external clientele. It is interesting that the title of her book reflects a change of attitude since her dissertation, the title of which is *The Archaeological Evidence for the Minoan House Cult*. See also R. Hägg's review in *JPR* 1 (1987), 45-48.

5. For a catalogue of finds from Gournia see Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 71-73, cat. 6-12. For Pseira see the result of the recent excavations: Ph. Betancourt and C. Davaras, *Hesperia* 57 (1988), 207-25.

6. Most of the shrines collected by Hood (see note 3 above) will be discussed here, but some will be reclassified. The one at Pseira, called by the excavators "shrine for the Pseiran community," was most likely a genuine town-shrine. It included a bench and frescoes of two seated ladies in relief. Betancourt and Davaras (supra n.5), 218.

7. It comprised three rooms: an anteroom, a storage area, and a main shrine. The latter con-

tained a hearth, libation equipment, and a roughly made terracotta figurine of an animal. J.-C. Poursat, *BCH* 90 (1966), 514-51; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 107, cat. 76; Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 159-60. The dimensions of the room with the hearth are 4.50 x 3.70 m. Another dining shrine, of seemingly public character, may have existed at Palaikastro; in Block P there was an accumulation of broken pottery mixed with ashes, bones of oxen and the cores of their horns: *BSA* 11 (1904/1905), 286ff.; 40 (1939/1940), 39, 36; Hood (supra n.3), 167.

8. As far as the relations of town and palace went in the First Palace period, note that there existed an administrative quarter, called Quartier Mu, independent of the palace. J.-C. Poursat, in *FMP*, 75, states: "some similarities between the palace . . . and Quartier Mu point to a functional complementarity of buildings issued from the same general programme and not to a political duality. . . . The emergence of a centralized power seems to have been associated with the growth of the town." See also *Mallia, Quartier Mu*.

9. Dated to MM I: S. Xanthoudides, *ArchEph* 1906, 117-56; N. Platon, "To Ieron Maza," *KrChron* 5 (1951), 122-24; Branigan, *FPC*, 105-6; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 83, cat. 32.

10. Platon, *KrChron* 5 (1951), 123, called it a "bothros," but C. Davaras, *Amaltheia* 3 (1972), 38-41, did some supplementary excavations and found an overflow channel leading from the pit to the outside of the building. He thus rightly concludes that it was a cistern.

11. The excavator Xanthoudides thought it was a medieval house. Platon (supra n.10) identified it as a peak shrine but more recently, after supplementary excavations, Davaras (supra n.10) decided it was a house with a "domestic" sanctuary.

12. Note that cult is attested in connection with springs or wells in the New Palace period at Knossos and at the palace of Zakros. Knossos: Spring Chamber at the Caravanserai building. Evans, *PM II*, 123-39; J. Shaw, *AJA* 82 (1978), 446-47; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 100, cat. 63. Zakros: Sacred well within the palace precinct. Platon, *Zakros*, 196-99; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 140, cat. 134. The well at Zakros could be reached by eight steps. Around it were found offerings of agricultural products, including olives and grape seeds; an animal figurine; animal bones; fragments of offering tables etc.

13. The results of the excavations of the huge mansion at Tourkogetonia and the cemetery of Phourni have been successively published by J. and E. Sakellarakis in *Prakt* over a long period.

For previous bibliography see the latest report, *Prakt* (1983), 367ff.

14. J. and E. Sakellarakis, *Prakt* (1979), 370ff.

15. J. and E. Sakellarakis, *Prakt* (1979), 386ff.; Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 234-35. The three excavated rooms give a superficial impression of a tripartite building, but this is misleading because at least half of the structure is unexcavated or had eroded away. The basic plan is a corridor with three rooms on either side opening onto it. The arrangement resembles that of the Neopalatial magazines at Phaistos.

16. N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 19.

17. Sp. Marinatos, *Prakt* (1949), 104-9; (1951), 259-61; (1952), 599-604; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 136, cat. 129.

18. N. Marinatos, in *FMP*, 168.

19. J. Shaw, *AJA* 82 (1978), 429-48.

20. N. Platon, *Prakt* (1957), 145-147; Hood (supra n.3), 169; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 134, cat. 122.

21. Hood (supra n.3), 169.

22. D. Levi, *BdA* 4th ser., 44 (1959) 237-65; Hood (supra n.3), 170; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 77, cat. 21. On the goddess figures: S. Alexiou, *Thea*, 195-202. Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 139 (there the building is designated as a villa or farm), 141, 145.

23. Alexiou, *Thea*, 196.

24. J. McEnroe, *AJA* 86 (1982), 3-19.

25. Note that contemporary rural Greece is full of small chapels on mountaintops, on isles, near springs.

26. For the phenomenon of offering see *Gifts to the Gods*, esp. the article by W. Burkert, 43-50. The figurines of peak-sanctuaries need a serious and detailed study which is undertaken by A. Peatfield (Ph.D. diss. [1989]; cf. article in *OpAth* 18 [1990], 117-31).

27. W. Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge, Mass. 1987), 13.

28. During EM III: Branigan, *FPC*, 103-8; A. Peatfield, in *FMP*, 89-93, esp. 90. For discussion of peak sanctuaries in general see also Nilsson, *MMR*, 68ff; P. Faure, *BCH* 91 (1967), 114-50; B. C. Dietrich, *The Origins of Greek Religion* (Berlin 1974), 290-307. Recently B. Rutkowski, "Minoan Peak Sanctuaries: Topography and Architecture," *Aegaeum* 2 (1988), 71-99. E. F. Bloedow, "Evidence for an Early Date for the Cult of the Cretan Zeus," *Kernos* 4 (1991), 139-77.

29. N. Platon, *KrChron* 5 (1951), 156; Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 92; A. Peatfield, *BSA* 78 (1983), 273-80.

30. J. L. Myres, *BSA* 9 (1902-03), 356-87, pls. VII-XII; Nilsson, *MMR*, 68ff; N. Platon (supra n.29), 120-22.

31. Featfield (supra n.28), 93: "In the Neopalatial period the direction of increased manpower and resources towards selected shrines (those associated with the political and economic centres) to the exclusion of isolated sites, suggests a religious centralisation." See also J. F. Cherry, "Generalization and the Archaeology of the State," in *Social Organisation and Settlement* ed. D. Green, C. Haselgrove, and M. Spriggs (BAR Int. Series, 47), (Oxford 1978), 411-37.

32. Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 76; For a useful summary of the new excavations, which correct the erroneous impressions of Evans (*PM I*, 151-63), see A. Karetsov, in *SCABA*, 137-53.

33. Platon (supra n.29), 157. For a critical view of the bonfires in Cretan Bronze Age sanctuaries see now B. Bergquist, "The Archaeology of Sacrifice: Minoan-Mycenaean versus Greek," in *Early Greek Cult Practice*, ed. R. Hägg, N. Marinatos, and G. C. Nordquist (Stockholm 1988), 21-34.

34. Karetsov (supra n.32), 145-46. I am indebted to Dr. Karetsov for her reading this section of the manuscript.

35. Karetsov (supra n.32), 146, fig. 14.

36. Karetsov, *Prakt* 1976, 410f.; N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 39.

37. Clay model of shrine from Petsofas: Davaras, *Guide*, fig. 31. From Piskokephalo: Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 78, figs. 79, 80. Ashlar masonry indicates that the building operations were conducted by the palatial organization because it is expensive and time-consuming to carve ashlar blocks. This is the reason that I suggest that these models represent emblems of official religion.

38. For a similar mixture of expensive and modest offerings from the Heraion of Samos in the Archaic Greek period see H. Kyrieleis, in *Early Greek Cult Practice*, ed. R. Hägg, and N. Marinatos, (Stockholm 1988), 215-21.

39. Karetsov, *Prakt* 1975, pls. 264-65.

40. Cf. Karetsov (supra n.32), 145: "The character and quality of the finds have a palatial character."

41. C. Davaras, *AAA* 7 (1974), 210-13.

42. For Kato Syme see below. Summary of the excavations: A. Lebessi, *ArchEph* 120 (1981), 1-24.

43. A model of a fish (a votive by a fisherman?) was found at the peak sanctuary of Traostalos in eastern Crete: Davaras, *Guide*, 97, fig. 55.

Regarding pests: Evans, *PM I*, 153; Dietrich, (supra n.28). Dietrich speaks of "apotropaic" cult. See also Platon (supra n.29) 112, 120-21. On the possible significance of the beetles Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 89ff.

44. Large figures come from Petsofas, for example. See Myres (supra n.30); Evans, *PM I*, fig.

111, frgt.r.; Platon (supra n.29), 121, estimates the height of the statue to about 1 m. Fragments of large statues have been also found at Kofinas: Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 84.

45. Figurines and their gestures are treated in A. Peatfield's doctoral thesis on peak sanctuaries (London); cf. note 26 above.

46. Platon (supra n.29), pl. H.2, p. 140.

47. Nilsson, *MMR*, 75.

48. Evans, *PM I*, 153; Platon (supra n.29), 157; C. Davaras, *Kadmos* 6 (1967), 102; Peatfield in dissertation (supra n.26) and *OpAth* 18 (1990).

49. Davaras, *Guide*, 246, fig. 138.

50. From Vrysinas: Davaras (supra n.41).

51. Myres (supra n.30), 356–87. Platon (supra n.29), 120.

52. Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 76–81.

53. Juktas: Karetsoou in SCABA, 141. Maza: Platon (supra n.29), 114. Petsofas: Myres (supra n.30). For others see Platon (supra n.29), 142–44.

54. For analogous ceremonies where the offerings are destroyed ("Vernichtungsoffer") in Scandinavia see U. -E. Hagberg, in *Gifts to the Gods*, 77–82. There weapons and other costly objects were destroyed by being thrown into the bogs. A burning ceremony of renewal associated with a mountain in the later Greek period was the Daedala: Burkert, *S&H*, 132–34.

55. Burkert, *GR*, 27. This is a more plausible explanation than Rutkowski's (*Cult Places*, 90) who thinks that the clay balls represent droppings of sheep. Such clay balls have been found at many peak sanctuaries, notably at Petsofas.

56. Peatfield, in *FMP*, 92.

57. Nilsson, *MMR*, 75.

58. Platon (supra n.29), 156; Dietrich (supra n.28), 304–5.

59. Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 88–89.

60. Burkert, *GR*, 28.

61. Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, fig. 77.

62. Basic discussion of the rhyton: Platon, *Zakros*, 161–69. Reconstruction of the shrine as only a facade by Shaw (supra n.19).

63. Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 84. Rutkowski says the baetyl resembles a stylized mountain but also that is the anionic form of the goddess in the shape of a pillar! More accurate: Niemeier, *AM* 101 (1986), 89; M. Cameron in *FMP*, 324.

64. See chapter 7 and Lurker, *Gods & Symbols*, 49, under "False Door."

65. C. Davaras, *Proc4CretCongr 1976* (Athens 1981), 88–93, pls. 15–17.

66. The first fragment was brought to the museum at Herakleion by a German officer during the occupation of Crete in WWII and published by Platon (supra n.29), 155, fig. 5. After many years the second fragment was brought to S. Al-

exou who immediately recognized a resemblance in style with the previous piece; in fact the two joined perfectly: S. Alexiou, *KrChron* 13 (1959), 345–52; Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 83–85.

67. Alexiou (supra n.66), 347, thinks that the top part shows bases for another pair of sacred horns. This is probably correct, but I would place them above the niche.

68. Alexiou, *KrChron* 17 (1963), 339–51 and *AAA* 2 (1969), 84–88 has convincingly argued that they are not functional columns (*pace* Evans, *PM III*, 64–65), but flagpoles as in Egyptian temples. He follows a suggestion which had been made by Sp. Marinatos: Marinatos-Hirmer, 146. For an alternative suggestion that the poles attract thunder and are connected with a rain/storm god: Ch. Kardara, *ArchEph* (1966), 176ff.

69. Evans, *PM III*, 65, fig. 37; Nilsson, *MMR*, 183, fig. 87.

70. Nilsson, *MMR*, 183, suggests an ascending bahustrate.

71. Excavated by A. Lebessi who has successively published her reports in *Prakt* (1972–1977). A summary in *ArchEph* 120 (1981), 1–24 and *National Geographic Research* 3 (1987), 102–13 (with P. Metaxa Muhly); and most recently "Aspects of Minoan Cult. Sacred Enclosures" *AA* (1990), 315–36 (with P. Metaxa Muhly).

72. Lebessi, *ArchEph* 120 (1981), 17ff.

73. *Prakt* (1973), pls. 199–201; (1976), pl. 224a. See also *National Geographic Research* 3 (1987), 108–10.

74. See for example B. C. Dietrich, *Tradition in Greek Religion* (Berlin 1986), 32f., 82f., who sees unity of cult both in Minoan/Mycenaean and Minoan/Greek.

75. A. Lebessi, *To Ieron tou Erme kai tes Aphrodites ste Syme Viannou* (Athens 1985) with English summary 221–40. Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 103.

76. Lebessi (supra n.75), 236.

77. *Ibid.*, pls. 17–58. Homosexual encounter, pl. 41 G5.

78. Ephorus in F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (Berlin-Leiden 1923–58), frg. 70 F 149; Burkert, *GR*, 260–62; J. N. Bremmer, *Arethusa* 13 (1980), 279–98; H. Patzer, *Die griechische Krabbenliebe* (Wiesbaden 1982); Lebessi (supra n.75), 237.

79. R. Koehl, "The Chieftain Cup and a Minoan Rite of Passage," *JHS* 106 (1986), 99–110. I am in agreement with Koehl that there is an initiatory aspect in the scene of the cup (chapters 6, 10). But we disagree in (a) the interpretation of the Chieftain Cup scene and (b) in the reconstruction of the procedures of the rites of passage.

80. A. Peatfield in his dissertation (personal communication) is arguing that most male figu-

rines have scalp locks. For pictorial examples see Davaras (supra n.37), fig. 26. For the correlation of shaved heads with youth see N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 35 and, more extensively, E. Davis, *AJA* 90 (1986), 399–406; Koehl (supra n.79), 100–103.

81. Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 99–118, calls them sacred enclosures. He puts together two totally different types of evidence, however, iconography and actual remains. Since art follows its own rules and rarely depicts objects as they really are, I do not think that this approach leads to positive results. "Enclosure" in Rutkowski's scheme can be a variety of "signs" in the iconography, ranging from walls to built structures on top of which there is a tree. Rutkowski lists: Kephala (99); Gazi (103); Poros (105); Kato Syme (103). In his Appendix III, pp. 115–16, he lists twenty-two cases. Typical finds are pottery and lamps but by far the most common are clay figurines. For a detailed description of a rural sanctuary near Zakros, see A. Brown and A. Peatfield, *BSA* 82 (1987), 23–33.

82. For chronological development and general discussion on Cretan caves: Nilsson, *MMR*, 54–68; Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 65–67; L. Tyree, *Cretan Sacred Caves: Archaeological Evidence*, Ph.D. Diss., Univ. of Missouri 1974. See also the numerous works by P. Faure of which only a few will be listed here: "Grottes crétoises," *BCH* 80 (1956), 95ff; *idem*, *Fonctions des cavernes crétoises* (Paris 1964).

83. Objects in crevices: Tyree (supra n.82), 178–79. Man-made altars are attested for Psychro and Arkalochori, for example: Tyree, 179–80.

84. The bronze figurines from caves and settlements have been recently studied by C. Verlinden, *Les statuettes anthropomorphes crétoises en bronze et en plomb, du III^e millénaire au VII^e siècle av. J.-C.* (Publications d'Historie de l'Art et d'Archéologie de l'Université catholique de Louvain 41, *Archaeologia Transatlantica* 4) (Louvain 1984); *idem*, *OpAth* 17 (1988), 183–89. Verlinden comes to the conclusion that the bronze figurines from both nature sanctuaries and urban settlements represent the same type of offering. However they also indicate different classes of Minoan society.

85. For a survey of offerings during Neopalatial times: Tyree (supra n.82), 75ff.

86. As Sp. Marinatos, *Prakt* (1932), 92; (1950), 257, observes. The caves of Kamares, Amnisos and Lykastos yielded only terracotta objects, whereas lots of bronzes were found in others, notably at Psychro, Skoteino, Ida and Arkalochori.

87. Nilsson, *MMR*, 395 bases his notion of polytheistic religion on this observation.

88. R. M. Dawkins & M. L. W. Laistner, *BSA* 19 (1912–13), 1–34.

89. Recently G. Walberg, in *Gifts to the Gods*, 172.

90. Dawkins & Laistner (supra n.88), 11.

91. Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 62–63.

92. Walberg (supra n.89), 172. Note that the pottery is from the First Palace period (Kamares ware).

93. D. G. Hogarth, *BSA* 6 (1899–1900), 163–91; Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 57; Tyree (supra n.82), 225–26.

94. Tyree (supra n.82), 182.

95. Note, however, that at Psychro, where there were many weapons, the male figurines outnumber the females only slightly: *ibid.*, 255–80.

96. Sp. Marinatos, *Kadmos* 1 (1962), 87ff. See also *idem*, *Prakt* (1935), 212ff., for the original publication.

97. Tyree (supra n.82), 174, 249ff.

98. Burkert, *GR*, 261–62.

99. It could be objected that warriors were not predominant in the social structure of Minoan Crete, and it is true that, relative to the Orient, the warrior element is indeed marginal. Yet, this does not mean that it was absent. A warrior festival can be reconstructed through a fresco from Thera (N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 52–61) whereas weapons are attested archaeologically. Swords (probably of ceremonial type) were found in the palace of Malia. Many weapons are attested in graves, although these come mostly from around 1400 BC, when Mycenaeans may have been present.

100. A correlation of status and finds in graves has been made by I. Kilian-Dirlmeier, "Nochmals zu den Kriegergräbern von Knossos," *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz* 33 (1986), who concludes that high status is expressed by jewelry, weapons, and religious symbols.

101. Tyree (supra n.82), 74.

102. *Ibid.*, 92; N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 39.

103. Tyree (supra n.82) 93; Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 55.

104. The cave of Eleithya is mentioned in the Linear B tablets and in Homer. Sp. Marinatos, *Prakt* (1930), 91–99; Nilsson, *MMR*, 58; Tyree (supra n.82), 24ff.

105. Nilsson, *MMR*, 395–96 argues for differentiation of deities in the caves on the basis of the votives. He also thinks that the cult of the caves can be explained by the fact that they originally were human habitations and later became the dwelling of deities (57). Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 64–65, postulates a chthonic deity which

later split up in sub-categories including a war-goddess. Finally the idea of a supreme god emerged (67). Tyree (supra n.82), 182, also accepts a female chthonic goddess and a war god for Arkalochori.

106. Nilsson, *MMR*, 389ff. for a discussion of the multiple goddesses of the Minoan Mycenaean pantheon.

Chapter 6

1. The second question, however, is whether priests were distinguishable from gods, see Sauren, *infra* n.16. This problem pertains also to Minoan iconography. For the Near East: B. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien II* (Heidelberg 1925), 55–58. For Egypt: A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Ägypten* (Tübingen 1923), 330–38.

2. Evans, *PM IV*, 397–419. See also Nilsson, *MMR*, 155ff. A good, albeit brief discussion of priesthood: S. Alexiou, *Minoan Civilization* (Herkuleion 1969; original Greek edition 1964), 102–8, and F. Schachermeyr, *Die minoische Kultur des alten Kreta* (Stuttgart 1964), 165–66. Syrian robes resembling those of our priests: C. F. -A. Schaeffer, *Ugaritica III* (Paris 1939), 140, fig. 141; 130, fig. 114.

3. S. Alexiou, *AA* (1964), 785–804, fig. 4. More complete restoration with additional fragments: M. Cameron, *AA* (1967), 330–44, fig. 12.

4. Cameron (supra n.3); N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 32–34.

5. Ch. Zervos, *L'art de la Crète* (Paris 1956), fig. 778; Long, *ATS*, pl. 13, fig. 11.

6. Long, *ATS*, 31, identifies the figure as a deity because of the position of upraised arms, but this gesture is not a sufficient criterion to recognize gods; besides, priests can appropriate the gestures of deities. On the other hand, I would not exclude the possibility that the figure is a god. Images of gods and priests are interchangeable in the Near East (see note 1 above).

7. It is important to remember that the seals form a homogeneous group, stemming from the same chronological horizon (MM III-LM I), whereas the paintings are later. The figure on the sarcophagus from Nirou Chani is postpalatial and may reflect some change in fashion. For ritual scenes on Postpalatial clay coffins (larnakes) see also chapter 11.

8. *CMS II.3*, 13 and 196; VIII, 110 a–c; IX, 6D; X, 278. For a complete collection see J. Betts, *TUAS* 6 (1981), 74–83.

9. J. Betts, *TUAS* 6 (1981), 74–83.

10. M. Mante-Platonos, *ArchEph* 120 (1981), 74–83.

11. Stone maces have been found at the palaces of Zakros, Knossos and in other places, see Mante-Platonos (supra n.10). A Syrian axe comes from the Vapheio tholos tomb on the mainland.

12. Evans, *PM IV*, 413.

13. Evans, *PM III*, 106, fig. 59. The figure is interpreted by Evans as an archer disembarking from a boat and climbing rocks.

14. Levi, "Cretule," 132, fig. 142.

15. Evans, *PM IV*, 413–21, esp. 417. He was followed by P. Demargne who pointed to the close affinities between Mesopotamian/Syrian sacred dress and the Minoan priestly garment: *BCH* 70 (1946), 148–53.

16. H. Sauren, "Die Kleidung der Götter," *Visible Religion* 2 (1983), 95–109, esp. 103: "Schliesslich folgen die kurgara-Priester. . . Sie tragen 3 Instrumente: eine besondere Streitkeule, einen blutbefleckten Dolch, und ein anderes nicht bestimmtes Object." This description is based on a text from the Isin-Larsa period.

17. See chapter 4, note 172.

18. Schaeffer (supra n.2) 118, fig. 107. Cf. Evans, *PM IV*, 417: "The ceremonial axe from Malia surely, like the giant sword that accompanied it, part of the actual regalia of the priest-king— . . . represents a variant of true Oriental form going back, like its animal decoration, to Sumerian models of the fourth millennium B.C." Regarding the long sword found in the same area, note that O. Pelon, who has conducted new excavations, doubts that the axe-head and sword come from the same level; the sword seems to be earlier: O. Pelon, *ProcysCretCongr* 1981, 276ff. For the Near Eastern influences on the Minoan upper classes see V. Watrous, in *FMP*, 64–70.

19. For the origins of ritual hunting and its connection with sacrifice: Burkert, *HN*. A recent summary of his views in *Violent Origins*, ed. R. G. Hammerton-Kelly (Stanford 1987), 149–76. Paleolithic ritual hunt is, of course, vividly represented in the caves of the period.

20. Cf. the coronation ceremony of Tutankhamen in the lively account of Ch. Desroches-Noblecourt, *Tutankhamen* (Engl. transl., London 1963), 176: "On the eve of the coronation . . . kings customarily displayed their hunting prowess—taming wild horses, baiting savage bulls, or wrestling with lions."

21. Frankfort, *Art & Architecture*, 89, pl. 87.

22. N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 48–49, figs. 33–38.

23. Griffin + dolphin: *CMS V*, 690. Lions + dolphin on the hull of a ship from the frieze of room 5, West House, Thera: Sp. Marinatos, *DagVI*, 112. Dolphins appear as emblems on thergers. See R. Laffineur, in *Minoan Thalassocracy*,

135. Dolphins as emblems on seals: *CMS I*, 259; I Suppl., 37, etc.

24. LH krater from Ras Shamra: H. G. Buchholz, ed., *Ägäische Bronzezeit* (Darmstadt 1987), 213, fig. 66a. Aesop's fables in *Aesopica*, B. E. Perry ed. (Urbana), no. 145, p. 377; no. 113, p. 365; no. 62, p. 345. I thank J. Bravo for the last reference.

25. *CMS I*, 223. The Vapheio seals were found in a royal tomb on the mainland, not on Crete. I feel, however, that since the type can be shown to have originated in Crete (Betts, supra n.8), these items were Minoan imports, and it is therefore justifiable to use them as evidence for Minoan religion. The same rule applies to other seals that are now in private collections. As long as there are close parallels found in Crete, they can be used as Minoan pictorial testimonia.

26. For this phenomenon in Mesopotamian iconography see Sauren (supra n.16).

27. Evans, *PM I*, 221, Fig 166; Nilsson, *MMR*, 86–88, fig. 17.

28. Rather than the deities themselves, as is often claimed. Nilsson, *MMR*, 340; Matz, "Göttererscheinung," 403.

29. E. Davis, *AJA* 90 (1986), 399–406. "Portrait seals" with heads with curly hair: *CMS IX*, 6D; X, 278; XI, 18. For portrayal of youths in Minoan art see also chapter 10.

30. Evans, *PM II*, 790ff.; the two principal figures are called a prince and his officer but Sp. Marinatos in Marinatos-Hirmer, 114, pl. 102, speaks of playing children. For recent treatments W. -D. Niemeier, *AM* 102 (1987), 83–84 and R. Koehl, *JHS* 106 (1986), 99–110. See also chapter 5, note 79.

31. For variations of male costumes see E. Sapouna-Sakellarakis, *Minoikon Zoma* (Athens 1971), esp. 57, fig. 12. More recently: H. -E. Giesecke, *OpAth* 17 (1988), 91–98. The latter emphasizes the sexual nature of the phallus sheath-costume.

32. Evans, *PM IV* 401, comes to the same conclusion: honored youths were identified with the male divinity and wore the same apparel. Young gods are represented on, among other items, the Oxford ring (Nilsson, *MMR*, 256, fig. 123 = fig. 165 in this volume) and the Berlin ring (*MMR*, 266, fig. 130 = fig. 166 in this volume) and a seal-impression from Chania, fig. 164 in this volume. For fuller discussion of this young god and for illustrations see chapter 7. For the iconographical evidence of the dress and hairstyles of youths in the New Palace period: Sapouna-Sakellarakis (supra n.31), pls. 31–39.

33. Nilsson, *MMR*, 155–58; Sapouna-Sakellarakis (supra n.31) nos. 143, 175–78, pp. 122–23; Sp. Marinatos, *ArchHom I*, pp. A31–32.

34. That women wear the hide-skirt is especially obvious on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus, where as on seals and sealings it is often impossible to identify the sex of the participants.

35. Nilsson (*MMR*, 158) discusses the leopard skin worn by Egyptian priests over one shoulder; this, however, is very different from the hide on Minoan representations which is almost certainly made of sheep. Besides, the Minoan skin-dress is worn as a skirt, not as a shawl over the shoulder.

For Near Eastern parallels see Sapouna-Sakellarakis (supra n.31), 151 with pl. 42a (the representation of a priest wearing animal hide dress from Mari). The sacred garment worn by gods and priests alike in Mesopotamia seems to have been made of animal hide: Sauren (supra n.16), figs. 1, 6, 7; Schaeffer (supra n.2), 135, fig. 118.

36. Already Evans, *PM IV*, 401, speaks of "votaries wearing the skins of their victims." The relationship sacrificer/victim has been explained by Burkert, *HN*, who also notes the instances of the incorporation of the victim's skin in the cult paraphernalia (*HN*, 187).

37. See *CMS II.3*, 146; XI, 238; XIII, 136; sealings from Hagia Triada: Levi, "Cretule," 179, fig. 224 and 180, fig. 225; Nilsson, *MMR*, 157, fig. 65; Levi, "Cretule," 131, fig. 141; Nilsson, *MMR*, 156, fig. 62. For a complete list: Sapouna-Sakellarakis (supra n.31), nos. 175–85.

38. At least two examples of this scheme exist: *CMS I*, 132 and Kenna, *CS*, pl. 11, no 284. In the background are sacred shields. For the meaning of the latter: N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 52–58.

39. Hagia Triada sealing: Levi, "Cretule," 131, fig. 140. Zakros: Nilsson, *MMR*, 157, fig. 64. Nilsson thinks that the double axe is being worshipped but this is an over-interpretation.

40. Nilsson, *MMR*, 156, fig. 63.

41. Levi, "Cretule," 138, sees a sacred dance, whereas Nilsson, *MMR*, 156, correctly postulates a goddess with attendants. Goddesses with peaked caps occur also in the Postpalatial period: Alexiou, *Taea*, pl. H, fig. 2; pl. I, fig. 1; pl. Theta, fig. 1.

42. Nilsson, *MMR*, 160. Together with the "cuirass," Nilsson discusses the "sacral knot" and folded garments that seem to me to be flounced skirts. He admits that he does not understand the significance of the "cuirass" (164).

43. Levi, "Cretule," 131, fig. 141 = Nilsson, *MMR*, 156, fig. 62.

44. No metal scales such as could be used as adornments are attested in the archaeological

record, which argues against the idea of cuirass. Note that the tassels indicate fabric rather than hide. The religious significance of this garment is accepted by Evans, *PM IV*, 401, and Nilsson, *MMR*, 160–64, but is doubted by Sapouna-Sakellarakis (supra n.31), 104–10, who thinks that it was a normal mantle for protection against cold weather. All agree that it is not a military garb.

45. For the associations of the garment in glyptic scenes (whether "cuirass" or flounced skirt one cannot tell): N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 58–61.

46. Sapouna-Sakellarakis (supra n.31), 110, sees more of a secular harvest scene. Sp. Marinatos in Marinatos-Hirmer, 144, leaves the question open.

47. On a seal-impression with men dressed in hide skirts, for example, Nilsson, *MMR*, 157, fig. 65. The gesture characterizes men in processions: N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 38–39.

48. Levi, "Cretule," 131, fig. 141; Nilsson, *MMR*, 156, fig. 62. Another seal-impression from Sklavokambos: Sp. Marinatos, *ArchEph* (1939–41), 88, pl. 4, 1.

49. Levi, "Cretule," 142, fig. 157.

50. W.-D. Niemeier, *AM* 101 (1986), 78–84.

51. The robes on the HTS are not of the long Syrian type with diagonal bands such as characterize the male priest on seals of the Neopalatial period, but a variation called *heanos* by Sp. Marinatos (supra n.33), 30. This garment is typical of the period around 1400, which is probably the last phase of Knossian Palatial culture. We cannot be sure that it was worn only by priests or by high status personages in general, but the cultic context of the scene is certain in this case. Personages with such long robes are depicted also on the fresco from the Corridor of the Processions, Knossos (ch. 3).

52. Y. Tzedakis, *AAA* 3 (1970), 14, figs. 1–2 = Marinatos-Hirmer, pl. 128. The object is dated to LM IIIB, c. 1250 BC.

53. Sacral associations of birds discussed by Nilsson, *MMR*, 330–40 and Matz, "Götterscheinung."

54. Pattern discussed by Burkert, *S&H*, 136–42, who shows that the dependency on seasonal cycles is not absolute. A scene of similar significance with goddess, birds and vegetation, was painted on a Protogeometric pithos found in a tomb at Knossos (see chapter 7, fig. 147). Here we have clear continuity of ritual from Minoan to early Greek times: N. Coldstream, *BICS* 31 (1984), 93–104; W. Burkert, in *Early Greek Cult Practice*, ed. R. Hägg, N. Marinatos, and G. Nordquist (Stockholm 1988), 81–87.

55. M. Lang, *The Palace of Nestor at Pylos II* (Princeton 1969), pls. 125, 126. The dress of the

priest with the lyre is not identical with the Syrian robe because of chronological discrepancy between Neopalatial seals (around 1500) and this mainland version (around 1250 BC).

56. For the connection of music with cult in the Bronze Age sanctuary of Phylakopi: C. Renfrew, *The Archaeology of Cult* (London 1985), 383–84. For shamanism in general see M. Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Technique of Ecstasy* (London 1964), 168–80. String instruments in connection with shamanism: H. Fromm, *Das Kalewala. Kommentar*. (Munich 1967), 259. Recently: F. Graf, "Orpheus; A Poet among Men" in *Interpretations of Greek Mythology*, ed. J. Bremmer (Totowa, N.J. 1986), 80–106.

57. G. Pugliese-Carratelli, *MontAnt* 40 (1944–45), col. 478, fig. 49, nos. 89, 100 = *Recueil des inscriptions en Linéaire A*, I, ed. L. Godart and J.-P. Olivier, *ÉtCrét* 21, (Paris 1976), 140–41; 164–65.

58. According to Evans, *PM IV*, 401, the flounced attire may have been derived from Oriental models: on Babylonian cylinders flounced garments are common, and they must have reached Crete by the days of Hammurabi. A glimpse of the not too great variety of female attire can be gained from the miniature fresco from the West House at Thera, where different types of women are depicted. *Thera VI*, pls. 105, 112. Discussion of female dress: Sp. Marinatos (supra n.33), 25–30.

59. The flounced costume can have variants. It can consist of either a skirt, jacket and belt, as separate pieces, or it can be a dress, with seam in the front and deep décolletage, over which a short flounced kilt is worn (this variant is found on Thera and could be local adaptation of the Minoan costume. For reconstruction see N. Marinatos *Art and Religion*, 102). Examples of this typical Minoan costume are the faience dresses from the temple repositories Knossos (see fig. 106 in this volume). One should also bear in mind the chronological evolution from Proto- to Neopalatial times: Sp. Marinatos (supra n.33), 26. Here, only Neopalatial costume will be discussed.

60. Sacred robes can belong to a priestess or goddess since the two are interchangeable, especially as regards costume. Sauren (supra n.16).

61. See chapter 3.

62. Crocus and lily motifs are associated with ritual vessels. Here are some scanty examples, by no means an exhaustive list. Crocus on an offering table from Thera: *Thera VII*, 57. Crocuses and lilies together on an incense burner from Thera: *Thera VII*, pl. 51. Lilies on an altar on a seal from Routs: Marinatos-Hirmer, pl. 232; on a necklace: Marinatos-Hirmer, pl. 225. Lily necklace around

the neck of the "Prince of the Lilies": chapter 3 of this volume, fig. 61. Lilies on the fresco from Amnisos: Marinatos-Hirmer, pl. XXIII. Crocuses are picked on frescoes from Knossos, Hagia Triada and Thera, to be offered to the goddess: cf. fig. 122 in this volume. N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 39–84; idem, in *Gifts to the Gods*, 130–32, with notes 53–56. See also G. Walberg, 171–76, in the same volume. The association of goddess with flowers is also discussed in chapter 7. Crocuses on the "garland fresco" from Knossos: P. Warren, *Minoan Religion as Ritual Action*, 24.

63. The robes were ritually buried in the cists close to the pillar crypts at the palace of Knossos. Evans, *PM I*, 506, fig. 364.

64. N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 70, fig. 49.

65. G. Karo, *Schachtgräber*, pls. 26, 27; Marinatos-Hirmer, pls. 226–27; Sp. Marinatos (supra n.33) 26.

66. The funerary symbolism of the ornaments is discussed by R. Laffineur, "Weitere Beiträge zur Symbolik im mykenischen Bestattungsritual," in *Schriften des Deutschen Archäologen-Verbandes IX, Referat vom Kolloquium zur Ägäischen Vorgeschichte, Mannheim 1986* (Mannheim 1987), 125–32. More extensive discussion of octopuses in chapters 9 and 10.

67. Evans, *PM I*, 430ff.; Persson, *RGPT*, 67; Alexiou (supra n.2), 92–93. While the above scholars postulate a religious/magical significance for the knot, Nilsson, *MMR*, 164 thinks it may have been merely decorative, a piece of fashion.

68. See chapter 3.

69. It is not certain that the examples on seals are sacred knots or flounced skirts. Some examples discussed in Nilsson, *MMR*, 162–64; N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 58–61, figs. 51, 60, 65, 66, 72.

70. Evans, *PM II*, 284, fig. 168.

71. H. Schliemann, *Mykenae*, 278, figs. 350–52; Evans, *PM I*, 431, fig. 309. Nilsson, *MMR*, 162.

72. For discussion and previous bibliography: R. Hägg and Y. Lindau, "The Minoan 'Snake Frame' Reconsidered," *OpAth* 15 (1984), 67–77.

73. *Ibid.*, 77; R. Hägg, "Epiphanie," 48.

74. R. M. Boehmer, in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie IV* (1975), 431–34.

75. *CMS II*, 3, 8; P. Demargne, "La robe de la déesse minoenne sur un cachet de Mallia," *Mélanges Charles Picard I* (Paris 1949), 280–88.

76. Levi, "Cretule," 130, fig. 139. E. Davis thinks the bow-like structure may be a horn-crown (see above); oral communication.

77. Malia seal: Demargne (supra n.75), 280–83. Thera fresco: N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 97–105.

78. Nilsson, *MMR*, 251 with figs. 119, 120; N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 58–61; 64–71. "Robe-rituals"

are discussed also by P. Warren, *Minoan Religion as Ritual Action*, 20–23 and Niemeier (supra n.50).

79. Niemeier (supra n.50), 78–79, fig. 3.

80. A brief survey of iconographical evidence follows. The references are to Nilsson's *MMR*. *Women in front of altars*: figs. 73, 84, 85, 86. *Worshipping or bringing offerings to goddess*: figs. 139, 158, 159. *Libating women* are depicted on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus. Evidence for *ritual dance* collected by P. Warren, *BSA* 79 (1984), 307–23, esp. 319–23.

81. Examples collected and discussed by J. Sakellarakis, *ArchEph* (1972), 255–75. See also N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 34–35, fig. 23.

82. Nilsson, *MMR*, suggests that the sacredness of the double axe is derived from the fact that it was a sacrificial instrument. He himself notes, however, that it is carried only by ministers of the cult or goddesses (226). See especially the Postpalatial mold with the frontally depicted goddess from Palaikastro: Nilsson, *MMR*, 225, fig. 112. Nilsson correctly criticizes the theories of Evans and others that the double axe is an aniconic form of a male god (220ff.). N. was correct in pointing out that the double axe is frequently shown together with bull's heads. However, this does not conclusively prove that it was a sacrificial instrument. As a symbol, it would denote "sacralization of the sacrificial animal." That the double axe was *not* a sacrificial instrument has been shown by H.-G. Buchholz, *Zur Herkunft der kretischen Doppelaxt* (Munich 1959). In my *MSR*, 22ff. I suggested that the axe may have been used for stunning. I doubt this now, because *no representation* shows the sacrificed animal in connection with a double axe: *ibid.*, figs. 1–34, 11, 15.

A recent treatment by B. C. Dietrich sheds interesting light on the significance of double axes. He stresses the connection of the axe with symbols of regeneration. Indeed many depictions on vase paintings and other media are coupled with plants or a butterfly: Nilsson, *MMR*, figs. 90, 98, 99, 101–3; See Dietrich, in *Early Greek Cult Practice*, ed. R. Hägg, N. Marinatos, and G. Nordquist (Stockholm 1988), 35–40; idem, *IPR* 2 (1988), 12–24.

One more example of a woman in a sacrificial context must be mentioned here: a very badly preserved seal from Crete depicting a woman in front of a bull(?). *CMS II*, 3, 213; J. Sakellarakis, *ArchEph* (1972), 246, pl. 942. It is suggested by the author of *CMS* that the priestess is holding a knife. I cannot see the latter; what is taken as a knife is more likely the arm of the woman. Note that the figure on a mainland seal who cuts open the belly of a pig with a knife (*CMS I*, 80), is

more likely to be a male rather than a female since the robe is not flounced and no breasts are visible. G. Mylonas, *Mycenaean and the Mycenaean Age* (Princeton 1966), 164; N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 13, fig. 3.

83. Compare with the linguistic type *chaitkeus* (smith) which denotes a profession. Summary of words connected with religion in the Linear B tablets from the mainland and Postpalatial Crete. E. Vermeule, *Götterkult, ArchHom* ch. V, 59ff. The Linear A tablets are not enlightening in this respect, but the administrative system and the administrators are dealt with admirably and thoroughly by J. Weingarten, *Kadmos* 26 (1987), 1-43. She arrives at the conclusion, which is based on seal usage, that an elite of about seventeen persons controlled the administration and commodities at the mansion of Hagia Triada. "Thus, the sealing administration does not resemble a bureaucratic pyramid but an obelisk implanted upon a large flat base: at the bottom are over 100 seal-owners who stamped just one or two nodules each." (2) Regarding the administrative elite of the temple repositories, Knossos, see J. Weingarten, in *Transition*, 39-52.

84. It is often said that the Syrian robe and its Postpalatial off-shoot with the seam in front (*heanos*) is a female attire worn by men. Cf. Alexiou (supra n.2), 107. This is not true, as the Neopalatial Syrian robe is a distinctly male attire.

It is easy to confuse the Syrian robe with the Postpalatial long dress with frontal seam. For example, what are the goddesses on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus wearing? See Ch. Long, *ATS*, 30-31. Long robes (possibly with seams) are worn also by the men on the so-called Palanquin Fresco (Evans, *PM* IV, 399, fig. 332) which stems from the later phases of painting at Knossos. See also chapter 3.

Chapter 7

1. Evans accepted one main goddess and a paramour. Although he was not oblivious to the possibility of polytheism, he could not discern distinct deities in the iconography. See Evans, *PM* II, 277; III, 457; IV, 24. See also the quote from a letter to Nilsson: *MMR*, 392, n.3. Sp. Marinatos also argued for a kind of monotheism: *ArchEph* (1937), 290. Similarly Persson, *RGPT*, 123. For further bibliography and full discussion: Alexiou, *Thea*, 252-75 (accepts one principal goddess). The main proponent of polytheism is Nilsson, *MMR*, 389ff. An overview of Minoan goddesses: G. Gesell, in *Minoan Society*, 93-99.

2. Often she receives the designation 'Mother of Mountains' in the literature. Other times she is assumed to have been identical with the goddess of the household. K. Branigan, *FPC*, 108, cautiously suggests that she is the same as the household/snake goddess. The same author in "The Genesis of the Household Goddess," *Studi Micenei ed Egeo Anatolici* 8 (1969), 28-38, suggests that "consolidation into a single cult in which the Snake or Household Goddess was the central figure is apparently to be related to the appearance of the peak sanctuaries in MM IA." (36) Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 94ff., takes a social approach tying in the rise of peak sanctuaries with the consolidation of royal power. He postulates worship of the consort of the goddess whose function would be to produce rain (95). Further discussion of the alleged mountain goddess on the seal-impressions (see fig. 127 in this volume) in Evans, *PM* I, 159; III, 463; Nilsson, *MMR*, 352-53 and 390, where he criticizes: "The name 'Mother of Mountains' has taken . . . a powerful hold on the modern imagination." He also points out how this has led scholars to assume an almost complete identity of the Minoan goddess with the Asian Cybele. See also Matz, "Götterscheinung," 14; W.-D. Niemeier, *AM* 102 (1987), 65-97, at 83.

Note that the finds from peak sanctuaries do not give any clue as to the sex of the divinities worshiped (Branigan, *FPC*, 106-7). It is therefore puzzling that the theory of the mountain goddess, which rests on such flimsy evidence, has had wide acceptance. Possibly the identification of the Minoan goddess with the Magna Mater, the Asian Mother of Mountains, was too appealing to resist, especially since the mountain name Ida occurs both in Crete and Anatolia. See Persson, *RGPT*, 105ff.

3. Evans, *PM* I, 500ff.; on snake cult: idem, *PM* IV, 152-60. Evans regards the one of the faience figures from the temple repositories holding snakes as the votary or double of the goddess (501).

4. Nilsson, *MMR*, 321. P. Warren, "The Beginnings of Minoan Religion" in *Antichità Cretesi, Festschrift D. Levi* I (Catania 1977), 137-47, sees the earliest form of the household goddess in the vessel-goddess from Myrtos (figure 26 in this volume). Her main function was to provide water supply. On goddesses see also Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 7, 36, 65; Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 147.

5. Snakes appear also on several clay figures from Gortyn, Gournia, and Priniias, but the latter date to Postpalatial times, when yet another transformation of the cult occurred (Ch. 11). The case, then, has been overstated. I do not wish to

deny the association of the female deity with the snake; it exists beyond doubt. But it should not be blown out of proportion at the expense of other symbols and animals with which female divinities appear during the palace period. Why not speak of a Lily, Goat, Lion or Griffin Goddess?

6. Branigan, "Genesis" (supra n.2) 34-35 sees an early form of the snake goddess in the goddess-vessel from Koumasa (figure 16 in this volume). But what is called a snake (on account of the stripe-marks) is certainly the arm embracing the jug. That the latter is the case can be shown by the similar arms on other figures from Koumasa and Myrtos.

7. Evans, *PM* I, 508.

8. Nilsson, *MMR*, 325ff. Similar evidence is cited by Evans, *PM* IV, 152ff. Evans had another reason for postulating a snake cult: ritual tubular vessels with clay snakes attached to them (for a tubular stand see figure 13). This could be support for the theory that snakes are guardians and protectors of the house, but to infer a household goddess on this basis is far-fetched.

9. The reason has to do with the nature of our material. Most of the pictorial information comes from seals and sealings and they are not of particular help in this period, as scenes of religious character are scarce. Many of the motifs are abstract or emblematic. Cult symbols and sacred animals appear, but there are hardly any depictions of ritual. This contrasts sharply with the abundance of cult scenes in the glyptic art of the Neopalatial period. As to clay figures of divinities (as opposed to worshippers), such are almost absent in the Prepalatial period. What remains is evidence from pottery.

10. For the few examples see Alexiou, *Thea*, 222-27.

11. D. Levi, *Festòs e la civiltà minoica* I, 96.

12. Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 17: "The two scenes may depict the epiphany of the Minoan goddess in different aspects, or perhaps the epiphany of different goddesses."

13. The loops have (naturally) been identified as snakes. Yet, they bear no resemblance to them; only the desire to recognize an earlier form of the snake goddess from Knossos must have prompted this suggestion. On the other hand, already the excavator, D. Levi, recognized a semi-aniconic picture of the divinity and pointed to the similarity with tubular stands (see fig. 13), decorated with similar loops: D. Levi, *BdA* 41 (1956), 250; idem, *Festòs e la civiltà minoica* I, 96. Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 17; K. Branigan, *Tombs*, 137. Matz also identifies the image as that of a cult idol of the deity: "Götterscheinung,"

418ff. Because of the aniconic form, he considers it a relic of an earlier religious level. This kind of evolutionism from primitive to sophisticated levels is no longer acceptable (see history of scholarship, chapter 1). Cult images are otherwise unknown, but it should be noted that this conical image is not shown inside a temple nor any other structure, and may well thus represent a provisional focal point, used in the open air during festivals. For the absence of anthropomorphic cult images in palatial Crete: N. Marinatos and R. Hägg, in *Minoan Society*, 185ff. with previous bibliography.

14. The flower is visible best on a drawing, Levi (supra n.13) fig. 120; in color: Levi, plate volume, pl. LXVII (reproduced in Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, pl. 39a). It has been suggested that this is a "Persephone figure" ascending from the underworld (K. Kerényi, *Eleusis* (New York 1967), xix; M. Caskey, "Ayia Irini, Kea: the Terracotta Statues and the Cult in the Temple," in *SCABA*, 130). I find this identification very unconvincing.

15. A similar costume may be represented on a figurine from the same palace (but stemming from the new palace period). There, the skirt has a surface with a rough texture as though it had knobs or barnacles attached to it. Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 128, cat. 104; Nilsson, *MMR*, 301, fig. 146.

16. For the emblematic role of lilies see below. The Lilies fresco from Thera also seems to have had an emblematic character referring to a season of fertility: N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 89ff.

17. Levi, *Festòs* (supra n.13), 117, fig. 161, col. pl. LXVII.

18. Although Evans recognized a war goddess, he had no sound grounds for doing so. See *PM* II, 52-53; Persson, *RGPT*, 92. One of Evans's war goddesses holding a spear and accompanied by a lion (*PM* III, 465, fig. 325) is certainly a male god, as the anatomy and direct parallelism with male figures in the same position show (see chapter 7, "Master of Animals"). Mycenaean evidence of a Shield-goddess, in itself doubtful, should be left aside, as Minoan and Mycenaean religions are not identical. See also Nilsson, *MMR*, 324-47, 355. Besides, the eight-shield had evidently a ritual significance: Nilsson, *MMR*, 406ff., discusses hoplolatry; N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 52-58 (with bibliography); P. Warren, *Archaeology* 37 (1984), 48-55, at 49.

S. Alexiou, *Minoan Civilization* (Herakleion 1969) also speaks of a war goddess (93-94). He mentions a hand of an idol with a snake and a sword (p. 87, illustrated in Nilsson, *MMR*, 81, fig. 14). However, the sex of the figurine to

which the hand belonged cannot be identified. Similarly Rehak, *AA* (1984), 543-44, argues for a Minoan war goddess.

A female holding a sword (Evans, *PM* II, 793, fig. 517; Nilsson, *MMR*, fig. 160 = *CMS* II.3, 16) is the only secure evidence of a female holding a weapon. Yet, she is also holding a crook (Evans called it a sprinkler) which seems to be a cult instrument. The female on the seal, if a goddess, does not seem to be a war divinity; she may rather be presiding over sacrifice.

19. L. Banti, G. Pugliese Carratelli, D. Levi, *Arte minoica e micenea* (Rome 1962), pl. opposite p. 58; H. Th. Bossert, *Altikreta* (Berlin 1923), pl. 69; M. Cameron, in *FMP*, 326, fig. 10. Convenient description and bibliography: Hood, *Arts*, 52.

20. Hood, *Arts*, 49-52.

21. N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 61-84; idem, in *Gifts to the Gods*, 123-32.

22. *CMS* I, 279 with bibliography. W. -D. Niemeier, in *Fragen und Probleme*, 163-86 at 167f., identifies the figure as an adorant on the basis that she is placing the lily on the altar. I reject this explanation because the "branches" on the altar seem to me to be the stems of the lilies themselves. Lily-stems have characteristic leaves.

23. Sealing with a goddess in a meadow: Evans, *PM* II, 766, fig. 497; M. Gill, *BSA* 60 (1968), 75. Evans designates the figure as a female "perhaps of a religious character." The religious character is certain because of the gesture of the female which corresponds to that of the "Mother of the Mountains" and male divinities (see below and Niemeier, supra n.2, 82-88). Sealing showing a hand offering lily: Evans, *PM* IV, 608, fig. 597A.f.

24. Amnisos: Marinatos-Hirmer, pl. XXIII. Thera: idem, pls. XXXVI, XXXVII; Marinatos, *Thera* IV, col. pl. C; *Thera* VI, pls. 50-51. Note that the lily motif appears on pottery quite often.

25. Temple repositories, Knossos: Evans, *PM* I, 498, fig. 356. From the shaft graves of Mycenae: Marinatos-Hirmer, pl. 225. As necklaces on painted figures: the so-called priest king (see fig. 61 in this volume). A flower necklace around the neck of a "Lady in Blue" on a Knossian fresco, the flower is crocus, however: Evans, *PM* IV, 285, fig. 219.

26. See also *CMS* XIII, 135; Levi, "Cretule," 134, fig. 144; p. 135, fig. 145; p. 181, figs. 229, 230; M. Gill, *BSA* 60 (1965), 58-98, pl. 7, R 91.

27. *CMS* I, 128. The ring is possibly of Mycenaean provenance but seems to reflect Minoan iconography. The griffin on the Thera fresco is also tethered.

28. *CMS* VIII, 146. Similar scheme in *CMS* VIII, 95. The author of *CMS* VIII, V. E. G.

Kenna, identifies the figures on both examples as priests. However, the skirts show that they are female. It is more likely that a goddess was meant, but as the iconography of the priestess/goddess is interchangeable, it does not make much difference.

29. I use "symbolic landscape" here in the sense of H. Frankfort who spoke of Egyptian religious landscapes as: "a vast expanse of marsh" with lotus and papyrus plants where the goddess Hathor made her epiphany: *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (New York 1961; original publication 1948), 154. Although P. Warren, *AAA* 9 (1977), 89-95, has suggested that the papyrus plant could well have grown on Crete, it is certain that papyrus thickets of such lushness as on the seal could not have existed in the Mediterranean. The iconography, as well as the concept, was transferred from the Orient; its meaning in Minoan art must be symbolic.

30. Levi, "Cretule," 137, fig. 148. The animal has a long snout and no wings. J. -C. Poursat has argued therefore that some of the animals that the goddess rides are dragons: *BCH* 100 (1976), 461-74. These scenes are also discussed by Matz, "Göttererscheinung," 416-17 and Alexiou, *Thea*, 233-34 with special emphasis on the gesture of upraised arms.

31. Nilsson, *MMR*, 383-88.

32. Nilsson, *MMR*, 358ff. Goddess flanked by lions on a seal-impression from Crete: Gill, *BSA* 60 (1965), pl. 5b. All examples of a goddess flanked by griffins collected by Hägg and Lindau, *OpAth* 15 (1984), 67-77.

33. Evans, *PM* III, 463; Nilsson, *MMR*, 352-53. On gods with this gesture: Niemeier (supra n.2), 82-88.

34. However, Ch. Sourvinou-Inwood, in *Fragen und Probleme*, 241-56, suggests he may be a deity. The standard view that the figure is a male votary is expressed by Nilsson, *MMR*, 353. Evans, *PM* I, 159, suggests that the man is a priest-king. Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 88, interprets him as a king who receives his staff of authority from the goddess. Yet, he is not receiving, nor is the goddess handing out. Her gesture and the staff typify gods who do not necessarily interact with their worshippers: see Niemeier (supra n.2) and N. Marinatos, *OpAth* 15 (1984), 122.

35. *CMS* IV, 295; VII, 118; Nilsson, *MMR*, figs. 169, 170; Gill (supra n.32); Evans, *PM* IV, 402, figs. 333-34.

36. Evans, *PM* IV, 608, fig. 597 A a, c.

37. R. Hägg, Y. Lindau (supra n.32).

38. *CMS* I, 233. See also: *CMS* IX, 154.

39. *CMS* VII, 134.

40. On two gold leaves from Mycenae naked females have birds (doves?) on their head; one also has them attached to her elbows. Nilsson, *MMR*, 333 (with fig. 154) identifies them as goddesses. The origin of the type may be Near Eastern since Minoan naked goddesses are rare.

41. For a collection of the evidence: Nilsson, *MMR*, 330-40. See also Matz, "Göttererscheinung," 403. Matz speaks of the "sign-character" of bird epiphanies which comes very close to my definition of birds as messengers of the gods. See also O. Keel, *Vögel als Boten* (Göttingen 1977).

42. *CMS* II. 3, 4. Other examples: *CMS* II.3, 77; II. 4, 28, 104; 112; V, 274; IX, 165; XII, 174 a-b (with tail in place of the head and very pronounced breasts), 276, 277; XIII, 3. See also Hagia Triada and Zakros sealings: Levi, "Cretule," 118, figs. 119-21; p. 175, fig. 211. For a discussion of the "bird-lady" series: J. Weingarten, *The Zakro Master and His Place in Prehistory* (Göteborg 1983) 60ff.

43. Levi, "Cretule," 118, fig. 119. Similar seated bird-figures from Zakros: Hogarth, *JHS* 22 (1902), pl. VII nos. 38-39.

44. Hogarth (supra n.43), pl. VI nos. 47-39, IX no. 92 = Weingarten (supra n.42), 63-64, 77.

45. *CMS* II.3, 170. The dolphin is called bird by the author of the *CMS* volume.

46. Ch. 3, n.137. For further glyptic scenes with dolphins: N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 48-49.

47. See note 3 above. Matz, "Göttererscheinung," 414-15, thinks that the figures are priestesses representing the goddess. See also Alexiou (supra n.18), 73, 87.

48. Evans, *PM* I, 500-504.

49. *Ibid.*, 502-4. Note that the second figure has only one extant arm and that both her head and that of the snake was missing. On fig. 360, half the snake has already been restored. It is interesting to observe that the snake is very small and that its size is unparalleled even in the Postpalatial example from Kannia. The head-dress with the animal was assumed to have belonged to this figure. One only hopes that the restoration is secure. See K. Polinger Foster, *Aegean Faience of the Bronze Age* (New Haven 1979), 70ff.

50. M. Konner, *The Tangled Wing* (New York 1982), 220.

51. In Egyptian religion the snake can be both a terrifying "enemy" (Apopis) or the cosmic serpent which is a medium of renewal; through his body passes the sun-god in order to be reborn. Probably because of its ability for renewal the snake is also wise, cf. the Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor in *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*,

ed. W. Kelly Simpson (New Haven 1972), 52ff.; E. Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many* (Ithaca 1982), 158-61. For the different aspects of the serpent, R. T. Rundle Clark, *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt* (London 1959), 239-45; O. Keel, *SBW*, 87: "The serpent incorporates the most manifold and contradictory significances." The image of the snake in folklore as possessing the secret of restoring life is best exemplified in the story of Glaucus (Apollodorus, *Bibliothèque* III, 3f) as well as in one of Grimm's tales: *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, no. 16.

52. See notes 3, 5, and 6 above.

53. The smaller figurine from the temple repositories has a quadruped on her hat, the Postpalatial examples have snakes with birds and other attributes on their headdresses.

54. Compare with typical Mesopotamian representations, B. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien* II (Heidelberg 1925), 77, fig. 23.

55. It has been suggested that the figure offering the rhyton is a male deity, but that does not seem very probable. In addition to the substantial difference in size between the male and the female, it is difficult to imagine a god offering a rhyton. See Levi, "Cretule," 142-43; Nilsson, *MMR*, 346. Nilsson does not even commit himself as to whether the seated figure is a deity; yet this seems obvious, because she is seated and attended.

56. Evans, *PM* IV, 387, fig. 322. Evans identifies the worshiper as male, but I do not see how the sex can be identified given the bad state of preservation of the sealing.

57. Nilsson, *MMR*, 347. For bibliography see *CMS* I, 17. I do not discuss this ring in all its details because it is apparently of Mycenaean manufacture. Although there is little doubt that on the basic level the iconography is Minoan, the position of the double axe in the center, and especially the hovering god with the shield in the field of the ring are unusual and may even be Mycenaean inventions. See H. A. Croenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement* (New York 1978), 212f.; J. T. Hooker, *Mycenaean Greece* (London 1976), 197ff. P. Rehak, *AA* (1984), 542. The above scholars argue for a Mycenaean origin on the basis of iconography. Even more convincing are arguments based on technical grounds. A. Sakellariou has shown that a different type of tool was used in making Mycenaean rings. This is most evident on the clear-cut lines and well-articulated profiles of the faces. See A. Sakellariou, in *Eilapine, Festschrift N. Platon* (Herakleion 1987), 245-50; also J. Boardman, *Greek Gems and Finger Rings* (Oxford 1970), 57.

58. CMS I Suppl., 114. Collection of evidence: N. Marinatos, in *Gifts to the Gods*, 125–30 with fig. 4; idem, in *Eilapine, Festschrift N. Platon* (Herakleion 1987), 417–21.

59. CMS II, 3, 103. N. Marinatos, in *Gifts to the Gods*, 125–30 and *Eilapine, Festschrift N. Platon* (Herakleion 1987), 417–21.

60. The platform is usually called a shrine, cf. Hood, *Arts*, 52, but as is evident from his reconstruction M. Cameron recognized it as a platform. That it is a wooden platform can be shown from the colors (which betoken wood rather than stone) and the numerous parallels which are listed below. The seated position of the goddess can be deduced from her bent knees.

61. Archanes altars: *Illustrated London News*, March 1966, 32, fig. 2. The use of incurved altars as stands has been demonstrated by M. Shaw in *Philia Epe, Festschrift G. Mylonas*, vol. 1 (Athens 1986), 108–23 with collection of all the examples found in *corpore* at Knossos and Malia. For depictions in glyptic art: Nilsson, *MMR*, figs. 61, 69, 121, 122.

62. Seal-impression on fig. 142: Evans, *PM II*, 767ff, figs. 498–99; Nilsson, *MMR*, 348, fig. 159. Sealing from Zakros with the same scene: Hogarth, *JHS* 22 (1902), 77, fig. 2.

Fig. 148 is an unpublished seal (or sealing) from the BSA collection, no. 135, which I saw in the CMS archives in Marburg (my thanks to Prof. I. Pini and the BSA). It depicts a goddess on a platform flanked by two lions. The platform is not exactly tripartite, but because the flanking lions are at a lower level than the goddess, the result is a similar tripartite structure.

63. I. A. Papapostolou, *Ta Sphragismata ton Chalion* (Athens 1977), 78–80, pl. 42, no. 30.

64. A gold ring from Mycenae should be mentioned here, as it reflects the same scheme. It is probably of mainland manufacture. The goddess is seated on a construction which is a fusion of a shrine and the tripartite platform. There is a pillar in the central section and sacred horns on top. The goddess has received a mirror (a typical article of feminine coquetry) from a woman who stands in front of her. To the left is a sacred flower, a papyrus, indicating an outdoor setting. See Evans, *TPC*, 190, fig. 64; Nilsson, *MMR*, 351; Persson, *RGPT*, 43–44, pl. 6.

65. A few exceptional depictions show the goddess as completely naked, as on the ring from Phaistos (fig. 139 in this volume) and on a sealing from Chania: E. Hallager, M. Vlasaki, *Kadmos* 23 (1989), 1–10. See also P. Warren, "Of Baetyls," *OpAth* 18 (1990), 193–206; n.30, The gold foil goddesses from Mycenae have already

been discussed (see note 40 above). Nakedness is otherwise rare: E. Sapouna-Sakellarakis, *Minoikon Zoma* (Athens 1971), 87.

66. This ring has been lost but a close replica is published in *CMS II*, 3, 252. See also Nilsson, *MMR*, 269–70 and the discussion of the iconography in Ch. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Kadmos* 12 (1973), 155ff. More recently, N. Marinatos, in *Fragen und Probleme*, 127–43, and Niemeier in the same volume 181ff. The goddess in the ship has been interpreted as the goddess of the sea and seafaring (Nilsson, *MMR*, 398; ch. Picard, *Les religions préhelléniques* [Paris 1948], 110–11); this hypothesis does not take account of the symbols connecting the deity with tree rituals.

67. Discussed by Ch. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Kadmos* 12 (1973), 155ff.

68. It might be argued that the prow of the ship, marked by the head of the dragon, points away from the land and that the deity is leaving rather than arriving. It seems, however, that the ships were two-directional.

69. Levi, "Cretule," 126, fig. 134; Nilsson, *MMR*, 350. Most recently H. Jung, in *Fragen und Probleme*, 91–109 with fig. 8, an actual photograph of the seal-impression.

70. Evans, *PM IV*, 956, fig. 925; M. Gill, *BSA* 60 (1965), 83.

71. Evans, *PM IV*, 956, Fig. 925. The waves are doubted by Nilsson, *MMR*, 351, but he did not have at his disposal the iconographical parallels that we now have. There is no doubt that the half-moon patterns on the sealing represent the sea.

72. Gill, *BSA* 60 (1965), 94.

73. J. Sakellarakis, *Prakt* (1967), 153, pl. 137a.

74. Suffice it to mention the ship festival on the outside walls of the temple of Ramses III at Karnak. Egyptian ship festivals and their connection with Aegean ones are explored by L. Morgan, in *TAW*, 629–44; idem, *ArchEph* 122 (1983), 85–105; idem, *The Miniature Wall Paintings from Thera* (Cambridge 1988), esp. 121ff. See also N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 52ff.

75. Evans writes so in a personal letter to Nilsson quoted by the latter in *MMR*, 392, n.3.

76. The diversification of Greek gods in the iconography is less distinct in the early Archaic period, however. It is only because we possess literary evidence that we know more about the divine personalities of the Greek gods of early Greece. See E. Simon, *Die Götter der Griechen* (Munich 1969).

77. Hornung (supra n.51), 185ff., 230ff. Hornung's treatise on Egyptian polytheism with the suggestive subtitle *The One and the Many* has become a classic. Especially brilliant is his analysis

of art as a metalanguage: the pictures of gods are allusions to essential parts of their nature and function (114).

78. For example A. Furumark, *OpAth* 6 (1965), 85–98, has identified three distinct Minoan goddesses in the Linear A tablets; now also idem, *OpAth* 17 (1988), 51–90. Female polytheism can also be deduced from the Knossos Linear B texts which are certainly Mycenaean, but since they were found in Knossos, they may retain traces of Minoan deities: E. Vermeule, *Götterkult, ArchHoc* ch. V (1974), 59ff.

79. Alexiou, *Thea*, 252–75, esp. 268ff.

80. Although he did recognize a hunting god and a Master of Animals: *MMR*, 354 and 357ff.

81. Picard (supra n.66), 111; Evans, *PM III*, 464ff.; D. Hogarth, "Aegean Religion," in *Hastings' Dictionary of Religion and Ethics*, 143ff. Critical discussion in Nilsson, *MMR*, 401ff.; Vermeule (supra n.78), 7. Note especially the references to Ishtar and Tammuz.

82. Evans, *PM III*, 465, suggests the Young God is a prefiguration of the Greek Hyakinthos. See also Persson, *RGPT*, *passim*, esp. 105ff.

83. Cretan Zeus, Adonis, and Hyakinthos are frequently mentioned. Picard (supra n.66), 117ff.; on the Cretan Zeus: Nilsson, *MMR*, 533ff. More recently: H. Sackett and S. MacGillivray, *Archaeology* (1989), 27–31.

84. N. Platon, *Crete* (Geneva 1968), 182–84.

85. Fr. Matz, "Minoischer Stiergott?" *Proc-CretCongr*, 215–23. On the iconography of bulls in the palace of Knossos see chapter 3. On bull hunting and sacrifice: chapter 9.

86. Indeed, Ch. Sourvinou-Inwood has made an eloquent case that the Greek Apollo has a Minoan component: in *Interpretations of Greek Mythology* ed. J. Bremmer (Totowa, N.J., 1986) whereas A. Lebesse has rightly seen the survival of the Minoan god in Hermes "of the Tree" at Kato Syme. See chapter 5 note 75.

87. See H. Frankfort, *Art & Architecture*, 118, fig. 9; pls. 38–40.

88. Bearded Masters of Animals in the Aegean are: (1) *CMS I*, 89; (2) a seal from the Giamalakis collection (below n.98); (3) a sealing from Hagia Triada, below n.97.

89. For example: *CMS I Suppl.*, 27; Evans, *PM IV*, 608, fig. 597 A h; *CMS V*, 675; *XI*, 177, 257, 302 etc.

90. *CMS IV*, 38D. The authenticity of this gem is doubted. If it is genuine, it is curious that the god seems to be holding knives. The iconography may imply that he is sacrificing the goats. In that case he is a lord of sacrifice. A sealing from Pylos, *CMS I*, 356 shows a very stylized Master of Animals, possibly between goats.

91. Seal from Knossos: *CMS II*, 3, 167. See also a seal from Rhodes (probably of Cypriot origin), *CMS V*, 657, where the god, likewise flanked by a lion and a griffin, has a horned helmet which points to strong Oriental influence. The following sealings from Knossos deserve consideration, all from M. Gill, *BSA* 60 (1965), 58–98, pls. 5–22: master of animals between two lions: U 104, pl. 8; R 44, pl. 15; master of animals as a hunter carrying two dead deer on a pole: Her. s. 650, pl. 9. Most interesting is a frontal head with a horned helmet flanked by a bird and unidentifiable object: U 105, pl. 8. Another frontally depicted head above a bull's head: Her. s. 653, pl. 9.

92. Basic bibliography: Evans, *JHS* 13 (1892–93), 195–226; F. H. Marshall, *Catalogue of the Jewellery, Greek, Etruscan, and Roman in the British Museum* (London 1911), 54; R. A. Higgins, *BSA* 52 (1957), 42–57; idem, *The Aegina Treasure, An Archaeological Mystery* (London 1979); C. Hopkirk, *AJA* 66 (1962), 182–84; Rutkowski, *Kultdarstellungen*, 102, fig. 30:1; Hägg and Lindau (supra n.32), 72. Nilsson, *MMR*, 367–68, fig. 177, notes that the god is exceptionally here represented with birds. This is not the only anomaly. The hat is unusual and so is the bow-like construction which has only a superficial resemblance with the Minoan horn-frame of the goddess (see above) that is behind him. Some have doubted the authenticity of the piece. I believe it is a hybrid of Near Eastern and Aegean motifs, manufactured perhaps in the borders of either civilization; I thus prefer to leave it out of the main discussion. Note that it comes from an unstratified "treasure" without datable context. In the most recent discussion of this piece, the author, Ch. Gates, comes to the same conclusion. See *Transition*, 215–24.

93. Niemeier, in *Fragen und Probleme*, 163–84, has shown this to be the case for both male and female divinity-worshiper groups. Compare also with the ring from Pylos, *CMS I*, 292. It is exciting that an extremely well-modeled ivory figure has been recently found at Palaikastro, Crete, showing a figure in such a gesture. He could well be a Minoan god. I thank Prof. A. MacGillivray for discussing the figure from his excavation with me.

94. *CMS V*, 201; Evans, *PM IV*, 467, fig. 392. The genuineness of the gem has been doubted but I. Pini has argued convincingly that it is genuine: I. Pini, "Echt oder falsch?" in *Studien zur minoischer und helladischen Glyptik, CMS Beiheft 1* (Berlin 1981), 142–45 (with bibl.).

95. *CMS II*, 3, 193. Cf also A. Sakellariou, *Les cachets minoens de la collection Giamalakis, ÉtCrét 3* (Paris 1958), 58, pl. XII, no. 358.

96. God with flanking demons: Nilsson, *MMR*, 379, fig. 187. God with flanking dogs: Evars, *PM* II, 765, fig. 295.
97. Levi, "Cretule," 133, fig. 143. Levi claims that the god, who carries a griffin, is bearded. I cannot verify it, as the drawing is not clear.
98. Seal from Crete: Sakellariou (supra n.95), 61, pl. VIII, no. 372. N. Marinatos, in *Gifts to the Gods*, 124-30, fig. 4.4. Sealing from Pylos: *CMS* I, 377.
99. All three examples here illustrated have an obvious affinity; they all come from Crete. Evans, *PM* I, 505, fig. 363 a-c; Levi, "Cretule," 137, fig. 150; Nilsson, *MMR*, 354-55. Note that Evans, Nilsson and others have identified the figure with the spear in the extended arm as a goddess because of the long skirt. Yet, the torso is undoubtedly masculine and gods can wear this type of longer skirt; also, since it is not the flounced skirt, a typical female attire. The identification as a female has been questioned by Niemeier (supra n.2), 83 with n.108. To the above triad we should add the small hovering god armed with a bow on a ring now in Oxford. In a discussion of the genuineness of the ring, a penetrating analysis of its iconography has been made by Ch. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Kadmos* 10 (1971), 60ff.
100. For example Ramses II is accompanied by a lion in a wall-sculpture at Medinet Habu: Keel, *SBW*, 86, fig. 103 with further references.
101. *CMS* II.3, 52 = Evans, *PM* II, 766, fig. 496 (where Evans identifies the animal as a dog, but it is probably a clumsily rendered lion). Similar: *CMS* I, 512 (the animal may be a horse); II.3, 24; 27; IX, 114; X, 135; XII, 207. Interesting is the variation of the type with a bull as the accompanying animal: *CMS* VII, 102; I. Papapostolou, *Ta Sphragismata ton Chanion* (Athens 1977), 67-68, pl. 36, no. 25. Papapostolou suggests that the scene belongs to an agricultural cycle but recognizes a religious element in the iconography.
102. The authors of *CMS* do not always identify these figures as divine. For example, in *CMS* XII, 207, the figure is called a young man. Evans thinks that the two men, *PM* II, 766, fig. 496 (= *CMS* II.3, 52) are attendants.
103. E. Hallager, *The Master Impression*, *SIMA* 69 (Göteborg 1985). In his thorough publication, Hallager cautiously abstains from any definite identification and leaves the possibility open that the figure may be a king. That he is a god, however, can be argued on several grounds. (1) He is too large to be a mortal. (2) He is shown between sacred horns. (3) His gesture corresponds to those of other deities, notably males to be discussed further on, but also to the gesture of the

goddess Mother of Mountains (above). (4) He is aligned with the central gate of a shrine which is a typical place for epiphanies (see chapter 8).

104. Evans, *TPC*, 170, fig. 48; idem, *PM* I, 160; Nilsson, *MMR*, 256, fig. 123; Persson, *RGPT*, 60-62; Matz, "Göttererscheinung," 391-92; Niemeier (supra n.2), 83.

105. Matz, "Göttererscheinung," 31. On hovering figures see Hooker (supra n.57), 197-99.

106. The traditional view is that this gesture indicates that the votary is dazzled by the god: Persson, *RGPT*, 61.

107. *CMS* XI, 28 with bibliography; Persson, *RGPT*, 67-69; Nilsson, *MMR*, 266, fig. 130. Nilsson misidentifies the god as a votary but is corrected by Matz, "Göttererscheinung," 395-96; Niemeier (supra n.2), 86.

108. *CMS* I, 292; On the gesture Niemeier in *Fragen und Probleme*, 169ff. Although the piece was found on the mainland, it may well be Minoan, as both the iconography and the style show.

109. *CMS* V, 608. The figure has been called a warrior (Vermeule, supra n.78, p. 39), a prince or a worshiper, but Niemeier and I have argued that he is a god on the basis of the gesture, which typifies gods and which hardly befits an adorant: N. Marinatos, in *Fragen und Probleme*, 133 and Niemeier (supra n.2), 84-86, both with previous bibliography.

110. N. Marinatos, *OpAth* 15 (1984), 115-22.

111. Larnax from Milatos, Crete: Evans, *TPC*, 174-75, fig. 50. Larnax from an Iron Age cemetery near Knossos of LM III date: L. Morgan, *BSA* 82 (1987), 171-200, esp. 198. Morgan sees a protective war deity. These are discussed also in chapter 11.

112. As S. Hood, *Arts*, 145, thinks. Most recently: Niemeier (supra n.2), 83-84 with notes 109-12.

113. In addition to the Young God, a boy god has been postulated by Evans and others, but although toddlers are occasionally represented in art, conclusive evidence that they refer to a god is lacking. Evans, *PM* III, 443ff., esp. 446 with fig. 310; IV, 468ff. A figurine from Mavrospelio shows a small child held by a *kourotrophos*: Evans, *PM* III, 469ff., fig. 327, mentioned also by Ch. Picard, *Les religions préhelléniques* (Paris 1948), 111. The child has been identified as a boy god without good reasons. Evidence for small boys has also been collected by Koehl, *AJA* 106 (1986), 100-101 with notes 11-12. Koehl does not claim they are all gods.

114. Indeed, peaceful relationships between animals and men are rare in the iconography. An exception is a seal-impression from Zakros show-

ing a man feeding(?) goats. cf. D. G. Hogarth, *JHS* 22 (1902), 78, fig. 7 (no. 15). I thank Dr. E. Davis for the reference.

Chapter 8

1. Most scholars accept that the small hovering images are gods, but some arguments (not convincing in my opinion) have been voiced against this interpretation: Th. Corsten, in *Forschungen zur Ägäischen Vorgeschichte. Das Ende der mykenischen Welt* (Köln 1987), 193-200 with bibl.

2. Levi, "Cretule," 139, fig. 153.

3. For bibl. see *CMS* II.3, 305; N. Marinatos, in *Fragen und Probleme*, 135.

4. Levi, "Cretule," 140, fig. 155 = Rutkowski, *Kultdarstellungen*, 54, fig. 14.5.

5. Hogarth, *JHS* 22 (1902), 77; Nilsson, *MMR*, 283, fig. 142, considers the goddess a bell-shaped idol but such did not come into existence until a later period; Matz, "Göttererscheinung," 394-95, identifies the figure as a goddess; N. Marinatos, in *Fragen und Probleme*, 134; Corsten (supra n.1), 197.

6. Matz, "Göttererscheinung," 389-90. Complete bibliography in *CMS* II.3, 51 and Niemeier in *Fragen und Probleme*, p. 165, nn. 7-9, p. 178, nn. 79-81. It has been suggested that the Isopata ring represents two distinct chronological phases: (1) the deity appears at a distance; (2) she arrives and is shown as the large figure in the center. I object to this interpretation for the following reasons. First, the hovering image and the central figure do not wear the same dress. Second, they have different gestures. Third, the gesture of the central figure is typical of a group of women that can be identified as high priestesses. See below.

7. Matz, "Göttererscheinung," *passim*, esp. 433ff. Although several scholars (B. Rutkowski, S. Hood) have postulated the existence of cult images for Palatial times, the thesis remains unproven. For discussion with previous bibl. see N. Marinatos and R. Hägg, in *Minoan Society*, 185-201.

8. A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben* (Tübingen 1923), 312; E. Hornung, *Conceptions of Gods in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1982), 135ff.

9. B. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien* II (Heidelberg 1925), 52ff., esp. 63.

10. In funerary art, it is the deceased or his family who make offerings to the gods. For the mentality behind offering in Egyptian religion see G. Englund, in *Gifts to the Gods*, 57-66. Illustrations in K. Lange and M. Hirmer, *Ägypten*

(Munich 1957): pharaoh worshiping seated divinity: pls. 218, 221-23. Funerary offerings discussed by J. Bergman, in *Gifts to the Gods*, 32-37.

11. Lange and Hirmer (supra n.10): god and pharaoh facing each other: pl. 116. God and pharaoh in tight embrace: pls. 120, 216.

12. The epiphanies experienced by men in Egyptian literature, however, do not conform to the Minoan model. The deity appears either with the characteristics of a cult image (like the snake of lapis lazuli in the story of the shipwrecked sailor or a sphinx in the dream of Tutmosis III) or the god is sensed as an aroma or radiance: Hornung (supra n.8), 128ff.

13. Objective and subjective viewpoints discussed by Matz, "Göttererscheinung," 444.

14. Frankfort, *Art & Architecture*, pls. 53, 54, 57, 65.

15. *Ibid.*, pls. 58c, 71, 95. God standing on animal: below n.18.

16. Meissner (supra n.9), 77, fig. 23.

17. Frankfort, *Art & Architecture*, pl. 119a; Meissner (supra n.9), 28, fig. 7; H. Danthine, *Le palmier datier et les arbres sacrés* I (1979), 99, figs. 192, 196.

18. Frankfort, *Art & Architecture*, pl. 45 B.

19. H. Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, pl. 18a = Keel, *SBW*, 23, fig. 9. *Ibid.*, pls. 16, 66, 119a.

20. Frankfort, *Art & Architecture*, 46.

21. Pace E. Vermeule, *Götterkult, ArchHom.* ch. V (1974) 8: "Die religiöse Praxis hat etwas Offenes. Religion wurde nicht durch eine Klasse von Priestern und Priesterinnen gefilert... sondern war Sache persönlichen Erlebens."

22. Hägg, "Epiphanie," *passim*: chs. 4 and 6 in this book.

23. Examples where the high priests takes on the guise and role of the god abound. For priests assuming the guise of gods in Greece: C. Bérard, "Hommes, prêtres et dieux," in *L'Islam: une religion*, ed. J. Waardenburg (1989), 95-120. Egypt: A. Wolinski, *Archaeology* 40 (1987), 22ff.

In the Near East the priest/priestess would stand for the god/goddess during certain festivals. Even in the Greek Orthodox church, the priest impersonates Christ during one phase of the Liturgy of Resurrection on Easter night. He pounds on the door of the church like Christ pounded on the gates of Hell.

24. Here I disagree with Matz. "Göttererscheinung," 388-89. Since on the Isopata ring, discussed above, the worshipers are not aware of the vision, I have interpreted it as a symbolic reference to epiphany.

25. Compare with the visions the disciples of Christ had after his resurrection and which gave them special status within the community.

26. Matz, "Götterscheinung," 420-23.
27. Evans, *TPC*, *passim*, refuted by Nilsson, *MMR*, 248.
28. Nilsson, *MMR*, 255-56 sensibly suggests that columns may refer to abbreviated shrines in the iconography but denies that they are aniconic representations of gods.
29. Matz, "Götterscheinung," 421ff., with bibl.
30. Columns are sacred in other cultures. Egypt: M. Lurker, *Gods & Symbols*, 41. In Biblical lands: M. Haran, in *Temples and High Places*, 35. Haran notes that an altar, a pillar or a sacred tree were marked features of certain cult areas.
31. G. Karo, *Die Schachtgräber von Mykenai* (1930-33), 74, nos. 242-44, pl. 18; Marinatos-Hirmer, pl. 227.
32. Such as the Grand Stand Fresco and the fresco fragments from the thirteenth magazine. See chapter 3.
33. Nilsson, *MMR*, fig. 121; On the sacred columns in general: Rutkowski, *Kultdarstellungen*, 51ff.
34. On the shrine of the Grand Stand fresco at Knossos: Evans, *PM III*, col. pl. 16; and chapter 3, "North Wing."
35. Column with double axe: Evans, *PM I*, 446, fig. 321. Many examples of columns flanked by animals are collected by Nilsson, *MMR*, 250ff. with figs. 119-21; N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 16, table 1.5.
36. M. Eliade would have perhaps interpreted the centrality of the column as an *axis mundi*. See *The Sacred and the Profane* (New York 1959), 35, 51-54.
37. Danthine (supra n.17).
38. The palm marks the spot of the epiphany also in Near Eastern iconography (fig. 175 in this volume): Danthine (supra n.17), I, 99; II, no. 173; N. Marinatos, in *Fragen und Probleme*, 136-37.
39. Th. Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness* (New Haven 1976), 41-43.
40. Lurker, *Gods & Symbols*, 119. The goddess of the sycamore tree is represented in the tombs of Sennedjem and Sennefer among others: R. Gundlach et al., *Sennefer* (Mainz 1988), fig. 19.
41. Evans, *TPC*, *passim*. Modified by Nilsson, *MMR*, 262ff. and Rutkowski, *Kultdarstellungen*, 52ff. Contra: Matz, "Götterscheinung," 420 and N. Marinatos, in *Fragen und Probleme*, 125-42, at 142.
42. G. Baudy, *Exkommunikation und Reintegration. Zur Genese und Kulturfunktion frühgriechischer Einstellungen zum Tod* (Frankfurt-Bern 1980), 78. Baudy offers some ethnological speculations: trees offered shelter and food to *homo sapiens*; often there would be water in the vicinity.

43. J. Griffiths Pedley, "Reflections of Architecture in Sixth-Century Attic Vase-Painting," in *Papers on the Amasis Painter and His World* (Malibu 1987), 63-80.
44. Because the smaller shrines are frequently surmounted by trees, they have been interpreted as enclosures of sacred trees, whereas the niches that characterize them have been considered portals or real gates through which one would enter the enclosure (Evans, *TPC*, 171, 181ff.; Persson, *RGPT*, 56, 60; Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 99ff.). This cannot have been the case, however. The aforementioned gates are too small for any human to enter. Matz, "Götterscheinung," 392, notes the consistently small size of the shrines with niches.
45. J. Shaw, *AJA* 82 (1978), 429-48. As Matz ("Götterscheinung," 422) correctly observed there is a "facade-like character" to the whole construction.
46. W. Stevenson Smith, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt* (rev. ed., Harmondsworth 1981), 53ff., figs. 38-39.
47. M. Saleh, H. Souroujian, *Die Hauptwerke im Ägyptischen Museum Kairo* (Mainz 1986) 165.
48. See chapter 5, note 65.
49. It has been assumed by E. Hallager, *The Master Impression* (Göteborg 1985), 18ff. and reconstruction fig. 17 on p. 56, that the town has three different gates; however, Ellen Davis has correctly pointed out to me in a private conversation that the presumed central gate is, in reality, a shrine with a niche. I owe this interpretation to her.
50. Rutkowski, *Kultdarstellungen*, 21, fig. 3.
51. Cf. *CMS I*, 119 where the tree is shown within a wooden construction; Evans, *TPC*, 185, fig. 59. Note also that a tree is shown inside a pot on the tablet from Psychro, Nilsson, *MMR*, 171, fig. 72.
52. N. Marinatos, "The Tree as a Focus of Ritual Action in Minoan Glyptic Art," in *Fragen und Probleme*, 138-40.
53. These scenes are also discussed by Ch. Sourvinou-Inwood in a forthcoming monograph entitled *Reading Dumb Images. A Study in Minoan Iconography and Religion*, as well as in a forthcoming paper. She thinks that the transportation of the tree refers to either a ritual or an emblematic, constructed representation. See also C. Davaras, *Proceedings of the 6th International Colloquium on Aegean Prehistory, Athens 1987*, who has collected many and diverse parallels from several cultures of tree-transportation in a boat.
54. For the role of Minoan flower pots see M. Platonos in *Eilapine, Festschrift N. Platon* (Herakleion 1987), 227-34.
55. S. N. Kramer, *The Sumerians* (Chicago 1963), 198.

56. The stylized tree is sometimes identified as lettuce (Lurker *Gods & Symbols*, 81) but it difficult to imagine lettuce being transported in procession (see below).
57. C. J. Bleeker, *Die Geburt eines Gottes* (Leiden 1956).
58. Burkert, *S&H*, 123-42.
59. See the recent and thorough treatment with complete bibliography by Niemeier in *Fragen und Probleme*, 174ff., esp. categories 5 and 6. In his article, Niemeier designates the "ambiguous" figures as goddesses with arguments that are hard to counter unless one accepts, as I do, that the confusion is deliberate, meant to show that the females are interchangeable with the goddess. I deal subsequently with Niemeier's groups 5 and 6.
60. The shrine defines not only the place of action, but the nature of the ritual as well. The latter involved bending of a tree and leaning over an oval stone. It obviously necessitated the presence of a high priestess. This ritual is discussed by Ch. Sourvinou-Inwood (supra n.53). See also A. Lebesse and P. Muhly, "Aspects of Minoan Cult. Sacred Enclosures" *AA* (1990), 315-336; N. Marinatos, "The Tree, the Stone and the Pitohs: Glimpses into a Minoan Ritual," *Aegaeum* 6 (1990), 79-91.
61. Nilsson, *MMR*, 257, fig. 124; *CMS I*, 126 with bibl. Most recently: Niemeier in *Fragen und Probleme*, 174ff. Note that the gesture of the hands on the hips is attested also for deities: Matz, "Götterscheinung," 394. There the author, however, interprets the gesture as one of dance.
62. J. Sakellarakis, *Proc3CretCongr* 1971, pl. 95; Rutkowski, *Kultdarstellungen*, 13, fig. 1,2; Niemeier, in *Fragen und Probleme*, 174ff.
63. Nilsson, *MMR*, 275, fig. 138; *CMS I*, 219 with bibl.; N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 54-55; Niemeier, in *Fragen und Probleme*, 176.
64. Even the skeptical Nilsson speaks of tree worship: "The tree cult is one of the best known features of primitive religion." (*MMR*, 262). Selected bibliography: Persson, *RGPT*, 25ff.; M. Popham, *BSA* 69 (1974), 217, pl. 37a; S. Hood, *Minoans*, 138. Most recently: P. Warren, *OpAth* 18 (1990), 193-206; N. Marinatos, "The Tree, the Stone and the Pitohs," *Aegaeum* 6 (1990), 79-91.
- Trees are eventually destroyed in tree-rituals of other cultures like in Classical Greece: Burkert, *S&H*, 123-42. Compare also with the eventual burning of the Christmas Tree.
65. Evans, *PM II*, 841-42, fig. 557; Sourvinou-Inwood, *Kadmos* 10 (1971), 60-69 with bibl.
66. *CMS II*, 3, 15; I. Papapostolou, *Ta Sphragismata ton Chanion* (Athens 1977), pl. 38, no. 28; Levi, "Cretule," 140, fig. 154 = Rutkowski, *Kul-*

- darstellungen*, fig. 2.9. All three in Niemeier, in *Fragen und Probleme*, 181ff.
67. Niemeier, in *Fragen und Probleme*, 181, has rightly noted that she sometimes turns away from the shrine; she is thus not directly involved in worship.
68. Scenes collected by Evans, *PM II*, 341, fig. 194 a-c. See also Levi, "Cretule," 141, fig. 156; *CMS I*, 159; II, 3, 218. Discussed by Matz, "Götterscheinung," 397, where he sees the small flanking figures as young girls.
69. Most interesting is a gem from Crete, *CMS II*, 4, 136, with exactly the same iconographical scheme. There, however, the central and flanking figures have animal heads. The central figure has a bovine snout; the smaller ones have bird-heads. Most probably there is playful experimentation here, as with the bird goddess (ch. 7), where the merging of the goddess with her attributes occurs. The alternative, that the cultic personnel was wearing animal masks, is unlikely for lack of parallels. Previous interpretations of this type of scene have suggested either dancers or a divine triad: a goddess with her two attendants (dioskourai): Ch. Picard, *Les religions pré-helléniques* (Paris 1948), 109; Levi, "Cretule," 140; Nilsson, *MMR*, 268, suggests dancing women; Alexiou, *KrChron* 4 (1950), 456.
70. Evans, *PM II*, 277 speaks of the Great Mother with her child or consort; in *PM III*, 463ff., he explores the relationship of the goddess with armed male gods. Evans was inspired by Anatolian religions. *Hieros gamos* is assumed by Ch. Picard, *Les religions pré-helléniques* (Paris 1948), 111, 118, 119, 188, 189 by analogy with later Greek beliefs of the union of Demeter and Iasion as well as Hera and Zeus attested for Dorian Crete. Nilsson, *MMR*, 403-5, discusses the Oriental model Ishtar/Tammuz, Magna Mater/Attis to Minoan Crete. He also explores the sacred marriage patterns of Dorian Crete and assumes that a Minoan stratum survived (525ff.). Persson *RGPT*, 147ff., uses both models and even brings in the Eleusinian mysteries. See also N. Platon, *Crète, Archaeologia Mundi* (Geneva 1968), 182. The most recent work on the subject: W. Pötscher, *Aspekte und Probleme der Minoischen Religion* (Hildesheim/Zurich 1990).
- Sacred marriage may have been practiced in Egypt between the pharaoh and his consort who posed as Hathor: L. Troy, *Patterns of Queenship in Ancient Egyptian Myth and History* (Uppsala 1986), 57. It is worth stressing that in Crete of the early Greek period there exists iconographical evidence for sacred marriage, on both the divine and the human level. The latter is perhaps connected with initiation. This resembles the Minoan model

and we may indeed have continuity in this case. See A. Lebesse, in *Eilapine, Festschrift N. Platon* (Herakleion 1987), 125–38.

71. For bibliography see CMS II.5, 324.

72. Evans, *PM I*, 197, fig. 145; Säflund, in *FMP*, 233.

73. CMS I, 101 with bibl.

74. This is how Evans, *TPC*, 176; *PM III*, 463–64, interprets this scene; it is often referred to as *sacra conversazione*. For discussion and bibliography Nilsson, *MMR*, 351–52; Persson, *RGPT*, 69.

75. For Egyptian art: Troy (supra n.70), 78, fig. 51; Sennefer holds his wife's wrist as an erotic gesture: Gundlach et al. (supra n.40), fig. 46. For Greek art see, for example, the metope with Zeus and Hera from temple E at Selinunt: E. Simon, *Die Götter der Griechen* (Munich 1966), 52, fig. 44.

An erotic interpretation of our scene has been proposed by A. Furtwängler, *Die antiken Gemmen* (Berlin-Leipzig 1910), 36. His idea seems correct to me but was rejected by both Evans and Nilsson; the latter, *MMR*, 252, claims that "it is certainly erroneous."

76. CMS IX, 115 with bibl.

77. Nilsson, *MMR*, 179; For bibl.: CMS V, 199.

78. For previous discussions see bibl. in CMS X, 261.

79. G. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton 1961), 243ff.; Burkert, *HN*, 319 (Engl. transl.), 289; idem, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, 74. For Demeter/Iasion, see Homer, *Odyssey* 5, 125ff.; Hesiod, *Theogony*, 969ff.; cf. Burkert, *GR*, 220, 284.

80. The fashion started with J. J. Bachofen, *Das Mutterrecht* (Basel 1861; 1897²). His work has had a great influence, but is nowadays looked upon with suspicion: S. Pembroke, "Last of the Matriarchs," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 8 (1965), 217–47; J. Bamberger, "The Myth of Matriarchy," in *Woman, Culture and Society* ed. M. Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere. (Stanford 1974), 263–80.

81. See now J. D. Weinreich, *Sexual Landscapes* (New York 1987), 259–69. Certain Greek and Near Eastern myths also reveal the same truth. They fall into a pattern: the Great Goddess chooses but ultimately destroys her young lover. Ishtar/Dumuzi, Aphrodite/Adonis are the most obvious examples. Discussion in Burkert, *S&H*, 99–122.

Chapter 9

1. Keel, *SBW*, 58 with fig. 59; S. Morenz, in *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 54 (1957), 58ff.

2. See especially the Lilies and Crocus landscape frescoes from Thera: N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, figs. 44, 52, 62.

3. L. Morgan, in *The Prehistoric Cyclades*, J. A. MacGillivray, R. L. N. Barber, eds. (Edinburgh 1984), 165–75, at 170, fig. 4.; N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 61ff.

4. The Egyptian landscape is generally recognized as "Nilotic," especially in view of the papyrus plants that grow on the riverbanks. Note, however, that there are Minoan peculiarities. The attacking cat, for example, is an Aegean element; in Egypt it is another predator, the ichneumon, that is depicted in river or marshy scenes. For Egyptian influences in Minoan art, S. Immerwahr, in *Iconographie minoenne*, 41–50; R. Laffineur, in *Proceedings of the 6th International Colloquium on Aegean Prehistory, Athens 1987* (forthcoming); L. Morgan, *The Miniature Wall Paintings from Thera* (Cambridge 1988), 34–40. Egyptian marshy landscapes include butterflies and dragonflies: N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 70 with fig. 50. The animals, lions and griffins, are more at home in the Near East.

5. For the notion of a religious landscape, see H. Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (New York 1961; original publication 1948), 154.

6. Ps. 148: 7a, 9b in Keel, *SBW*, 60.

7. Frankfort, *Art & Architecture*, pl. 3; Keel, *SBW*, 60, fig. 62. The vase is variously dated to the fourth millennium (Frankfort) or to the third.

8. Crocus appears on offering tables for example: Thera VII, pl. 51. As a festoon pendant on the ship fresco from Thera: Thera VI, pl. 112. See also L. Morgan (supra n.3), 166–71. The religious significance of plants has been recently stressed by P. Warren who has found frescoes at Knossos depicting garlands with lilies, crocuses, roses, myrtle, etc. See P. Warren, in *Iconographie minoenne*, 187–207; idem, *Minoan Religion as Ritual Action* (Gothenburg 1988), 24–27 with figs. 14–15.

9. An offering table from Thera: Thera VII, pl. 47 = N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, fig. 48. The painting from the House of the Frescoes, Knossos: Evans, *PM II*, 444ff., 266; see also restoration by M. Cameron, fig. 194 in this volume. Lilies are carried by women on a painting found in the same room as the Crocus Gatherers from Thera, Xeste 3; they thus belong to the same thematic program as the Crocus landscape: Thera VII, pl. 65 = N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, figs. 44, 45. A swallow (typical spring bird) is coupled with the autumn crocus on a fresco fragment from Xeste 3: Thera VII, pl. 39b = N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, fig. 47.

10. Large insects are shown on seal-impressions from Zakros and Hagia Triada, for

example: Zakros: see Platon, *Zakros* (Greek edition, Athens 1974), 74; illustrated in P. Warren, "Of Baetyls," *OpAth* 18 (1990). Hagia Triada: Levi, "Cretule," 143, fig. 159 = Rutkowski, *Kultdarstellungen*, fig. 14.

11. CMS I, 270; II.3, 22; 46, 237, 390; V, 677 b; VII, 70; VIII, 152; X, 102. See also I. Pini, in *Minoan Thalassocracy*, 123–31; A. Sakellariou, *Les cachets minoens de la collection Giamalakis, ÉtCrét X* (Paris 1958), pl. IV, no. 329; I. Papapostolou, *Ta Sphragismata ton Chanion* (Athens 1977), pl. 32, No. 21. Collection of the evidence in J. G. Younger, *The Iconography of Late Minoan and Mycenaean Sealsstones and Sealings* (Bristol 1988), 203–5. Noteworthy are the possible associations of butterflies with double axes: Nilsson, *MMR*, 195, fig. 90; M. Gimbutas, *Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe, Myths and Cult Images* (London 1974¹, 1982²) 186ff.; B. C. Dietrich, in *Early Greek Cult Practice*, ed. R. Hägg, N. Marinatos, and G. C. Nordquist (Stockholm 1988), 35–40. Bees play an important role: see C. Davaras, *ArchEph* 123 (1984), 76ff.

12. Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 80ff., establishes the connection of the horned beetle with sheep and pastoral life. Most recently C. Davaras, *BSA* 83 (1989), 45–54, discusses a beetle-rhyton from Prinias and draws attention to a vessel decorated with beetles from Knossos (p. 49, fig. 6). Davaras also suggests a relationship between the beetle and the Egyptian scarab.

13. Cf. the Phaistos sealings, CMS II.5, 301, 302; Younger (supra n.11), 208ff.

14. P. Mountjoy, in *Iconographie minoenne*, 231–42; M. Gill, in the same volume, 63–81. Cf. also the marine floors of shrines at Knossos and Hagia Triada: chapter 3.

15. G. Karo, *Schachtgräber von Mykenai* (1930–33), 94, nos. 386, 387, pl. 44 = Marinatos-Hirmer, pl. 226.

16. R. Laffineur, in *Kolloquium zur Ägäischen Vorgeschichte, Schriften des Deutschen Archäologenverbandes IX* (Mannheim 1987), 132, assumes that the symbolism is Mycenaean. The Minoan origin can be established on the grounds that mollusk motifs on seals originate in Crete and not the mainland (see note 13 above). In addition, it is in Crete that funerary symbolism with marine motifs abounds in the Postpalatial period.

Larnakes: Marinatos-Hirmer, pl. 130; Davaras, *Guide*, 174–177, figs. 102–104; Ch. Zervos, *L'art de la Crète* (Paris 1956), pls. 776ff.; *Prakt* (1974), pls. 185–88; B. Rutkowski, *Larnaksy Egejskie* (Warsaw 1966), pls. XX.1, XXV, XXVI, XXX, XXXIII. More extensive treatment below in chapter 11.

17. M. Sguaitamatti, *Antike Kunst* 29 (1986), 156–60.

18. Karo (supra n.15), 43, nos. 2, 4, 6, 8–14, pls. 27–29 = Marinatos-Hirmer, pl. 224; Laffineur (supra n.16). These round gold sheets may have been of Mycenaean manufacture but the symbolism remains Minoan.

19. Lurker, *Gods & Symbols*, 118–19, under "sun."

20. Similar observations about Greek art are made by E. Vermeule, *Aspects of Death* (Berkeley 1979), chapter 3.

21. Near Eastern origin of griffins, Nilsson, *MMR*, 255, 387. In general: A. Dessenne, *BCH* 81 (1957), 203–5.

22. Griffins are shown attacking bulls (CMS V, 216) and deer (CMS IX, 20D) or carrying their prey in their mouth (CMS V, 642). For further examples see Dessenne (supra n.21); N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 44–45, n.231; J. Weingarten, in *Fragen und Probleme*, 299–312. Weingarten also discusses birds of prey at 306ff.

23. Evans, *PM IV*, 433ff.; Levi, "Cretule," 190ff.; Nilsson, *MMR*, 376ff. with bibl.; extensive treatment by M. Gill, *AM* 79 (1964), 1–21; F. van Straten, *BABesch* 44 (1969), 110–21. The function of demons pouring libation has Anatolian parallels: M. J. Mellink, "Anatolian Libation Pourers and the Minoan Genius," in *Monsters and Demons in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds. Papers Presented in Honor of E. Porada* (Mainz 1987), 65–72.

24. As Gill (supra n.23), 5, assumes. Most recently D. Sansone, *Illinois Classical Studies*, 13, 1–17, identifies the demons as female and postulates continuity with the Classical Greek Erinyes.

25. J. Weingarten (*The Transformation of Egyptian Taweret into the Minoan Genius: A Study in Cultural Transmission in the Middle Bronze Age*, SIMA LXXXVIII [Patterson 1991]) correctly argues that we must look at the evolution of Taurt within the Egyptian iconography as well. At the time when the type was borrowed (First Palace period in Crete corresponding to Middle Kingdom in Egypt) Taurt had predatorial characteristics. Gill (supra n.23), 2–3, also stresses that there is a development of the form of the genius from Proto- to Neopalatial times. For illustrations of genii with subdued animals or as hunters Gill (supra n.23), pls. 4:4, 4:5, 4:6, 4:7, 5; CMS XI, 37.

26. CMS IX, 148.

27. CMS XI, 45 = *AGDS* II, 36; Gill (supra n.23), pl. 612; CMS XI, 244 = Levi, "Cretule," 186, fig. 239; CMS II.4, 73 (the seal is published upsidedown in CMS: the griffin is attacking the lion from above). For the attacker-victim relationship see also Weingarten, in *Fragen und Probleme*, 299–312.

28. CMS XI, 37; Nilsson, *MMR*, 378, fig. 185. See also Evans, *PM IV*, 442f., figs. 367, 369

where a demon leads a lion as though it were a sacrificial bull; Gill (supra n.23), pl. 47.

20. Nilsson, *MMR*, 359, fig. 171; CMS VII, 126.

30. CMS XI, 208; Evans, *PM* IV, 462–63, fig. 387; Gill (supra n.23), 11, pl. 7:2.

31. Gill (supra n.23), 14, 21, pl. 7:6. Gill considers this piece a forgery because of "the confusion in the engraving where the legs of the bull become entangled with the tentacles of the octopus. . . ." But no forger would have invented such a design if he/she wanted the seal to be attractive and comprehensible. It is the common designs that are more suspicious.

32. On an unpublished sealing from Thebes (see chapter 7, "Transportation of the Goddess") two demons flank a goddess; the demons in turn are flanked by two griffins. A cylinder seal from Cyprus (Gill, supra n.23, pl. 6:2) depicts a Master of Animals who holds two submissive lions by the mane. Above the god are griffins, one attacking a lion. A demon stands to the left of one lion. Demons with libation jugs held in a position of submission by a male god: CMS XI, 290.

33. F. van Straten (supra n.23); N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 46; idem, in *Gifts to the Gods*, 130.

34. CMS I, 232; V, 440; XII, 212; Gill (supra n.23), pls. 1 and 2; van Straten (supra n.23), 11–114.

35. CMS I, 179; Gill (supra n.23), pl. 6:3. Sealing from Thebes (see note 32). Demon with a male god: CMS V, 201 = ch. VII, fig. 50; Gill, pl. 7:5.

36. Evans, *TPC*, 101, fig. 1; 117, figs. 12–14; CMS I, 231; Gill (supra n.23), pls. 2:5, 3, 4:2.

37. Nilsson, *MMR*, 381.

38. The usual interpretation is that triton-shells are musical instruments but the fact that they have perforations could equally well mean that they were used for pouring. This latter suggestion I owe to W. -D. Niemeier and it is based on the iconography of a seal from the Idaean cave (Nilsson *MMR*, 153, fig. 61) where a woman seems to be tilting (rather than blowing) a triton shell in front of the altar.

39. Cl. Baurain and P. Darcque, *BCH* 107 (1983), 3–73; Baurain, in *Iconographie minoenne*, 93–118, thinks that the tortoise shell on the back of the genius is a shield.

40. N. Platon, *KrChron* 1 (1947), 502–24.

41. Baboons are depicted in a position of worship greeting the sun in Egyptian iconography, see the paintings of the tomb of Tutankhamon, for example. A most interesting seal from the first dynasty depicts the pharaoh running toward a seated baboon which holds a bowl as though to receive offerings: W. Decker, *Sport und Spiel im*

alten Ägypten (Munich 1987). See W. Helck and E. Otto, eds., *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* (1975), 83–85; N. Marinatos, in *Gifts to the Gods*, 123–32, at 128, discussion in n.17 with bibl.

42. N. Marinatos, in *Gifts to the Gods*, 124–30, figs. 4–7; idem, in *Eilapine, Festschrift N. Platon* (Herakleion 1987), 417–21; idem, *OpAth* 17 (1988), 137–41.

43. N. Marinatos, in *Gifts to the Gods*, 128–30.

44. Levi, "Cretule," 162, fig. 175; Sakellariou (supra n.11), no. 380 = N. Marinatos, *MSR*, figs. 30, 32.

45. N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, fig. 80.

46. R. D. Barnett, *JNES* 5 (1973), 1–10; C. Mendelson, *Anatolian Studies* 33 (1983), 81–83.

Chapter 10

1. A. van Gennepe, *Rites of Passage* (London 1960; orig. publ. Paris 1908).

2. *Ibid.*, 82–83.

3. V. Turner, "Betwixt and Between: the Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*," in *The Forest of Symbols*, (Ithaca, N.Y., 1967), 93–111.

4. Ch. Doumas, *Thera*, 106–8; idem, in *Eilapine, Festschrift N. Platon* (Herakleion 1987), 151–59; N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 73ff.; G. Säflund, in *FMP*, 227–33; E. Davis, *AJA* 90 (1986), 399–406; R. Koehl, *JHS* 106 (1986), 99–110.

5. Mostly: H. Jeanmaire, *Couroi et courètes* (Lille 1939); A. Brelich, *Paides e parthenoi* (Rome 1969); P. Vidal-Naquet, *Le chasseur noir* (Paris 1962); idem, "Recipes for Greek Adolescence" in *Myth, Religion and Society*, ed. R. L. Gordon (Cambridge 1981) 163–85; C. Calame, *Les chœurs de jeunes filles en Grèce archaïque* (Rome 1977).

6. The chronology of the Knossos frescoes is disputed (see above, chapter 3; Hood, *Arts*, 48–77) but most seem to date after LM IB whereas the Theran frescoes date to LM IA.

7. Unfortunately there is no exact chronological correspondence between Theran and Knossian paintings. We can observe the phenomenon in other media, however, such as on the figurines from peak sanctuaries (Petsofas, for example) which have scalp locks. See E. Sapouna-Sakellarakis, *Proc4CretCongr* 1976 (Athens 1982), 490, 503. The figurines are now being studied by A. Peatfield.

8. *Thera* IV, 47.

9. *Thera*, VI, 38; *Thera* VII, 35.

10. See, for example, *Thera* VII, pls. 60, 61.

The stages are illustrated by Davis and Koehl (supra n.4). See also below "A Puberty Rite for Girls on Thera."

11. *Thera* VI, 38.

12. For the symbolic significance of hairstyles in general: E. Leach, "Magical Hair," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 88 (1958), 152.

13. A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum* (Tübingen 1923), 191.

14. Doumas, in *Eilapine* (supra n.4), 153.

15. Koehl (supra n.4), 101.

16. Chapter 6, n. 29. Babies: Marinatos-Hirmer, pl. 113; Koehl (supra n.4), 101 with fig. 1A.

17. *Ibid.*; Davis (supra n.4) in general.

18. See fig. 211.

19. In deliberate contrast to many previous works on Aegean religion which combine Minoan and Mycenaean such as Nilsson, *MMR*; Rutkowski, *Cult Places*; B. C. Dietrich, *The Origins of Greek Religion* (Berlin 1974); idem, *Tradition in Greek Religion* (Berlin 1986).

20. N. Marinatos, "Minoan Threskeiocracy on Thera?" in *Minoan Thalassocracy, 167–78*; idem, "Minoan-Cycladic Syncretism," in *Thera and the Aegean World*, III, 1, ed. David A. Hardy (London 1990). In the latter paper I have argued that Theran religion had strong Minoan components (official level) and indigenous features (folk level).

21. It will be remembered that most Minoan adyta are associated with pier-and-door systems. See chapter 4.

22. *Thera* VII, 32–38; Doumas, *Thera*, 106–8; N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 61–84.

23. N. Marinatos, in *Gifts to the Gods*, 123–30.

24. A group from the same workshop must have worked on both, as can be seen by the rendition of the outlines of the figures, the eyes, the dresses. But the way the plants and rocks are rendered differs in the two paintings, so that at least two hands can be discerned. I have profited by discussions with Ellen Davis on this subject.

25. For extensive argumentation see Davis (supra n.4). She, however, sees *two*, rather than three, age groups.

26. N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 27–29.

27. For unveiling of *sacra*, see van Gennepe (supra n.1), 79. How display of meaningful images or objects enhances the awareness of the initiate has been described by V. Turner (supra n.3), 102ff. Cf. also the *epopteia* of the Eleusinian mysteries: G. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton 1961), 272–78; Burkert, *GR*, 288.

28. Davis (supra n.4), 402.

29. This gesture-convention of showing pain, mental or physical, is widespread in Aegean and Egyptian art. See Doumas, in *Iconographie minoenne*, 29–34.

30. N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 77–84.

31. I see now that this must be the thematic link (I owe this idea to W. Burkert) between the adyton fresco and that of the crocus gatherers and I want to correct my previous suggestion in *Iconographie minoenne*, 219–30, esp. 228, where I toyed with the idea that there is a mythical component in the scene and that the wounded girl may be the vegetation goddess. In the meantime there has appeared an article by S. Amigues, *Revue Archeologique* (1988), 227–42. Amigues is critical of my views and sees little that is ritual in nature in the adyton fresco. Although her analysis has much to recommend it (especially as pertains to the actual process of crocus gathering), her interpretation fragments the unity of the thematic program and ignores the symbolic contents. We agree on one point: that the wounded girl has been wounded as a result of the excursion in the mountains.

Note that, although the Crocus Gatherers fresco stresses the young age of the girls, it is very probable that, in real practice, a mixed age group was initiated at the same time. Van Gennepe (supra n.1), 65ff., has shown that a conventional age was chosen for initiation. Iconographical evidence suggests that this was the case with the girls' puberty rites at Brauron in the Classical period: Ch. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Studies in Girls' Transitions. Aspects of the Arkteia and Age Representation in Archaic Iconography* (Athens 1988).

32. The excavation of this area has not yet been completed. The suggestions are tentative. For the frescoes in particular see Ch. Doumas, in *Eilapine, Festschrift N. Platon* (Herakleion 1987), 151–59.

33. Pitcher found in shaft graves: G. Karo, *Die Schachtgräber von Ilykenai* (Berlin 1930–33), pls. 154–55.

34. Pace Doumas (supra n.32), 157.

35. Turner, *The Forest of Symbols* (supra n.3), 56f.

36. For the significance of contests in Greek religion and society: W. Burkert, *GR*, 105–7; J. -P. Vernant, *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece* (Engl. transl. 1980, orig. publ. 1974), 19–44, esp. 21. The ethological point of view would be that contests as play are the equivalent of the play of young animals who prepare for hunting.

37. On the relation between war, competition and contests see Vernant (supra n.36), 31f. Just a few names of Olympic victors who were also eminent statesmen need be mentioned here to show that athletics in Ancient Greece were a means of getting political power: Alcibiades son of Kleineias (416); Alcmeon son of Megakles (592); Kallias son of Didymios (480–72); Kimon son of Stesago-

ras (536, 532, 528); Kylon of Athens (640), etc. I thank Prof. H. D. Evjen for supplying me with the list of names.

38. Athletic events are often performed in connection with funerals in which case they can be regarded as a response to the social gap created by the death of a member of the group. Not only are tensions and grief released, but new configurations of hierarchy emerge. The ethnological point of view would be that contests establish hierarchy in the animal society, especially after the death of a leader. A classic description is that of the funeral games of Patroclus in Homer's *Iliad*, book 22. K. Meuli, *Die Antike* 17 (1941), 189–208; idem, *Der griechische Agon: Kampf und Kampfspiel im Totenbrauch, Totentanz, Totenklage und Totenlob* (1968); Burkert, *HN*, 48–58. For emotional reactions to death in general see Huntington & Metcalf, 23–43.

39. Circus and gladiatorial games, for example, flourished during the Pax Romana; see W. Burkert, "Die antike Stadt als Gemeinschaft," in *Saat und Fest*, ed. P. Hugger (Stuttgart) 25–44, esp. 36ff.

40. *Thera* IV, 47–49; N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 106ff.

41. N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 112; idem, in *Philia Epe. Festschrift G. Mylonas III* (Athens 1939), 19–24; L. Morgan, in *Iconographie minoenne*, 5–15, at 16–18.

42. It is noteworthy that this convention, showing one athlete in a lighter tone than the other, finds parallels in Egyptian art. See, for example, the boxing contests that are depicted in the tombs of Beni-Hassan, esp. in Tomb 17: E. Brunner-Traut, *Ägypten* (Stuttgart 1982⁴), 549; W. Decker, *Sport und Spiel im Alten Ägypten* (Munich 1975), 78ff.. There is also a painting from Thebes with two competing boys, illustrated in N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, fig. 77. However, the Egyptian convention had a totally different meaning pertaining to visual clarity achieved through color-contrast.

Parallels for athletic contests are attested both in Egypt and in the Near East. For Egypt see Decker (above) esp. 63ff. For athletics in connection with Hittite festivals: Ch. Carter, "Athletic Contests in Hittite Religious Festivals," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 47 (1988), 185–87.

43. This observation misled Sp. Marinatos, *Thera* IV, 49, to suggest that the child on the left may be a girl, because it appears placid.

44. Evans, *PM* I, 688; III, 225; IV, 21; Marinatos-Hirmer, 144–45 with bibl.

45. Which corresponds to the unshaved look of the children on the Thera frescoes so that we

can infer an identity of custom: Koehl (supra n.4), 101–3.

46. Säflund (supra n.4), 230.

47. *Ibid.*, 231. The helmets are mostly restored. Only one small fragment with a plume is preserved.

48. Evans, *TPC*, 102, fig. 2; *PM* II, 614–16, fig. 386; Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 101, fig. 135; Säflund (supra n.4), 232.

49. J. Coulomb, *BCH* 103 (1979), 29–50; idem, *Proc5CretCongr* 1981 (Athens 1985), 67–76.

50. Levi, *ASAtene* 8–9 (1925–26), 122, fig. 129. There is a sealing from the temple repositories, Knossos, which definitely depicts an athletic match, because a column towers to the right of the scene: *BSA* 60 (1965), 71; illustrated in Niemeier, *AM* 102 (1987), fig. 6. More scenes of Cretan seal-impressions are published by A. Xenaki-Sakellariou, in *Iconographie minoenne*, 293–309, at 302–5; I. Pini, in *Fragen und Probleme*, 201–16. Some glyptic scenes depict duels between warriors. Note that most come from the mainland or are of unknown provenance but some do originate in Crete: *CMS* I, 11, 12, 16; V, 180b, 643; VII, 129, 130; XI, 34. See also Pini, in *Fragen und Probleme*.

51. Hagia Triada sealing No. 114: Levi, "Cretule," 122–23, figs. 130–31; Evans, *PM* IV, 512, fig. 456. New drawing and description, I. Pini, in *Fragen und Probleme*, 203, fig. 1. Combat scenes: I. Pini, in *Fragen und Probleme*, 203ff.

52. *Thera* VI, 35ff., fig. 4, pls. 85, 90; N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 37, fig. 18, with bibl. on p. 124.

53. N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*; idem, *AM* 98 (1983), 3f.

54. M. Benzi, *Prospettiva* 10 (1977), 3–15; Dumas (supra n.32), 157. For scenes of fishing in Aegean art: J. Sakellarakis, *AAA* (1974), 370–90.

55. See chapter 5, note 79; chapter 6, note 30.

56. Evans, *PM* II, 742, identifies the skins as elephants' hides, which is most improbable.

57. Koehl (supra n.4), 101.

58. For the rich controversy surrounding the identification of this figure, see most recently W. -D. Niemeier, *AM* 102 (1987), 83–84 with nn. 110–12. Niemeier and I agree that, pace Koehl (supra n.4), it is the "Chieftain" and not the young man who receives the animal hides.

59. The same type of crooked instrument is also held by a female, priestess or goddess: *CMS* II.3, 16.

60. Initiation has been suggested also by Koehl (supra n.4). See chapter 5.

61. Large predators, such as lions, could not have found enough food on an island. Wild bulls

seem to have existed, however. Bones of the species of wild bull, *bos primigenius*, have been found at Tylissos: J. Hazzidakis, *Tylissos à l'époque minoenne* (Paris 1921), 13ff.; Platon, *KrChron* 8 (1954), 451.

62. N. Marinatos, "The Bull as an Adversary: Some Observations on Bull-Hunting and Bull-Leaping," in *Ariadne, Festschrift S. Alexiou*, (Rehymnon 1989), 23–32.

63. Evans, *PM* I, 188, fig. 137d.

64. As on a seal from Routsí, *CMS* I, 274, and the Vaphio cups (a set of two gold cups found in a tholos tomb in the Peloponnese) Marinatos-Hirmer, pls. 200–207. Discussion of the manufacture and origin of the cups by E. Davis, *The Vaphio Cups and Aegean Gold and Silver Ware* (New York and London 1977).

65. Found in the cemetery of Katsambas, Crete, of the New Palace period: Hood, *Arts*, 122 with bibl.

66. On the location of bull-games: J. W. Graham, *POC*, 73–83; idem, in *Antichità Cretesi I, Festschrift D. Levi* (1977), 65ff.; N. Platon, in *Kernos, Festschrift G. Bakalakis* (Thessalonike 1972), 143–45 (in Greek). Iconography: A. Ward, "The Cretan Bull-Sports," *Antiquity* 42 (1968), 117–22; J. G. Younger, *AJA* 80 (1976), 125–37; idem, *Muse* 17 (1983), 72–80; J. Pinsent, in *Minoan Society*, 259–69; N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 51–72. Many of the above authors deal with the manner in which bull leaping was conducted and with the problem of how realistic the representations are.

67. Evans, *PM* III, 209ff.; IV, 21ff.

68. See note 62 above. The subject of bull hunting has also been dealt with by F. Matz, "Minoischer Stiergott?" *Proc1CretCongr*, 215–23. The similarity of bull leaping and bull hunting has led scholars to suggest that the latter evolved out of the former. This goes contrary to common sense and denies hunting its primeval importance. Matz put it very poignantly when he said: "Priorität liegt nicht bei dem Spiel" (219).

69. Evans, *PM* III, figs. 143–48, pl. XXI. See also chapter 3.

70. Rings with bull leaping: Younger (supra n.66).

71. Evans, *PM* III, 212; *PM* IV, 21ff.

72. An exception is S. Damiani-Indelicato, "Were Cretan Girls Playing at Bull-Leaping?" *Cretan Studies* 1 (1988), 39–47.

73. Leaper from a fresco in the palace of Knossos: Evans, *PM* III, 217, fig. 148; pl. XXI.

74. G. Giesecke, *OpAth* 17 (1988), 91–98.

75. M. Cameron, in *FMP*, 324.

76. There are good reasons for this, which are biologically determined. Men can run faster and are stronger.

77. On the roles of men as warriors/hunters: Burkert, *HN*, 12ff.; Vernant (supra n.36), 19–44.

78. N. Marinatos, *JPR* 1 (1987), 23–34. A conspicuous exception are the cult scenes with the shaking of the tree and kneeling over the stone (see chapter 8); but there the presence of both men and women could have been dictated by the fact that some sexual union may have marked the culminating phases of the ritual.

79. Some examples from Greek art: Odysseus is white, his companions dark on a Proto-Attic amphora, seventh century BC, illustrated, for instance, in J. Boardman, *Pre-Classical. From Crete to Archaic Greece* (Harmondsworth 1967), 90, fig. 50.

80. The frescoes under discussion may be some of the latest additions to the palace of Knossos dating to about LM IIIA; they thus post-date considerably the Thera frescoes. Indeed, it is not inconceivable that there may have been a change of conventions around 1400. This would explain why on the Mycenaean mainland there are white figures riding chariots or wearing boar's tusks helmets. These figures are usually taken to be female, but it is possible that we misunderstand the color here also.

81. Achilles on Skyros, H. J. Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Mythology* (London 1928¹, 1956), 239; cf. also Leukippos.

S. Damiani-Indelicato (supra n.72), who was the first to really challenge the idea of female bull leapers, arrives at a different conclusion regarding color. She believes that the color code indicates a temporal sequence.

Chapter 11

1. Most recently: D. Doxey, "Causes and Effects of the Fall of Knossos in 1375 B.C.," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 6 (1987), 301–24; P. Warren (at conference in Cyprus Oct. 1989) argued for a 1350 destruction.

2. For the problem of the date of the Mycenaean arrival in Crete and the destruction of Knossos in particular see the convenient appendix in Hood, *Minoans*. That there was a destruction in LM IIIA2 is argued convincingly by M. Popham, *The Destruction of the Palace of Knossos. Pottery of the Late Minoan IIIA Period*, *SIMA* 12 (Göteborg 1970). Concerning the final destruction: E. Hallager, *The Mycenaean Palace at Knossos. Evidence for Final Destruction in the LM IIIB Period* (Stockholm 1977); W. -D. Niemeier, *Die Palastkeramik von Knossos. Stil, Chronologie und historischer Kontext*. Archäologische Forschungen 13 (Berlin 1984). The period of domination of the palace of Knossos has been termed *monopalatial*.

by E. Hallager, "Final Palatial Crete. An Essay in Minoan Chronology," in *Studies in Ancient History and Numismatics Presented to R. Thomsen* (Århus 1988), 11–21. See also note 1 above.

3. Sp. Marinatos, *Antiquity* 13 (1939), 425–39; idem, *Proc2CretCongr 1966* (Athens 1968), 198–216; J. V. Luce, *The End of Atlantis* (London 1969); D. Page, *History and the Homeric Iliad* (London 1963); idem, in *TAW*, 691–98. For criticism: W. -D. Niemeier, *Jdl* 95 (1980), 1–76. General discussion of the issue in *TAW* I, passim.

4. For example, S. Hood, *Minoans*, 56ff.; idem, in *Proc5CretCongr 1981* (Herakleion 1985), 170–78.

5. P. Warren, "Absolute Dating of the Bronze Age Eruption of Thera (Santorini)," *Nature* 308 (1984), 492–93. See also chapter 1, note 1.

6. The impact of the plague on European civilization is discussed critically by H. Trevor-Roper, *The Rise of Christian Europe* (London 1965).

7. C. Renfrew, see chapter 3, note 1.

8. Hood, *Minoans*, 60: "The centre and east of Crete if not the whole island may have been under the direct rule of Knossos after the disaster of c. 1450 BC."

9. See the papers by Ph. Betancourt and L. V. Watrous in *Proceedings of the Kommos Symposium, Scripta Mediterranea*, ed. J. W. Shaw and M. C. Shaw 6 (1985), 31–34, 7–11. Similarly, a Postpalatial flourishing of the town of Tiryns was deduced by K. Kilian in his excavations there: Kilian, in *Problems in Greek Prehistory. Papers Presented at the Centenary of the British School at Athens. Manchester 1986*, ed. E. B. French and K. A. Wardle (Bristol 1988), 115–52, esp. 135.

10. See Betancourt (supra n.9); see also H. Haskell and B. Pålsson-Hallager, in *Minoan Society*, 111–20 and 121–28 respectively.

11. For this reason scholars have rightly stressed a unity with the previous period. Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 47ff., for example. Credit is due to Gesell for separating the different periods of Minoan religion; most scholars do not.

12. One striking instance is the adyton in the Little Palace which turns into the "Fetish Shrine": Evans, *PM* II, 519–25. This is one of many examples all of which can be found in Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*.

13. A list of Postpalatial shrines of all types can be found in Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*.

14. Benches were probably used for placing cult implements even in the Neopalatial period, but they were not used for display of idols; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 19–22: "The Bench Sanctuary."

15. Tubular stands are often called snake-tubes. Their function was to support offering bowls, see fig. 13 in this volume.

16. H. Boyd-Hawes, *Gournia, Vasiliki, and Other Prehistoric Towns on the Isthmus of Hierapetra* (Philadelphia 1908), 47–48; Nilsson, *MMR*, 80–82; Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 161; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 72, cat. 10 with bibl.

17. It has been thought that the shrine with the marine-scape floor originated in the New Palace period and that it acquired its final form after the fall of the palaces. At that time the painted floor was supposedly covered with plaster. Three distinct phases were thus attributed to the shrine (concise summary in Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 74–75, cat. 15 with bibl.). However, these results have been contested by V. La Rosa who has recently resumed excavations in the area. He finds no evidence for Palatial phases and attributes even the painted floor to the Postpalatial period: *ASAtene* 57–58 (1979–80), 103–7 with plans figs. 6 and 59.

18. Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 43.

19. *Ibid.* 77, cat. 21.

20. Alexiou, *Thea*, 196; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 43.

21. Evans, *PM* II, 335.

22. *Ibid.*

23. Gesell thinks that the published plans and photographs by Evans have been "somewhat regularized" (*Town/Palace Cult*, 90, cat. 37); there is consequently some small doubt about the original position of these items. See also Nilsson, *MMR*, 78–80.

24. Much to my amazement, this figure is always identified as a male votary after Evans. Yet, the dress with a typical jacket and décolletage is obviously female; so is the braid in the back which, artistically, resembles the braid of the other female figures in the group.

25. The other votaries are supposedly her attendants. Evans reconstructs a trio based on glyptic scenes: *PM* II, 340–41.

26. Sp. Marinatos, *ArchEph* (1937), 278–91; Alexiou, *Thea*, 188–192; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 69, cat. 5.

27. *BSA* 38 (1937–38), 57–762; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 79, cat. 22; Alexiou, *Thea*, 192–95; Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 166–67; idem, *Studi Mice-nei ed Egeo-Anatolici* 26 (1987), 257–79. Gesell lists five goddesses, Rutkowski speaks of six or more (263).

28. As comparative material one should adduce not only the cult center and shrines at Mycenae and Tiryns (presentation of the recent evidence in *SCABA*) but also the well-published shrine complex from Phylakopi on the island of Melos, which also contained benches with figurines and paraphernalia: C. Renfrew, *The Archae-*

ology of Cult, *BSA* suppl. vol. 18 (London 1985) esp. 361–443.

29. Nilsson, *MMR*, 225, fig. 112; 282, fig. 141; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 77, cat. 21 under "C"; Alexiou, *Thea*, pl. ST', fig. 3.

30. Thus, it typifies "plebeian" art during Roman times which coexists with the "higher" classicizing style: R. Bianchi-Bandinelli, *Rome: The Center of Power* (New York 1970), 51–71. It also characterizes late Roman imperial art and art of Late Antiquity: H. P. L'Orange, *Art Forms and Civic Life in the Late Roman Empire* (Princeton 1965), 69–125.

31. The meaning of the latter is elusive. They are called leaf-like ornaments by Alexiou, *Thea*, 195; Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 53, calls them disks.

32. Some figures lack attributes and Gesell defines them as votives: Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 49. On the clay goddesses in general, see Alexiou, *Thea*, and Gesell, 47–50.

33. Opinions differ. Alexiou, *Thea*, 243–52, comes to the conclusion that the gesture of up-raised arms is one of benediction and that it characterizes only the divinity. E. Brandt, *Gruss und Gebet* (Waldsassen/Bayern 1965), 25, thinks that the meaning signifies supplication or invocation of the divinity, hence befitting mortals. Discussion in Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 49 with nn. 54–57.

34. The male figure at Kannia (Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, pl. 70) seems to be a votary to judge by his gesture. Above, I have suggested that the so-called male votary holding a bird from the Shrine of the Double Axes, Knossos, is, in reality, a female.

35. Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, 71.

36. *Ibid.*, 48.

37. For the issue of Minoan-Myceanean syncretism see C. Renfrew, in *SCABA*, 67–79.

38. K. Kilian, in *SCABA*, 47–58, esp. 56. There is even a Mycenaean word, "theophoria", which means carrying of gods: Ch. Boulotis, *Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt* 9 (1979), 59ff.

39. See Lurker, *Gods & Symbols*, 116, under "standards." A good example of the carrying of the cult image of the god in a procession (rather than the more commonly depicted sacred barge) is depicted on the walls of the second court on the mortuary temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu (Min festival): C. J. Bleeker, *Die Geburt eines Gottes* (Leiden 1956), 59–93.

40. For burial customs of the period see I. Pini, *Beiträge zur mioinischen Gräberkunde* (Wiesbaden 1968), 52–54.

41. Evans, *PM* IV, 975. Fresco fragments are reported from the pillar crypt adjacent to Tholos B at Archanes: see chapter 2, note 58.

42. For larnakes of the Postpalatial period see in general B. Rutkowski, *Larnaksy Egejskie*, *Bibliotheca Antiqua* 7 (Warsaw-Krakow 1966); C. Mavriyannaki, *Recherches sur larnakes minoennes de la Crète occidentale, Incunabula Graeca* (Rome 1972).

43. Mavriyannaki (supra n.42), 87; for pottery motifs see A. Kanta, *The Late Minoan III in Crete, a Survey of Sites, Pottery and their Distribution*, *SIMA* 58 (Gothenburg 1980) and the recent works of P. Betancourt, *A History of Minoan Pottery* (Princeton 1985) and W. -D. Niemeier, *Die Palaststilkeramik von Knossos, Archäologische Forschungen* 13 (Berlin 1985).

44. Of the numerous larnakes decorated with marine motifs special notice should be taken of one from Gazi with a ship depicted on one of its long sides: S. Alexiou, *Proc3CretCongr 1971* (Athens 1973), 3–12, pls. 1, 2. Others illustrated in: Davaras, *Guide*, 174–75, figs. 102–3; Mavriyannaki (supra n.42), pls. 12, 17, 20, 25, 26, 29; Rutkowski (supra n.42), pls. 25–26, 30–33; M. Squitramatti, *Antike Kunst* 29 (1986), 156–60.

45. As Alexiou (supra n.44), 7ff. observes, the scenes are always generic and do not have relevance to the specifics of the dead person's biography.

46. See chapter 9 and notes 13 and 14.

47. Such larnakes are mostly from eastern Crete. Some are exhibited in the museum of Hagios Nikolaos, Crete, some are in the Herakleion museum: Kanta (supra n.43), pl. 66:2. See also Rutkowski (supra n.42), pls. 32:1, 33:3, 50.

48. As Nilsson, *MMR*, 440, puts it: "Tombs from the Golden Age of Minoan civilization are remarkably scarce, and discoveries and excavations have been so numerous that this cannot be accidental."

49. On papyrus see Evans, *PM* II, 476. That the plant was considered sacred can best be illustrated by seals on which it is flanked by animals: Rutkowski, *Kultdarstellungen*, 65, fig. 21:1. One pair of seals depicts acrobats performing their task with papyrus as a center: Evans, *PM* IV, 502, figs. 443–44. On an ivory piece a papyrus is the focal point of a procession; a man and sphinx proceed towards it: J. -C. Poursat, *Catalogue des ivoires mycéniens du Musée National d'Athènes* (Paris 1977), pl. 28 (T. 49). A sacred papyrus landscape with god and goddess is depicted on a seal: see chapter 7, fig. 124. for papyrus on wall paintings: N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, 94–95. For palm trees N. Marinatos, *OpAth* 15 (1984), 115–12.

50. R. C. Bosanquet, *BSA* 8 (1901–1902), 286ff., pl. 20; Nilsson, *MMR*, 170, fig. 71; Marinatos-Hirmer, pl. 131; Davaras, *Guide*, fig. 104. For larnakes decorated with plant-motifs see

A. Kanta, *AAA* 6 (1973), 316ff. figs. 1–2;

Marinatos-Hirmer, pl. 130; Davaras, *Guide*, fig. 147 (lid only); Mavriyannaki (supra n.42) pls. 4-11, 13-16, 21, 26, 33, 37; Rutkowski (supra n.42), pls. 5, 23, 27-30, 40, etc. Two recently published larnakes from the Rethymnon area are decorated with palms and stylized papyrus plants: J. Tzedakis, *ArchDelt* 34 (1979), pl. 213.

51. Marinatos-Hirmer, pl. 130; Mavriyannaki (supra n.42), pls. 20, 21, 34; Rutkowski (supra n.42), pl. 20, etc.

52. Ch. Zervos, *L'art de la Crète* (Paris 1956), pl. 776 = Rutkowski (supra n.42), pl. 34:1. This is a genuine symbolic landscape. A similar striking combination is found on a larnax from Episkopi where plant motifs appear above a huge octopus: Davaras, *Guide*, fig. 147. More common is another variant, a combination of two distinct panels, one with birds/plants, the other with an octopus or fish, each panel referring to a distinct realm. The panels are related, as they occur on the same side of the larnax: Mavriyannaki (supra n.42), pl. 20, similar on pls. 22, 25, 26; Marinatos-Hirmer, pl. 130; Rutkowski (supra n.42), pl. 20:1. See also larnax from Kavrochori, see note 70 below.

53. G. Rethemiotakis, *ArchDelt* 34 (1979), Meltai, 228-59, with full comparanda.

54. As Rethemiotakis (supra n.53) aptly observes 252, 257-58.

55. Zervos (supra n.52), pl. 779 = Rutkowski (supra n.42), pl. 31:1; Davaras, *Guide*, fig. 105. Similar "signs" of fertility are to be found in landscape scenes in Egyptian tombs.

56. Mavriyannaki (supra n.42), 84-86 with n.335 L. Morgan, *BSA* 82 (1987), 171-200, at 174.

57. Mavriyannaki (supra n.42), 86, pl. 38.

58. Y. Tzedakis, *AAA* 4 (1971), 218-19, figs. 6-7; 220, fig. 8.

59. Evidence collected by L. Morgan (supra n.56), 192 with nn. 72-75.

60. Tzedakis (supra n.58), 216-22.

61. The explanation suggested by A. Kanta (supra n.50), 320, is that the hunter's position is due to the fact that he is dead. However, then the bird must also be dead although we clearly have no bird hunt here.

62. A. Kanta (supra n.50), 315-21.

63. Kanta (supra n.50), 318, suggests that the radiating lines from the head and back of the animal may signify blood spurting from the wound. However, similar lines in front of a bird on the Kavrochori larnax cannot be interpreted as blood. The lines are there probably to draw attention to the wound.

64. Sp. Marinatos, *BCH* (1934), 272, fig. 40; Zervos (supra n.52), fig. 778; Alexiou, *Thea*, fig. 2; Rutkowski (supra n.42), pl. 23:2; Long, *ATS*,

pl. 13, fig. 31. The priest on this larnax, identified by his Syrian robe, is not connected with hunting, however. The long sides are decorated with argonauts and papyrus.

65. It is certain that animals were sacrificed in funerary contexts: there is the sacrificed bull on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus as well as the archaeological testimony from Archanes: J. Sakellarakis, *PZ* 45 (1970), 157-58; N. Marinatos, *MSR*, 41. For this reason there is the suggestion that some of the animals may be sacrificial: see Kanta (supra n.50); E. Vermeule, *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry* (Berkeley 1979) 66ff.; Mavriyannaki (supra n.42), 84-86. However, sacrifice and hunting are two different, albeit related, activities. Vermeule attempts to bridge the gap by suggesting that "death by hunting" makes the animal holy.

66. Episkopi larnax: Davaras, *Guide*, 177, figs. 105, 145, 146.

67. E. Vermeule and V. Karageorghis, *Mycenaean Pictorial Vase Painting* (Cambridge, Mass. 1982), 7-11. See also A. Åkerström, *Berbat 2* (Stockholm 1987), 91-108.

68. P. Dikaios, *Enkomi*, 918f.; Vermeule and Karageorghis (supra n.67), 14-15; Åkerström (supra n.67), 100ff.

69. It has been aptly described by Vermeule-Karageorghis (supra n.67), 15: "It seems to be an open frame of hourglass shape, a snare, a kind of bow . . . or something wooden that does not survive materially." See also the following note.

70. The latter suggestion by M. P. Nilsson, *Opuscula Selecta I* (1951), 443ff. For more recent discussion Vermeule (supra n.65), 71, 235; J. Puhvel, *AJP* 104 (1983), 217-29; Åkerström (supra n.67), 100ff. Åkerström himself arrives at a secular reading: a lord has just returned to his estate and is greeted by servants who are bringing fodder to the horses (Åkerström interprets the scales as troughs). The figure below the chariot is carrying a folding chair.

71. J. Wiesner, "Die Hochzeit des Polypos," *Jdl* 74 (1959), 35-51.

72. G. Karo, *Die Schachtgräber von Mykenai* (Berlin 1930-33), pl. 34. For Egyptian underworld scenes see, for example, A. J. Spencer, *Death in Ancient Egypt* (Harmondsworth 1982), 144-45 with pl. 19.

73. Vermeule-Karageorghis (supra n.67), 14. The authors conclude (p. 15) that the primary meaning of the Zeus-krater is hunt, which fits my general interpretation well.

74. In addition to the Tanagra painted sarcophagi, there are a few others from Mycenae, Tiryns, and other places in the Argolid. See K. Demakopoulou, in *Eilapine, Festschrift N. Platon*

(Herakleion 1987), 67-78, esp. 74 with n. 37. The iconography of these larnakes may have been influenced by Minoan art. And yet they have their own distinctive funerary repertoire involving funeral scenes, bull leaping, etc., which do not occur on Minoan specimens. See Th. Spyropoulos, *AAA* 2 (1969), 20-25; idem, *AAA* 3 (1970), 184-97; Vermeule (supra n.65), 63ff, figs. 20, 23, 26. Good illustrations in K. Demakopoulou and D. Konsola, *Guide to the Archaeological Museum at Thebes* (Athens 1981), pls. 42-44.

75. A clear example of hunting scenes from the Old Kingdom can be found in the tomb of Ptah-Hotep at Sakkara. There are mating foxes, a lion devouring an ox, a hound seizing an antelope. Quick reference in J. Kamil, *Sakkara* (London, New York 1978), 118. See also a relief from the "Room of the Seasons" at Abu Ghurab: J.

Baines, Jaromir Málek, *Atlas of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford 1984), 155. The pharaoh Sahure hunting: H. A. Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement* (London 1951), 47 with fig. 4. for the New Kingdom: idem., 84-86 with fig. 14.

76. In the tomb of Idout at Sakkara, for example, hunting and fishing predominate in the entrance chambers, food offerings are the main subject in the main chamber. Kamil (supra n.75), 149. See Cl. Barocas, "La décoration des chapelles funéraires égyptiennes," in *La mort, les morts dans les sociétés anciennes*, ed. Gh. Gnoli and J.-P. Vernant, (Paris-Cambridge 1982), 429-40.

77. S. Steingraber, *Catalogo ragionato della pittura etrusca* (Milano 1985), pls. 2f.

78. Groenewegen-Frankfort (supra n.75), 82.

79. Burkert, *SGH*, 78-98, esp. 88-94 with bibl.



ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

- Fig. 14. After Hood, *Minoans*, p. 142, fig. 127.
Fig. 15. Photo: courtesy P. Warren.
Fig. 16. Photo: courtesy P. Warren.
Fig. 17. After Branigan, *Tombs*, fig. 18.
Fig. 18. (A): after Ch. Zervos, *Crète* (Paris 1956), pl. 266. (b)–(d): after photographs by the author.
Fig. 19. After Hood, *Minoans*, p. 142, fig. 127.
Fig. 20. After Branigan, *Tombs*, fig. 21.
Fig. 21. Photo: courtesy Italian School of Archaeology, Athens.
Fig. 22. Photo: courtesy Italian School of Archaeology, Athens.
Fig. 23. Photo: courtesy Italian School of Archaeology, Athens.
Fig. 24. After J. and E. Sakellarkis, *Prakt* (1982), 484, fig. 6.
Fig. 25. After *Mallia, Necropoles I*, pl. XXV.
Fig. 26. Photo: courtesy P. Warren.
Figs. 27–32. Photos: courtesy A. Frantz.
Fig. 33. After L. Morgan, *BSA* 82 (1987), 171–200, fig. 4 (simplified drawing).
Fig. 34. After J. Pendlebury, *A Handbook to the Palace of Minos* (London 1954), plan 9.
Fig. 35. After E. Stefani and E. Fiandra.
Fig. 36. After S. Logiadou-Platonos and N. Marinatos, *Crete* (Guidebook; Athens, 1983).
Fig. 37. After S. Logiadou-Platonos and N. Marinatos, *Crete* (Guidebook; Athens, 1983).
Fig. 39. After Evans, *PM I*, fig. 322.
Fig. 41. Reconstruction after Evans, *PM II*, fig. 450.
Fig. 45. After M. Cameron, *KrChron* 18 (1964), 50, fig. 5.
Fig. 46. After M. Cameron, *KrChron* 18 (1964), 41, fig. 2.
Fig. 47. After Frankfort, *Art & Architecture*, pl. 37.
Fig. 50. After Evans, *PM III*, figs. 45–46.
Fig. 51. After Evans, *PM III*, pl. XVI.
Fig. 52. After Evans, *PM III*, fig. 30.
Fig. 54. Reconstruction by N. Platon, *KrChron* 1 (1947), 502–24.
Fig. 55. After Evans, *PM III*, pl. XXIV.
Fig. 57. After Evans, *PM III*, fig. 144.
Fig. 59. After Evans, *PM II*, fig. 503.
Fig. 61. After Evans, *PM II*, frontispiece, pl. XIV.
Fig. 62. Niemeier, *AM* 102 (1987) 95, figs. 24–26.
Fig. 62. After Evans, *PM III*, fig. 2.
Fig. 65. After *Festos II*, fig. 285.
Fig. 66. After Dourmas, *Thera*, fig. 6.
Fig. 67. Sketch after model by Graham, *PoC*, fig. 151.
Fig. 70. After Evans, *PM IV*, insert plan.
Fig. 71. After Evans, *Archaeologia* 65 (1913/14), fig. 53.
Fig. 72. After Evans, *Archaeologia* 65 (1913/14), fig. 52.
Fig. 73. After Evans, *PM II*, fig. 235.
Fig. 72. After *Festos II*, fig. 309.
Fig. 75. Based on *Mallia, Palais IV*, fig. 1.
Fig. 76. After Evans, *PM II*, fig. 225.
Fig. 77. After Evans, *PM II*, fig. 232.
Fig. 78. After Evans, *PM IV*, fig. 157.
Fig. 79. After Evans, *PM IV*, fig. 877.
Fig. 80. Based on Evans, *PM IV*, frontispiece, pl. XXXIII.
Fig. 81. After *Guide des fouilles françaises en Crète* (Paris 1983), fig. 9.
Fig. 82. After C. Davaras, *Amaltheia* 3 (1972), fig. 3.
Fig. 84. After photograph by A. Frantz (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut).

- Fig. 85. After Platon, *Zakros*, fig. on p. 167.
 Fig. 86. After C. Davaras, *Guide to the Museum of Hagios Nikolaos* (Athens), fig. 31.
 Fig. 87. After S. Alexiou, *KrChron* 13 (1959), 346–52.
 Fig. 88. (A–c): After Evans, *PM* IV, fig. 343; (d): after Evans, *PM* IV, fig. 342; (e): after CMS II.3, 147; (f): after Evans, *PM* IV, fig. 336.
 Fig. 89. After CMS II.3, 196.
 Fig. 90. After CMS II.3, 13.
 Fig. 91. After CMS VIII, 110.
 Fig. 92. After Evans, *PM* III, fig. 59.
 Fig. 93. After CMS XIII, 22D.
 Fig. 94. After CMS II.3, 43.
 Fig. 95. After Evans, *PM* IV, fig. 341 and CMS I, 223.
 Fig. 96. After CMS X, 268.
 Fig. 97. After CMS X, 278.
 Fig. 98. After CMS IX, 6D.
 Fig. 99. After CMS I, suppl., 113.
 Fig. 100. After Evans, *PM* II, fig. 516.
 Fig. 101. After CMS II.3, 146.
 Fig. 102. After Nilsson, *MMR*, fig. 65.
 Fig. 103. After Nilsson, *MMR*, fig. 62.
 Fig. 104. After CMS I, 132.
 Fig. 105. After Levi, "Cretule," p. 131, fig. 140.
 Fig. 106. After Nilsson, *MMR*, fig. 64.
 Fig. 107. After Nilsson, *MMR*, fig. 63.
 Fig. 108. After Nilsson, *MMR*, fig. 66.
 Fig. 109. After Tzedakis, *AAA* 1 (1970), 111, figs. 1–2.
 Fig. 110. After M. Lang, *The Palace of Nestor of Pylos II* (Princeton 1969), pl. 126.
 Fig. 111. After Evans, *PM* I, fig. 364.
 Fig. 112. After N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, fig. 49.
 Fig. 113. After Nilsson, *MMR*, fig. 173.
 Fig. 114. After Nilsson, *MMR*, fig. 176.
 Fig. 115. After CMS II.3, 8.
 Fig. 116. After P. Demargne in *Mélanges Charles Picard* I (Paris 1949), 280–88.
 Fig. 117. After N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion*, fig. 69.
 Fig. 118. After Nilsson, *MMR*, fig. 119.
 Fig. 119. After photograph in Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, fig. 39A.
 Fig. 120. Photo: courtesy Italian School of Archaeology, Athens.
 Fig. 123. After CMS I, 279.
 Fig. 124. After Evans, *PM* II, fig. 497.
 Fig. 125. After CMS X, 160.
 Fig. 126. After I. Papapostolou, *Ta Sphragismata ton Chanion* (Athens 1977), pl. 44, no. 32.
 Fig. 127. After CMS V, 253.
 Fig. 128. After CMS I, 128.
 Fig. 129. After CMS VIII, 146.
 Fig. 130. After Evans, *PM* IV, fig. 436.
 Fig. 131. After CMS I, 167.
 Fig. 132. After CMS V, 584.
 Fig. 133. After Evans, *PM* III, fig. 323.
 Fig. 134. After CMS V, 654.
 Fig. 135. After CMS I, 233b.
 Fig. 136. After CMS VII, 134.
 Fig. 137. After CMS II.3, 4.
 Fig. 138. After CMS II.3, 279.
 Fig. 139. After CMS II.3, 170.
 Fig. 140. Based on Evans, *PM* I, frontispiece.
 Fig. 141. After Evans, *PM* I, fig. 362a.
 Fig. 142. After Nilsson, *MMR*, fig. 157.
 Fig. 143. Photo = CMS I, 17. Photo: courtesy A. Hirmer.
 Fig. 144. After CMS I, suppl., 114.
 Fig. 145. After CMS II.3, 103.
 Fig. 146. After Evans, *PM* II, fig. 498.
 Fig. 147. Courtesy British School at Athens and I. Pini, Marburg.
 Fig. 148. After I. Papapostolou, *Ta Sphragismata ton Chanion* (Athens 1977), pl. 42.
 Fig. 149. Photo = CMS II.3, 51. Photo: courtesy A. Hirmer.
 Fig. 150. After CMS II.3, 252.
 Fig. 151. After Evans, *PM* IV, fig. 925.
 Fig. 152. After Sakellarakis, *Prakt* (1967), pl. 137a.
 Fig. 153. After N. Coldstream, *BICS* 31 (1984), 96. Courtesy British School at Athens.
 Fig. 154. After Evans, *PM* IV, fig. 391.
 Fig. 155. After CMS IX, 153.
 Fig. 156. After CMS VIII, 147.
 Fig. 157. After CMS V, 675.
 Fig. 158. After CMS VII, 173.
 Fig. 159. After Evans, *PM* II, fig. 495.
 Fig. 160. After Evans, *PM* IV, fig. 392.
 Fig. 161. After CMS II.3, 193.
 Fig. 162. After Levi, "Cretule," p. 133, fig. 143.
 Fig. 163. After Evans, *PM* I, fig. 363c.
 Fig. 164. After Evans, *PM* I, fig. 363a.
 Fig. 165. After Evans, *PM* I, fig. 363b.
 Fig. 166. After Nilsson, *MMR*, fig. 155.
 Fig. 167. After CMS IX, 114.
 Fig. 168. After CMS II.3, 52.
 Fig. 169. After CMS II.3, 24.
 Fig. 170. Illustration courtesy E. Hallager.
 Fig. 171. After Evans, *PM* I, fig. 115.
 Fig. 172. After CMS XI, 28.
 Fig. 173. After CMS I, 292.
 Fig. 174. After CMS V, 608.
 Fig. 175. After Rutkowski, *Kultdarstellungen*, fig. 14.4.
 Fig. 176. After CMS II.3, 305.
 Fig. 177. After Rutkowski, *Kultdarstellungen*, fig. 14.5.
 Fig. 178. After Nilsson, *MMR*, fig. 142.
 Fig. 179. After Keel, *SBW*, fig. 443.
 Fig. 180. After Keel, *SBW*, fig. 274.

- Fig. 181. After H. Danthine, *Le palmier datier* II, no. 8.
 Fig. 182. After Keel, *SBW*, fig. 9.
 Fig. 183. After Marinatos-Hirmer, pl. 227.
 Fig. 184. After C. Davaras, *Guide* fig. 189.
 Fig. 185. After photograph by author.
 Fig. 186. After C. J. Bleeker, *Die Geburt eines Gottes* (Leiden 1965), pl. III.
 Fig. 187. Photo = CMS I, 126. Photo: courtesy A. Hirmer.
 Fig. 188. After J. Sakellarakis, *Proc3CretCongr* (Athens 1973), pl. 95a.
 Fig. 189. After CMS I, 219.
 Fig. 190. After Nilsson, *MMR*, fig. 155.
 Fig. 191. After CMS II.3, 15.
 Fig. 192. Drawing after Papapostolou, *Ta Sphragismata ton Chanion* (Athens 1977), pl. 38.28.
 Fig. 193. After Rutkowski, *Kultdarstellungen*, fig. 2.9.
 Fig. 194. After Nilsson, *MMR*, fig. 134.
 Fig. 195. After CMS II.5, 324.
 Fig. 196. After CMS I, 101.
 Fig. 197. After CMS IX, 115.
 Fig. 198. After CMS V, 199.
 Fig. 199. After CMS X, 261.
 Fig. 200. After M. Cameron, *BSA* 63 (1968), 1–31, fig. 13.
 Fig. 201. After CMS V, 440.
 Fig. 202. After M. Gill, *AM* 79 (1964), fig. 1.3.
 Fig. 203. After CMS XI, 244.
 Fig. 204. After Gill, *AM* 79 (1964), fig. 4.7.
 Fig. 205. After Evans, *PM* IV, fig. 387.
 Fig. 206. After CMS VII, 177.
 Fig. 207. After Gill, *AM* 79 (1964), fig. 6.2.
 Fig. 208. Photo = CMS I, 179. Photo: courtesy A. Hirmer.
 Fig. 209. After Cl. Baurain in *L'inconographie minoenne*, *BCH Suppl.* XI (Athens 1985), 96, fig. 1.
 Fig. 210. After Doulas, *Thera*, fig. 7.
 Fig. 219. Photo: courtesy Italian School of Archaeology, Athens.
 Fig. 221. After Gill, *BSA* 60 (1965) p. 71.
 Fig. 222. After Levi, "Cretule," fig. 129.
 Fig. 224. After Evans, *PM* II, figs. 476, 516.
 Fig. 225. After Hood, *Arts*, 122, fig. 111.
 Fig. 226. After Evans, *PM* III, col.pl. XXI.
 Fig. 227. After Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, fig. 119.
 Fig. 228. After photograph in Gesell, *Town/Palace Cult*, fig. 118.
 Fig. 229. After Alexiou, *KrChron* 12 (1958), pl. E. 3.
 Fig. 230. After Alexiou, *KrChron* 12 (1958), pl. Z.
 Fig. 231. Photo: courtesy Italian School of Archaeology, Athens.
 Fig. 232. After Nilsson, *MMR*, 282, fig. 141.
 Fig. 233. After C. J. Bleeker, *Egyptian Festivals* (Leiden 1967), fig. 3.
 Fig. 234. After Marinatos-Hirmer, pl. 130.
 Fig. 235. After K. Mavriyannaki, *Recherches sur les larnakes minoennes de la Crete occidentale* (Rome 1972), pl. XII.
 Fig. 236. After A. Kanta, *The Late Minoan III in Crete, a Survey of Sites, Pottery and their Distribution*, *SIMA* 58 (Gothenburg 1980), pl. 66.2.
 Fig. 237. After Marinatos-Hirmer, pl. 130.
 Fig. 238. After G. Rethemiotakis, *ArchDelt* 34 (1979), *Mel.*, 231, fig. 3.
 Fig. 239. *Ibid.* 232, figs. 5, 6.
 Fig. 240. After Y. Tzedakis, *AAA* 4 (1971), 217, fig. 4.
 Fig. 241. After A. Kanta, *AAA* 6 (1973), 319, fig. 3.
 Fig. 242–44. After Davaras, *Guide*, figs. 105, 145, 146.
 Fig. 245. After Åkerstrom, *Berätt* 2 (Stockholm 1987), 99, fig. 65.1.
 Fig. 246. After Evans, *PM* IV, 1018, fig. 966.



GLOSSARY

- ADORANT:** worshiper.
- ANATOLIA:** The peninsula of Asia Minor except for the coastal strip (Ionia).
- ADYTON:** Sunken chamber; type of Minoan shrine.
- BAETYL/BAETYLIC:** A sacred stone which is an object of veneration.
- BARBOTINE:** Rough plastic relief on the surface of a clay vessel. Used mostly to describe pottery.
- GENII:** Minoan demons with leonine features.
- GRIFFIN:** Fantastic creature of Near Eastern origin with the body of a lion and the head and wings of an eagle.
- IDOL:** Figure worshiped as a god or goddess.
- KOINE:** A *common* cultural or spoken language.
- KRATER:** Type of open-shaped vessel.
- LARNAX** (pl. larnakes): Terracotta chest with lid used as a coffin. Sometimes oval-shaped larnakes (without lids) were used, mostly in E. Crete. The latter resemble bathtubs.
- LIBATION:** Pouring of liquid offerings (mostly from jugs or rhyta).
- LINEAR A:** Minoan linear syllabic script which remains undeciphered. Some inscriptions are found on cult objects (dedications?) but most of them are on clay tablets. In use during the Second Palace period, 1700–1450.
- LINEAR B:** Mycenaean linear syllabic script. Most of the signs were taken from Linear A but were used by the Mycenaean when they took over Crete. The language of Linear B is an early form of Greek. It was spread in the Mycenaean mainland from where hundreds of tablets have been recovered, especially from the palace of Pylos. However, numerous Linear B tablets were found also at Knossos and give incontrovertible evidence of Mycenaean presence.
- MAGAZINES:** Rooms used for storage.
- NAUTILUS:** Type of mollusk with large shell.
- OSSUARY:** Building adjacent to tombs for storage of bones.
- PILLAR CRYPT:** Type of Minoan shrine. Dark chamber with one or more pillars.
- PITHOS** (pl. pithoi): Large storage jar, sometimes also used for burial.
- PIER-AND-DOOR:** Wooden structure in which a wooden pier alternates with a door.

PYXIS: Vessel used as a box.

RHYTON (pl. rhyta): Perforated vessel, mostly ovoid or conical-shaped, sometimes in the form of an animal or animal's head, used for the pouring of liquid. Conical-shaped rhyta could be used as funnels for pouring liquid from one vessel to another.

SARCOPHAGUS: Coffin, mostly of terracotta, sometimes of limestone.

SPHINX: Fantastic creature with a human head and a lion's body, of Egyptian origin.

VOTARY: Human worshiper.



INDEX

- Adyta, 76, 77-87, 94, 203, 205, 222
 Afterlife beliefs, 26-27
 Alexiou, S., 79
 Amnissos, 126
 Anemospilia, 114
 Apesokari tomb, 13, 16, 18
 Archanes, 26, 30, 31, 89
 Arkalochori, 125
- Banquet halls, 102
 Bathrooms, 77-79
 Beetles, 195
 Bench sanctuaries, 76, 98
 Birds, 29, 139, 140, 147, 157, 167
 as messengers, 35, 132-133,
 155-156
 Bonfires, 116, 118, 119
 Branigan, 27
 Bread production, 21-22, 30, 102
 Bronze, 125
 Bronze offerings, 124
 Bulls, 197, 199, 218
 horns, 64
 hunting of, 74
 iconography, 67, 68-69
 leaping, 67, 74, 214, 218-220
 worship of, 167
 wrestling, 28-29
 Burkert, Walter, 10, 11
 Burial
 at sea, 231
 gifts, 23
 monumental, 24
 secondary, 22-23, 26-28, 91
- Cameron, M., 53, 65-67
 Camp Stool fresco, 127
 Cats, 193
 Cave sanctuaries, 123-126
 Celestial deities, 97
 Ceremonial and display areas
 balustrade shrines, 104-106
 loggia at Malia, 109-110
 platforms, 103-104
 throne room complex, Knossos, 106-109
 Chariots, 234
 Chrysolakkos, 24, 26
 Chthonic gods, 97
 Chthonic rituals, 94
 Cisterns, 113-114
 Columns as sacred monuments, 180
 Combat, ritualized, 212-216
 Conical cups, 7
 Coulomb, J., 73
 Crocuses, 193, 195
 Crocus Gatherers, 205
 Crowns, 143
 Crypts. *See* Pillar crypts
 Cuirass. *See* Garments
 Cults
 centers for, 110
 communal, 13-14, 26, 30, 31
 epiphany, 108-109
 equipment for, 5-8

- Cults (*continued*)
 funeral, 24
 implements for vs. burial gifts, 23
 of the dead, 13, 15, 23, 31, 34
 social ranking and, 24
 symbols of, 28-30
 types of, 14
- Daggers, 70
 Death rituals and agriculture, 97
 Deified dead, 20-21
 Deities, 126
 association with predators, 132
 frontal depiction of, 132
 Demargne, P., 24
 Demons, 196-197, 199
 Dining, 7, 98-103, 110, 114, 116, 118, 122, 124
 Divinities, 119
 Dogs, 167
 Dolphins, 131-132, 156-157
 Double axes, 5, 49-50, 79, 94-95, 145, 235
 Dress, manner of, 127, 130, 135, 137, 141, 143
 See also Garments
 Dresses. *See* Garments
- Earrings, 56
 Eliade, M., 45
 Epiphany
 cult, 108-109
 scenes, 163
 visionary, 175-179
 Evans, Arthur, 8, 40, 49-50
- False doors, 121, 182
 Feasts, 30
 Female depiction, 54-56, 60-61, 67-68, 141
 Festivals, 22, 50, 53, 66, 75, 109, 118, 119,
 146, 164, 189, 192, 205, 208, 216
 agricultural, 46, 100, 103, 145
 of the dead, 28, 30, 48
 public, 124, 125, 126, 130, 137, 138
 Funeralary ritual, 13-14
- Garments, 133, 146, 167, 195
 cuirass, 137-138
 dresses, 63, 64, 109, 141, 144, 210, 228
 kilt, 53
 loincloth, 68, 215
 robes, 33, 34, 35, 53, 70, 109, 127-128,
 130, 132, 137, 138, 140, 141, 143, 144,
 145, 146, 174, 176, 202
 skirts, 100, 138, 143, 144, 145, 146, 162,
 210, 219, 226, 228
 skirts, hide, 31, 33, 35, 53, 135-137, 141
 Gennep, A. van, *Rites de passage*, 201
 Goats, 167, 193
 Goddesses, 35
 and animals, 152-160
 bird, 156
 household, 148
 impersonation of, 162
 mountain, 148
 Postpalatial representation of, 226-229
 servants of, 199-200
 symbols of, 29-30
 and their worshipers, 159-162
 transportation of, 162-165
 and vegetation, 149-152
 vessels, 147
 Gods
 bearded, 167
 as hunters, 169-171
 impersonation of, 179
 as the Master of Animals, 167-169
 as youths, 171-174
 Gortyn, Kannia, 114-115
 Gournia, 23-24, 112
 Graham, J. W., 45, 77, 102
 Granaries, 46, 48, 101
 Griffins, 54, 64, 132, 152-153, 154, 161, 167,
 193, 196, 197, 199
 Gypsades, 121
- Hagia Triada, 30, 31-36, 50, 132, 135
 Hagios Kyrillos, 16
 Harvester's procession, 137
 Heraldic representations, 154
 Hertz, R., 26, 30
 Hide skirts, 135-137, 141
 Horns, 5, 79, 143
 House of the High Priest, Knossos,
 105-106
 House Za, Malia, 80
 Human figurines, 117
 Human sacrifice, 114
 Hunting, 131, 216-218, 235, 237-238, 240
- Immortality of the soul, 27
 Individualized burial, 31
 Insect symbolism, 195
 Inverted landscapes, 161
- Juktas mountain, 116-117, 118
- Kamares, 124
 Kamilari, 18, 20-22, 30, 31

- Karetsou, A., 116
 Kato Syme, Viannou, 117, 122-123
 Keranoi, 7
 Knossos, 49-50, 80
 Corridor of the Processions, 51
 east wing frescoes, 63-69
 entrance, 73-74
 north wing frescoes, 58-63
 south wing, 69-73
 west wing frescoes, 53
 Koumasa, 16-17, 28-29
- Landscape symbolism, 193-196
 Larnakes, 24, 36-37
 narrative depictions on, 234-239
 Postpalatial character of, 240-241
 Postpalatial iconography of, 229-241
 surrealistic depictions on, 232, 234
 La Rosa, V., 91
 Lebessi, A., 123
 Levi, D., 20
 Libations, 30, 33, 34-35
 tables for, 6
 vessels. *See* Rhyta
 Lilies, 149, 152, 193, 195
 Lions, 154, 167, 197, 199
 Lustral basins. *See* Adyta
 Lyres, 138
- Malia, 50, 112
 Mansions, 39
 Marinatos, Sp., 79, 125
 Master of Animals, 167-169, 171
 Meat, 102
 Mesara tombs, 15
 Minoan civilization
 absence of priest-king, 50-51
 discovery of, 1-2
 First Palace period, 2, 4
 New Palace period, 4
 political power and religion, 74-75, 111
 Postpalatial period, 4
 Prepalatial period, 2
 Mochlos, Mesara, 26
 Mochlos cemetery, 14
 Mollusks, 195-196, 231
 Monkeys, 63, 160, 161, 199-200
 Mortuary priests, 23
 Mortuary rituals, 26
 Mother of the Mountains, 154
 Music, 138-140
 Mycenaean, 8, 9, 221
 Myrtos, 147
- Nakedness, 203
 Nature sanctuaries, 115-123
 Niemeier, W.-D., 73, 108
 Nilsson, M. P., 9
 Nirou Chani, 128
- Octopuses, 142, 236, 239
 Offering tables, 7, 30
 Ossuaries, 14, 15, 20
 Oval House at Chamaizi, 112-114
- Palaces
 architecture of, 40-41
 central court functions, 43-46
 functions of, 38, 48-50
 orientation of, 41-43
 storage rooms, 48-50
 as temples, 74
 vs. temples, 39-40
 west court functions, 46-48
 Palaikastro, 112, 116
 Palm trees, 54
 Peak sanctuaries, 116-117, 118, 119-121, 122
 Petsofas, 116, 118, 121
 Phaistos, 50, 80, 86, 98-101, 149
 Philormos, 118
 Phourni, 22-23
 Pier-and-door construction, 84-86,
 94, 222
 Pillar crypts, 76, 87-98, 222
 explanation of, 95-98
 in palaces and mansions, 94-95
 in tombs and cemeteries, 88-94
 Piskokephalo, 118
 Pithos jars, 24
 Plants, 231-232
 Platanos, 16
 Platon, N., 46, 63, 77, 87-88
 Polytheism vs. monotheism, 165-166
 Porti, 16, 28-29
 Positivists, 9, 10
 Priestesses
 as goddesses, 108-109
 as goddess impersonators, 143, 145
 iconography and role of, 184-188
 lack of distinct dress, 141
 and sacrifice, 145
 symbolic motifs, 141-142
 Priesthood as a profession, 145-146
 Priest-king issue, 50-51, 71-73, 75
 Priests
 association with youths, 133-135
 depicted as hunters, 131

- Priests (*continued*)
 insignia of, 129-130
 mortuary, 23
 and music, 138-140
 representation of, 127-129
 symbols associated with, 130-131
- Processions, 137
- Pseira, 112
- Puberty rites. *See* Rites of passage
- Public festivals, 46, 58-61
- Quartier Mu, Malia, 84
- Regeneration and renewal, 118, 195, 196
- Renfrew, C., 38
- Residences, 114, 115
- Reusch, H., 108
- Rhyta, 5-6, 16, 20, 50, 80, 95, 119-121, 157
- Rites of passage, 123
 combat and, 212-216
 fishing and hunting and, 216-218
 for girls, 203, 205-211
- Rituals
 chthonic, 94
 funerary, 13-14
 hunting, 131
 mortuary, 26
 renewal, 34
- Robes. *See* Garments
- Rousses, Viannou, 114
- Royal Villa, 95, 104
- Sacred marriage, 188-192
- Sacrificial tables, 7
- Sakellarakis, E., 22
- Sakellarakis, J., 22
- Sanctuaries
 bench, 76, 98
 cave, 123-126
 nature, 115-123
 peak, 116-117, 118, 119-121, 122
- Scalp locks, 202
- Sea creatures, 193, 231
- Seager, R., 14-15
- Second Palace period, 110
- Shaved heads, 202
- Sheep bell idols, 17-18
- Sheep bells, 30
- Shrine of the Double Axes, 224
- Shrines
 balustrade, 104-106
 dining, 98-103, 110, 112
 domestic, 112
 identification of, 76-77
 niches in, 182
 Postpalatial, 222
 public, 222-226
 size of, 181-182
 town, 112-115
 trees on top of, 182-183
- Skeletons, 26, 27
- Skin coloring, 202, 219-220
- Skirts. *See* Garments
- Snake goddesses, 148, 157, 158-159
- Snakes, 157-159, 223
- South House, 79
- Sphinxes, 196
- Stone maces, 7
- Stratified society, 71
- Sunken chambers, 79-81
- Symmetry, 154
- Temples, 110
- Temple Tomb, 89-91
- Thera, 80
- Toasting rituals, 15, 16, 17, 20, 30, 56
- Tomb of the Double Axes, Knossos, 93-94
- Traostalos, 118
- Trees, 180-181, 182-183
- Tubular stands, 7-8
- Vathypetro, 114
- Vorou, 18
- Votive offerings, 116-117
- Votive vessels, 18
- Vrysinas, 117
- Warren, P., 29, 38
- Weapons
 as offerings, 125-126
 as priestly insignia, 129
- West symbolism, 48
- Wine production, 22, 23, 28
- Worshippers' offerings, 160-162
- Xeste 3, Thera, 83, 86, 203
- Young God, 135, 175, 202
- Youth, depiction of, 133, 202-203
- Zakros, 50, 79, 80, 101
- Zakros rhyton, 119-121
- Zeus-krater, 239