

15TH INTERNATIONAL AEGEAN CONFERENCE

15^e RENCONTRE EGÉENNE INTERNATIONALE

INSTITUTE FOR ORIENTAL AND EUROPEAN ARCHAEOLOGY,
DEPARTMENT AEGEAN AND ANATOLIA, AUSTRIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

AND

INSTITUTE OF CLASSICAL ARCHAEOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF VIENNA

METAPHYSIS
RITUAL, MYTH AND SYMBOLISM
IN THE AEGEAN BRONZE AGE

VIENNA, 22-25 April 2014

Eva ALRAM-STERN

Men with Caps: Chalcolithic Figurines from Aegina-Kolonna and their Ritual Use

With the restart of excavations in 1967 it became clear that the Bronze Age settlement of Aegina-Kolonna goes back to the Late Neolithic period. In 1994 for the first time architectural structures dating to the Chalcolithic Attica-Kephala-Culture were identified. Major evidence came from room 8c of the prehistoric town where a corner of a building was excavated. This corner bordered an oval construction of stone which contained sherds of pattern burnished ware as well as four coarse miniature bowls. In these bowls as well as in the fill of the construction a number of clay figurines were located. Further clay figurines were collected in the same area during the following years.

The figurines were made of coarse clay and are covered – similarly to Chalcolithic Crusted Ware – with a thick white slip and red paint. Two main types of figurines may be distinguished, a t-shaped type with no further sexual indications as well as a more naturalistic type with an indication of the face as well as the penis. The latter type wears a pointed cap either shaped with the head or made separately and set on it. Since also the t-shaped figurines had separately made caps set on their short end it may be argued that all these figurines actually represented males. Furthermore the naturalistic figures have their legs bended, and also the t-shaped figurines show a clear flexion so that these males were probably represented in a sitting position.

Both types of figurines are extremely rare and have their closest parallels in the Chalcolithic cemetery of Kephala on Kea as well as in the settlement of Sphakovouni in Arcadia. But similar types are also known from the area of the Balkans. Furthermore, a clay figurine which has pierced ears has also close parallels in Southeastern Europe.

According to their location in a separated construction it may be argued that the figurines were deliberately, probably ritually deposited. This interpretation is also supported by their connection with the miniature bowl.

Of interest is also the emphasis of the figurines on their caps which optionally could have been removed or put on their heads. Similar headdresses are represented on Thessalian Neolithic figurines as well as on Early Cycladic figures of Plastiras type. Removable caps on similarly shaped clay figurines are known from the area of the Balkans so that it should be argued that these headdresses represented status symbols.

On the other hand, the sitting position of the figurines points to the possibility that they were originally arranged on miniature chairs or at least thought to be sitting. Since also this detail is known from the area of the Balkans we have to view these figurines in a broader context. Having this in mind we may consider their meaning and possible connection with ritual actions performed by the people of Chalcolithic Aegina.

Eva ALRAM-STERN

A New Mycenaean Wheel-made Figurine from Kynos, Lokris

The Mycenaean settlement of Kynos in Eastern Lokris, situated at the Gulf of Euboea, is one of the most important harbours of the region excavated from 1985–1995 by Phanouria Dakoronia. In addition to about 160 human and animal figurines, fragments of wheel-made animal figures as well as ship models, the excavations have produced a wheel-made female figure. The figure of which only head and arms are missing was found highly fragmented in the area of an alley. According to stratigraphy the piece should be dated to LH IIIB2. The figure belongs to one of the few items found outside the Argolid. In contrast to stylistic and technological similarities to the Argive items there are also clear differences which may go back to production outside the Argolid.

Maria ANASTASIADOU

Wings, Heads, Tails: Small Puzzles in LM I Zakros

Since their discovery in 1901 the fantastic ‘creatures’ engraved on the seals that impressed the sealings from House A in Kato Zakros have been a matter of intensive discussion. The ‘creatures’ will be broken down into their constituent elements and the ways in which they have been composed will be examined. This will be done in an attempt to understand these combinations and the principles lying behind their creation. Comparisons with standard Minoan fantastic creatures will be made and the subject of the place the Zakros ‘creatures’ held in the metaphysical world of the Minoans will be addressed.

Carolyn C. ASLAN & Magda PIENIAŹEK

Heroic Past, Memory and Ritual at Troy

Troy is a place where archaeology and legend meet. Despite the importance of Troy in Greek religion and myth, very little has been known about the local religious practices at the site in the Late Bronze or Iron Ages. New research has now identified a Late Bronze Age cult building (Troy VIIa phase). Moreover, the ruins of this building were still remembered as a sacred location during the Protogeometric phase, and later inhabitants built their Geometric period temple in this same location. This evidence not only increases our knowledge of religious practices at Troy, but also raises questions about the degree of continuity and community memory at the site from the Bronze to Iron Age.

The focus of this paper is a district of the lower town just outside the LBA fortification wall on the western side of the site. This area has been known as the Greek and Roman *West Sanctuary* and its religious significance in the Archaic through Roman periods was first documented by Carl Blegen's team in the 1930's. New excavations by the Tübingen/Cincinnati team in the 1990's to early 2000's show that the special character of this location began much earlier in the Bronze Age. It is likely that this area first served as an elite cemetery in the time of the Troy VI Early phase. In the Troy VIIa phase the so-called 'Terrace House' was erected. The building has a megaron style plan with a porch, main room, and at least two small back rooms. Pithos storerooms may have been located along the sides, at least in the first phase. Although this building was originally interpreted as an elite house, further study of the finds have suggested a religious function, partly on the basis of comparison with Aegean cult buildings. The Terrace House contained the largest concentration of Late Bronze Age small finds at Troy including jewellery made of precious stones and metals, weapons and metal tools, numerous glass and faience beads, a ceramic bull rhyton, ceramic fenestrated stands, and also a standing male figurine made of bronze. It is noteworthy that the closest comparanda both for the plan and for the finds are with Aegean shrines, not Hittite.

The fact that a significant cult building was erected outside the citadel and far from the main representative gates raises a question about the reason for such a locality. It is possible that there was an association between the cult building and the 'ancestral graves' found in the nearby vicinity dating to the Middle Bronze Age (Troy VI Early phase). Not only the memory, but also graves that may have been discovered or destroyed when the monumental fortifications of the Late Bronze Age were constructed in this area could have built a connection between the Middle Bronze Age past and the ideology of the 13th century.

The Terrace House was destroyed at the end of the Late Bronze Age (Troy VIIa phase), and remained a ruin through the Troy VIIb1-2 phases. Despite its ruined state, people began once again to hold rituals in or near the building in the Protogeometric period. Pits and deposits containing burnt bones, fenestrated stands, pronged ceramic objects, cups, kraters, and cooking vessels were found in and around the building. Eventually in the Geometric period, a new cult building was built on this spot, partially reusing the Late Bronze Age stone foundations. It is likely that the Protogeometric and Geometric inhabitants were aware of the earlier function of the Terrace House, and were deliberately referencing the past. It cannot be definitely determined whether or not there was true religious continuity, or rather just a memory of a sacred location and a desire to connect with a heroic past.

Emilia BANOU & Brent DAVIS

The Symbolism of the Scorpion in Minoan Religion: a Cosmological Approach on the Basis of Votive Offerings from the Peak Sanctuary at Ayios Yeoryios sto Vouno, Kythera

Among the various votives from the Minoan peak sanctuary at Ayios Yeoryios sto Vouno, Kythera, are five scorpion figurines, one of bronze and four of clay. These finds constitute a peculiarity of the Kytherean peak sanctuary and at the same time a *unicum* among Minoan religious dedications.

The material, size and quality of the bronze figurine point to its significance as a religious symbol *per se*, and not, for example, as an attribute of a deity. The fact that, despite the heavy disturbance of the site, the four clay scorpion figurines were found close together, and not far away from the bronze one as well, also points to their special placement within the sanctuary.

The overseas character of the sanctuary is implied both by its natural setting, on the maritime crossroads of the southern Aegean, with a panoramic view as far as Crete, Melos, and the mainland; and by special categories of finds, like the great number of bronze votives offered by visitors very probably engaged in metal trade, and the building models, perhaps invocations for protection at sea and for a safe return home.

Starting from the special connection between the scorpion and the Kytheran peak sanctuary suggested by the evidence, this paper discusses the possible symbolic meaning of the scorpion in Minoan religion from a cosmological point of view. It seeks to investigate the significance of Scorpius as an old and important constellation known from at least the 3rd millennium BC to ancient Near Eastern civilizations, with which the Minoans maintained regular contact during the Palatial period. Without overlooking the magical significance of the scorpion, as suggested by its representation mainly on amulets and seals in Minoan Crete and elsewhere in the ancient world, the paper focuses on some distinctive traits of Scorpius produced by its position in the Bronze Age sky, and on the possible implications of these traits for Minoan religious beliefs.

Observation of celestial bodies was a primary tool for reckoning time, creating calendars, and regulating human activities such as agriculture and navigation. Unlike most other constellations of ancient origin, Scorpius looks very much like its namesake, no doubt a primary reason for its early identification with the scorpion. In addition, Scorpius is one of the most conspicuous constellations in the northern summer sky, with its brightest star, Antares (= *anti-Ares*, 'Rival of Ares', because of its reddish hue; also, *Cor Scorpii*, 'Heart of the Scorpion') being easily identifiable.

Indeed, if Antares is above the horizon at sunset, it is one of the first stars to emerge from the twilight, making it a primary navigational aid. For people throughout the Bronze Age Aegean, Antares appeared at sunset only between the spring and autumn equinoxes, a period roughly coinciding with the sailing season; thus in the Bronze Age, Antares was visible from the beginning of every evening during the sailing season, but not during the rest of the year.

Under such circumstances, it is easy to see how Antares (and thus Scorpius) might come to be associated with sailing. As a navigational aid, Scorpius would then have been especially important to people crossing the sea, like many of the visitors to the peak sanctuary at Ayios Yeoryios; thus the scorpion figurines may have been thank-offerings or invocations of divine protection for a safe journey, especially in the dangerous waters around Cape Maleas. For such visitors, the notion that these figurines served as dedications for protection against scorpions is hardly credible.

Furthermore: in the Bronze Age, Venus moved through Scorpius each year during a period beginning several weeks before the end of the sailing season. The importance of Venus is attested very early in the Near East, where it is associated from the 3rd millennium BC with Ishtar, a primary Akkadian deity of whom many goddesses in the ancient world were viewed as counterparts, including Isis, Astarte and Aphrodite.

The scorpion was one of Ishtar's main symbols, and was also associated with Isis in the 2nd millennium BC in ancient Egypt. In later times, one of the two important celebrations dedicated to Isis was *Ploiafesía*, during which model boats were thrown into the sea to celebrate the beginning of the sailing season.

Though no connection between Aphrodite and the scorpion is known from the ancient sources, her connection with the sea is reflected in the myth of her birth and in her early association with islands lying in the open sea and on important maritime routes, such as Cyprus and Kythera, as well as in her epithets as *Ενπλοία* and *Λιμενία*. On Kythera, she was characteristically worshipped as *Ουρανία*.

The fact that Aphrodite, as a personification of Venus (along with her counterpart Isis) was, among others, associated with sailing, reflects the importance of Venus for navigation; and the same may hold true for the association between her counterpart, Ishtar, and the scorpion, given the special celestial connection between Venus and Scorpius described above.

It is reasonable to assume that the Minoans – though not necessarily associating the scorpion with a particular deity – were aware of such notions during the period of their greatest expansion in the eastern Mediterranean, and that the scorpion votives at Ayios Yeoryios peak sanctuary on Kythera represent dedicants' thanks for, or hope of, a safe journey by sea.

Katrin BERNHARDT

Absent Mycenaean? On the Mycenaean Figurines and their Imitations on Crete in LM IIIA-B

A strong Mycenaean presence has been suggested by some scholars for Crete already from LM II onwards. In LM IIIA Mycenaean influence become recognizable not only in considerable amount of Mycenaean pottery imports, but also through adoptions of Mycenaean pottery shapes and motives and Mycenaean inspired architecture at least at a handful of sites. In contrast, we have rather meager evidences of Mycenaean figurines on Crete for the LM IIIA-B period despite their contemporaneous abundance on the mainland.

At the moment 59 fragments can be assigned to figurines of mainland type, either imported or imitated. I will present an overview of the regional and chronological distribution of these figurines of LM IIIA-B date and their find contexts. Although a lot of the later are lost due to the bad documentation of old excavations, where the ritual behavior can be reconstructed, it seems to be exactly the same as on the mainland with depositions around hearths and near entrances. Furthermore, the amount of Mycenaean figurines in graves on Crete seems to equal the relation of figurines between settlements and necropolis on the mainland. Both results point to a shared underlying belief and make Mycenaean figurines a fairly good marker of ethnicity on Crete.

Nevertheless, the small amount of them suggests that they played a minor role in a mainly Minoan dominated ritual landscape and raises a rather uncomfortable question: Do we have to conclude from this evidence that there were hardly any Mycenaean on Crete at this time?

Philip P. BETANCOURT, Thomas M. BROGAN & Vili APOSTOLAKOU

Evidence for Ritual at a MM IIB Dyeing Workshop at Pefka, Crete

Ancient processes that involved the transformation of one material into another were often accompanied by ritual practices. Rituals have been found to be associated with several classes of workshop, including glassmaking and metallurgy. This situation appears to be the case with a MM IIB workshop engaged in manufacturing purple dye and probably other organic colors at Alatzomouri-Pefka in East Crete. In addition to the evidence for the manufacture of dyes and the dyeing of fibers, recent excavations have also yielded a large number of offering stands and other specialized ritual pottery including a rhyton and other objects. The offering stands are especially interesting. They consist of shallow bowls supported on three legs with additions inside them that range from actual small clay cups to circular cup-like rings to circular indentations as if the additions are sometimes actual objects and sometimes symbolic substitutions. All of the offering stands are heavily burned in the interior but not on the exterior.

Fritz BLAKOLMER

Hierarchy and Symbolic Meaning of Animals and Mythical Creatures in the Aegean Bronze Age

In the Aegean Bronze Age, animals in seal images are shown to a large extent in a non-realistic, abstract, symbolic and mythical context, be it a griffin attacking a bull or a lion seizing a Cretan wild-goat. Consequently, endemic animals, exotic beasts and hybrid creatures were perceived in close relation to each other. Although neither the archaeo(zoo)logical records nor the written evidence give us specific information on the ideological and mythological significance of wild, exotic or hybrid beings, Minoan and Mycenaean iconography constitutes an excellent basis for a closer investigation of this important part of the 'metaphysical' realm of Aegean Bronze Age societies. Although, nowadays, the iconography of different types of animals and mythological creatures is fairly well defined, there has never been made an attempt to study the iconological relationship and meaning of these second-order beings in a systematical way. This may be partly due to the fact that they are hitherto rather overshadowed by our search for images of deities.

By a contextual and statistical analysis of iconographical scenes in Aegean seal glyptic as well as in other artistic media, several questions will be addressed: Which creatures were interchangeable in their iconological perception and which ones possessed a distinct meaning in Aegean iconography? Can we observe any basic difference in the iconographical contexts of animals endemic in the Aegean and creatures 'imported' from the Near East such as the Ta-wrt demon, the 'Minoan dragon', the monkey and possibly also the lion? Is it possible to define a specific order of precedence on the basis of the abundant scenes of animal attack? Which animals were linked most closely to human figures? Which animals and hybrid creatures were associated most often with divine figures? And what was the role of the 'Minoan genius' who obviously had a very specific position in the complex interrelationship of deities, humans, animals and mythological creatures? Is there any chronological development discernible in Minoan and Mycenaean images of animals and mythical creatures? Can we define an ideological hierarchy of gods, hybrid creatures, wild beasts and domesticated animals – and what was the position of human beings in this 'metaphysical' mindset?

Tina BOLOTI

A ‘Knot’-bearing(?) Minoan Genius from Pylos. Contribution to the Cloth/Clothing Offering Imagery of the Aegean Late Bronze Age

“In the interpretation of early religious iconography ‘Cherchez le monstre’ can be a useful first step” (Colin Renfrew, *The Archaeology of Cult: The Sanctuary at Phylakopi*, 1985, 24).

The fresco fragment 40 H ne from Pylos, ascribed by M. Lang to “a woman standing left”¹, it was soon after its publication attributed by M. Gill to a “Minoan Genius”². Despite their disagreement, they argued unanimously that the figure carries a piece of cloth/clothing, a “yellow skirt” according to Lang and a “knot- or cuirass” according to Gill; both interpretations were adopted by S. Immerwahr, who referred to it as “a sacral knot, or a flounced skirt”³. The motif of a ‘knot or skirt’-bearing Genius, although not inconsistent with the latter’s nature, as a divine attendant carrying animals, ewers or poles, it has so far no iconographic parallel. In this paper, we focus anew on the fresco fragment of the Genius from Pylos, by proposing, for the first time, a reconstruction of it, as it actually amplifies the iconographic range of scenes related to the ritual offering of cloth/clothing in the Aegean Late Bronze Age. In conjunction with this ritual practice, attested both by Linear B and iconographical evidence, we aim at discussing the ambiguity connected with the ‘knot’ and ‘skirt’ depictions in the Aegean art and the relevant problems of interpretation.

¹ M. L. LANG, *The Palace of Nestor at Pylos in Western Messenia II: The Frescoes*, Princeton 1969, 79.

² M. A. V. GILL, “Apropos the Minoan Genius”, *AJA* 74 (1970), 404-406.

³ S. A. IMMERWAHR, *Aegean Painting in the Bronze Age*, University Park 1990, Py No. 2, 196.

Elisabetta BORGNA & Andreas VORDOS

Construction of Memory and the Making of a Ritual Landscape: the Role of Gods and Ancestors at the Trapeza of Aigion, Achaea, at the LBA-EIA Transition

In this paper some fresh results of the ongoing excavations at the Trapeza site, ca 7 km south of Aigion will be presented. These preliminary results, by attesting the early occupation of the area at the LBA-EIA transition, illuminate significant aspects concerning religious ideology, beliefs and ritual behaviours of a community aiming at the construction of a legitimizing past. The making of a ritual landscape, which was to have its acme in the Late Archaic period with the foundation of a monumental temple, seems to have been inspired in earlier times by the meaningful world of the ancestors, as emerges from the evidence of the occupation and use of the Mycenaean cemetery on the Trapeza's SW slope. Here the newly discovered tombs show that at the very end of the Late Bronze Age some members of the local community displayed a high social status. The same funerary area seems to have been continuously occupied for ritual purposes well into the EIA, as offerings at the tombs clearly show just at the same time when religious practices on the summit of the Trapeza mark the inception of the cult of a powerful goddess.

Christos BOULOTIS

Sacral Knot, Eight-Figured Shield and the ‘Hidden Sword’ on the Vapheio Signet-ring CMS I, No. 219: a Contribution to the Minoan-Mycenaean Religious Symbolism

The golden signet ring CMS I, No. 219 from the Vapheio tholos tomb is undoubtedly one of the most discussed Minoan-Mycenaean rings mainly on account of the representations of a vegetation ritual at a hypethral sanctuary. In the present contribution, we shall re-examine it, by focusing our attention on a group of religious objects placed opposite the sacral tree presumably as integral elements of this particular ritual. These consist of the eight-figured shield and the ‘sacral knot’ on it; however the subsequent iconographic analysis will reveal that, in addition to these, there was a third object of great iconographic and hence of major conceptual importance, which has, so far, eluded the attention of scholars: almost hidden behind the shield and the ‘sacral knot’ there is a sword (!) standing upright, whose only visible parts are the pommel of the hilt and the tassel which decorated the lower end of the scabbard.

On the basis of these new data I have undertaken a thorough investigation of the period’s themes – both narrative and emblematic. What emerges from this is that the sacral symbolism prevailed and spread at almost the same period as the Vapheio ring, which consisted mainly of the ‘sacral knot’, the eight-figured shield and the sword, in various combinations among themselves and with other types of weapons and sacral symbols (double axe, quiver, gorgoneion, squill).

But what could the presence of weapons mean in a vegetation context? Should they be considered to be attributes of a divinity or symbols of upper class members involved in various ceremonies? What is their relationship with the ‘warrior goddess’? Were armours worshipped in the Minoan-Mycenaean world? To what extent do their representations reveal their possessors’ identity and status? These and similar questions will broaden the field of our speculations.

Anne P. CHAPIN

Mycenaean Mythologies in the Making: the Frescoes of Pylos Hall 64 and the Mycenaean Megaron

Efforts to identify individuals in the art of the Aegean Bronze Age, whether heroes or kings or even gods, have long been frustrated by the persistent anonymity of the art form: figures are unlabelled, generic faces lack recognizable portrait features, and costumes lack distinctive features or attributes. The plain backgrounds of many frescoes dating to the Mycenaean era even deny a description of place. Such is the inscrutability of the art that no prehistoric image can be securely associated with surviving tales from the age of heroes, as recounted by Homer and other Greek authors. Indeed, the question has become as to whether the myths – the stories – of Aegean prehistory can be identified at all in the surviving art. This study addresses these questions by taking a new look at warrior frescoes from Hall 64 at Pylos and the megaron of Mycenae. It argues that these compositions, while not recognizable as specific legends or myths known from historical sources, nevertheless convey complex visual messages corresponding to a developing ideology that Mycenaean elites presented about themselves. These visual narratives, developed 500 years before Homer, functioned (like later legends and myths) to frame and define the various identities of Mycenaean Greeks within their wider world.

Two compositions are investigated. Hall 64 of Pylos, was embellished with a complex fresco program with hounds, a naval scene, and a frieze of armed warriors, horse-drawn chariots, and battle scenes. The best-preserved fragments depict a fierce fight between Mycenaean warriors identified by boar's tusk helmets and 'barbarians' distinguished by their animal (sheep) skin clothing. Pairs of figures engage in single combat reminiscent of Homeric battle. This fresco, as argued by Jack Davis and John Bennett, illustrates how the Mycenaean warriors of Pylos defined themselves as the antithesis of a more primitive 'other', to be contrasted and distinguished from themselves. But as Mabel Lang observed, it is unlikely that real opponents of the Mycenaean warriors would enter battle without armor, clad only in animal skins. It is suggested here that this scene represents not a contemporary conflict of the Late Bronze Age, but rather, a legendary battle of the Mycenaean warriors' own distant, imagined past. Like later tales of battles with primitive barbarians, such a visual narrative would celebrate Mycenaean achievements – military strength, heroic valor, and the triumph of Mycenaean civilization – just as it defined the current rulers of Pylos as the rightful heirs of that tradition.

At Mycenae, the mural wall paintings of the megaron are also fragmentary and burned. They comprise several disconnected sections of a three-foot high frieze which probably ran around the four walls of the Throne Room. Preserved fragments depict horses, chariots, grooms, and warriors. The Falling Warrior vignette, which is frequently reproduced but poorly preserved, shows a large-scale warrior falling before an architectural façade of Aegean palatial character. The warrior's large scale suggests his narrative significance, while his tunic and greaves characterize him as Mycenaean. Is he a fallen hero, valiant defender of an Aegean city? Or a defeated enemy? Either scenario suggests the fresco presents a tale of Mycenaean-on-Mycenaean conflict. Whether or not such an event ever occurred as depicted is secondary to the fresco's visual power, since the story has become heroic in the telling. It seems likely, then, that the ruler of Mycenae surrounded his seat of power with images of Mycenae's military strength: warriors, chariots, and an epic battle for an Aegean city.

Together, the artistic programs of these two megarons suggest that there is no need to scrutinize later myth and legend for the stories the Mycenaean warriors told about themselves. To

the contrary, the artistic evidence of Mycenaean wall painting suggests that palatial elites at Pylos and Mycenae proclaimed an official ideology of military aggression and victory through the example of their own heroic past. Whether pictured as the bringers of civilization to primitive barbarians, or valiant warrior heroes, Mycenaean elites told their own stories, even if the specific words are now lost.

Dora CONSTANTINIDIS

Proximity Analysis of Metaphysical Aegean Ritual Spaces during the Bronze Age

Land or sea access but also barriers impacted Aegean Bronze Age societies: politically, culturally and even ritually. Clearly identified ritual practice spaces can be interpreted in relation to their proximity to features of both land *and* sea. A number of spatial factors can be investigated ranging from distances to and between various sanctuary types, along with proximity and orientation to significant land and seascape markers. Space, location and orientation may have inadvertently influenced various rituals across the Bronze Age Aegean. By contrasting Minoan, Cycladic and Mycenaean known places of ritual, spatial awareness of ritually significant places may lead to a deeper understanding of those cultures that made those spatial decisions and why. It is possible that geographical constraints alone may have ultimately influenced ritual locations. However a more holistic analysis of ritually significant locations incorporating both their artefacts and architecture in relation to their surrounding environment is also necessary. For instance a rocky seashore may have led to different ritual spaces being dedicated around it as opposed to a sandy sea shore with a well protected harbour. Relatively fertile fields may have given rise to different ritual spaces as opposed to those facing or on mountain peaks.

Furthermore ritual practices are generally spatially oriented. People can either orient themselves or even their built environment to comply with their perceived metaphysical world. Connections to a more metaphysical presence during the Aegean Bronze Age are evident in the location of peak sanctuaries and the settlements below. A GIS can efficiently analyse distances and orientation to determine if there are any underlying patterns of location choices. Spatial theory is proposed as a methodological framework by which we can more closely investigate possible land and seascape features that may have been the focus underlying the choice of locating ritual spaces and designing the associated artefacts and architecture that accompanied those spaces. It is proposed that a GIS is used to catalogue identified ritual spaces in relation to features on the land and sea but also to constellations in the sky that may have led to certain orientation of ritual spaces. Spatial theory can be used to analyse ritually significant locations and their relationship to their associated settlements whether within or without them and their location in proximity to other ritual spaces. A more comprehensive analysis is also needed whereby the orientation of building features such as courts, horns of consecration, and pillar crypts for the living are considered in conjunction with tombs for the dead. In order to seek out a deeper understanding of peoples metaphysical relationship with their ritual spaces both for their lives and in their death any possible patterns of ritual practices scattered across the land and in the case of the Aegean in relationship with the sea as well need to be spatially interpreted.

Sam CROOKS, Caroline TULLY & Louise HITCHCOCK

Numinous Tree and Stone: Re-animating the Minoan Landscape

Iconographic scenes of inferred cultic activity, including the hugging or leaning upon of aniconic stones and the apparent appearance of epiphanic figures in proximity to trees, are suggestive of an animistic conception of the natural world. Architectonic evocations of the numinous sacred landscape, through iconographic representation, cultic paraphernalia, palatial architectural features, extant baetyls and peak sanctuaries, reflect strategies of elite status legitimisation through advertisement of relational associations with landscape.

Scenes of epiphanic ritual depicted within apparently natural settings – amongst trees and stones free from architectural elaboration – are suggestive of elite interaction with perceived numinous elements within the landscape, while images of envisioned epiphany imply direct communication between human ritual actors and the animate landscape, achieved through interaction with tree or stone.

Stepped cult structures such as shrines and openwork platforms, which may be sat upon by women or surmounted by trees, may have symbolised mountains and facilitated the replication of peak sanctuary ritual in an architecturally elaborated, possibly urban, setting. Interaction with baetyls may appropriate qualities of solidity and permanence, while also enhancing claims to status and authority through evoking ancestor veneration. Evidence of feasting in association with baetyls may suggest their function within programs of social cohesion and the naturalisation of hierarchy in which elites expressed status and generated ritual indebtedness through conspicuous generosity and display.

These elements of the Minoan sacred landscape will here be analysed through the lens of animism. In contrast with the influential primitivist evolutionary epistemology expounded by the Victorian comparative ethnologists, animism drawn from cultural anthropology posits a relational epistemology, in which a reflexive relatedness exists between people and the natural environment, which is perceived as being sentient. Rather than providing inert backdrops to ritual performance, the landscape is here reconfigured as sentient and numinous, functioning as a politicised, active agent in the enactment of power.

Janice L. CROWLEY

**In the Air Here or from the World Beyond?
Enigmatic Symbols of the Late Bronze Age Aegean**

Since the beginning of the excavations which brought to light the civilisations of the Bronze Age Aegean, the symbols of their peoples have been noted and discussed. The absence of translated texts which refer to the symbols and to art subject matter in general denies the scholar ease of describing and interpreting. Thus, after more than a century of study, we are still in the infancy of our understanding. We are regularly left with using inverted commas, as with 'horns of consecration' and 'incurved altar', to show that we are not even sure of the exact nature of the symbols let alone what they mean. This is particularly so with a series of symbols used in the designs on gold signet ring bezels of the Late Bronze Age, symbols which appear to be depicted in the air above or near human figures. Some can be named, like the sun, crescent moon and butterfly, but dispute rages about others, like the 'chrysalis' and the 'ear of grain'. However, it is now possible to take their identification and interpretation further by studying closely newly excavated and recently published seals and sealings and by re-examining and comparing the rings we have known for so long. This paper provides a new assessment of these enigmatic symbols, in some cases proposing more accurate names and in all cases proposing meanings in keeping with our expanded knowledge of Aegean societies.

When all the discrete images in the top sections of the signet ring designs are addressed they are found to be of two types. There are the images that could legitimately claim to be in the correct position in the air above or near the human figures because they can actually be there in the real world and can be seen by humans. These are the celestial bodies like the sun and moon and flying creatures like the birds and butterflies. Then there are the images that cannot actually be in the air above the human figures in the real world but are placed there in the design as symbols of 'the other'. These are the enigmatic shapes like the 'chrysalis' and 'ear of grain' and the special case of the small human figures.

The paper discusses each of the symbols in the two types in detail, some 18 symbols plus the small human figures. The symbols knowable in the real world are discussed under the headings celestial signs and flying messengers and the other-worldly symbols are discussed as hovering symbols and figures arriving on high. Where new names are given to the symbols to reflect more closely their actual nature and role, the emphasis is on including the precise detail of the rendition. Particular attention is given to the ten enigmatic shapes which have been called 'floating symbols' but are here termed hovering symbols. The description, hovering, is preferred since floating can be construed as a rather aimless action at the whim of the wind while hovering is a movement organized with intent.

The detailed description and revised nomenclature provides the basis for the interpretation of the symbols. Comparison of the usages of the symbols and elucidation of their place in the wider iconography sharpens our understanding, dulled by long familiarity with the ring designs. The *In the Air* symbols provide a tantalising interface between the real world and the numinous. Their importance can hardly be overestimated.

Mary K. DABNEY

Mycenaean Funerary Processions as Shared Ritual Experiences

In this paper landscape analysis is used to investigate Mycenaean funerary processions as shared ritual experiences. Topographical features along routes between settlements and their extramural cemeteries at Mycenae, Prosymna, Berbati, Zygouries, Nemea, Aidonia, and Asine are examined. Similarities in topographical features, such as elevation changes, direction changes, and landmark views, are discussed. The ways in which these similarities create common experiences for funerary procession participants at different sites are used to reconstruct the shared ritual experience of Mycenaean funerary processions. Finally these funerary processions are compared to processions and mortuary scenes depicted in Mycenaean art. This comparison contributes to our understanding of processions as a unifying experience in Mycenaean ritual practices.

Anna Lucia D'AGATA, Sara DE ANGELIS & Sabina CALDERONE

Funerals of Late Minoan III Crete: Ritual Acts, Special Vessels and Political Affiliations in the 14th and 13th Century BC

Ritual acts and symbolic actions, with their dense palimpsest of meanings, are preserved in material remains which convey the memory of these events down the centuries. The more special the event, the greater our chance of identifying it in the archaeological record. The analysis of *ceramics* in ritual contexts can provide indications for reconstructing political and social dynamics. The first step is to identify the function of the individual vases in their original context; then stylistic analysis can illustrate the strategies of social communication and ideological manipulation. In this respect funerary depositions, with their rich ceramic assemblages, represent a prime investigative context.

Although the architectonic evidence connected with LM III tombs, the appearance of *burials with bronzes*, and the dissemination throughout Crete of burial habits of Knossian derivation, have been subjected to numerous studies, the funerary rituals documented in the island in the 14th and 13th century BC have never been systematically analysed. This paper reflects an on-going project at ISMA (CNR, Roma), coordinated by Anna Lucia D'Agata, designed to fill this gap, focusing on regional and micro-regional perspectives.

Among the ritual actions that can be identified inside the tombs, to date attention has been paid almost exclusively to those based on the use of the rhyton, while other shapes associated with the manipulation of liquids have been largely ignored. For this conference we want to reconstruct such actions so as to investigate the mechanisms by which a practice of high social relevance was shaped, reproduced and also transformed over time. In addition our enquiry should clarify the role that such factors as local traditions, cultural affiliations and interactions played in the adoption and dissemination of these actions. Lastly, such an analysis can reveal culturally and politically significant differences in the material culture adopted and developed by Cretan communities in the heterogeneous political landscape that the island experienced while it was part of the Mycenaean state systems.

Fanouria DAKORONIA**Sacrifice on Board**

An unexpected unique find collected at Kynos is a sherd of a pictorial crater of the LH IIC middle period according to its context.

Distinguished are the prow and deck of a war ship of the type known already from Kynos again, namely from the famous sea-battle crater.

Upon deck a fully armed warrior carrying a shield of 'Hittite type' and a long spear is standing at the left while another person kneeling and holding a double axe is trying to sacrifice a goat.

We have to do with a representation of an action so far not acquainted among the topics either of Minoan or Mycenaean iconography and it will be discussed the character of the scene concerning not only the meaning but also the provenance, the workshop of the vase, since for the first time we deal with a pictorial vase of 'white ware' fabric.

Veronika DUBCOVÁ

Divine Power from Abroad: Some New Thoughts about the Foreign Influences on the Aegean Bronze Age Religious Iconography

The universally acknowledged presence of foreign motifs in the Aegean Bronze Age iconography and its close relationship with the contemporary cultures builds a legitimate basis for numerous attempts of reconstructing various areas of its belief systems. The obvious similarities between the iconographic motifs can be very tempting, but we should keep in mind, that many of them have rather symbolic character and their meaning can vary with every culture and ideology, from which it originates.

A detailed analysis of selected older or newly discovered motifs sheds some new light on the character of their adoption and adaptation by the Aegeans. The best example of such an adaptation and all the connected visual and functional changes is presented by the well-known Ta-wrt demon, originally inspired by a minor Egyptian deity. We can observe this kind of changes also by a number of other motifs, bearing similarities with the original Egyptian Bes and Hathor or Mesopotamian naked goddesses. Through easily transportable media such as seals, magic wands, amulets or jewellery, they were widely spread in the whole eastern Mediterranean. Their appearance in the Aegean varies from random occurrence to their firm incorporation into the iconographic system. Altogether, these motifs show some common features and thus preferences such as an apotropaic, protective and magic-erotic character and connections with fertility and vegetation. But, the iconography itself gives us only very little hints at their connection with the more complex ideology, which may have been behind all the preserved depictions, architectural installations or cult activities. All these observations should be taken into consideration by the reconstruction of ideology, mythology or theological profiles of the gods.

Birgitta EDER**Religious Ideology in Space: Mycenaean Symbols in Action**

With the beginning of the period of the Shaft Graves unequaled quantities of foreign materials arrived on the Greek Mainland which were employed to shape the cultural identity of Mycenaean Greece. Raw materials such as ivory, blue glass and semi-precious stones were imported from the Near East, and with the rise of the palaces on the Greek mainland the palatial industries started to transform precious foreign materials into jewelry. Evidence for processing and working of imported raw materials comes mainly from the palaces and their immediate surroundings. While much of the production seems to have remained within the immediate ambit of the palaces, Mycenaean glass relief beads apparently were produced by the palatial industries and subsequently dispersed beyond the palaces.

Mycenaean glass relief beads have been found in thousands all over Greece and in the Aegean and probably arrived at all levels of society, although in varying quantities. They come in a variety of motifs, drawing however on a common and apparently repetitive repertoire of designs known also from figurative illustrations on wall-paintings, reliefs, signet rings and seals. These motifs include altars, libation jugs and figure-of-eight shields with clear religious connotations as well as floral designs which can be identified with flowers used during festivals and ritual ceremonies. Following H. Hughes-Brock I suggest that all these motifs were not merely decorative, but meaningful and intended to convey an ideologically charged message.

Mycenaean glass relief beads thus materialized ideology and allowed the distribution of cognitive messages via the jewelry's motifs. Although the specific components of the Mycenaean messages will remain unknown to us, they would have unfolded through acts of performance on various levels of Mycenaean society. These may include political ceremonies and religious practices as well as burial rituals connected with death and afterlife.

Glass could be designed and cast and by this process charged with messages. As the palaces were responsible for the production of glass jewelry they will have exercised an influence on the range of messages conveyed. As glass jewelry was small, light and therefore highly mobile it offered the possibility to reach a wide group of the population far beyond the immediate palatial environment. Jewelry designed by the palaces was one of the means by which Mycenaean palaces could transport palatial ideology to people in a distance. The distribution of these attractive glass items with figurative designs offered the opportunity to exercise palatial influence on people in a distance and ask for benefits and tributes in return.

While the mobility of the emblems of a palatial ideology played a significant part in the dissemination of ideas into the geography of Mycenaean Greece, the creation of Mycenaean type figurines with LH IIB/IIIA1 may represent something like a complementary palatial strategy to promote a designed religious ideology and thus exercise ideological influence over larger parts of the population. Growing evidence for Mycenaean sanctuaries which were located in the countryside beyond the palaces will be viewed in this context.

Jonathan M. FLOOD

The Evolution of Water Shrines and Symbolism during the Cretan Bronze Age

This paper charts the evolution of water shrines and water symbolism on Crete over the course of the Bronze Age. The dark, watery bowels of the island's many caves were established as places of pilgrimage and reverence as early as the Neolithic, but over time water shrines, water ritual, and water symbolism grew in complexity, distribution, and function. The Middle Minoan II Period witnessed the creation of the first spring-centric shrines, like that at Zou and the better-known Cretan cult site of Syme. The creation of the island's first true water shrines coincides with the arrival of the Egyptian deity Tawaret to Crete, a goddess intimately linked to fertility. The Minoans quickly transformed the appearance of Tawaret upon her arrival, removing its breasts and adding a libation vase or ewer to the figures hands. This transformation in appearance is indicative of a change in function and in the symbolic meaning of the deity, from general fertility to a more specialized association with freshwater and water quantity. The integration of water shrines and symbolism into the Cretan landscape, architecture (religious, domestic, and political), iconography, religion, and material culture took a great leap forward during the Neopalatial period. During this time construction expanded around the water shrines at Syme and Zou, and new water shrines were created in other parts of the island. Water shrines and features were then integrated into ceremonial architecture. It was at this time that Minoans planned and erected the large ceremonial building on Mochlos centered on an impluvium that dominated the main hall of the construction. A large triangular kernos chiseled from purple schist was installed along the southern edge of the basin. Symbolically the Mochlos impluvium links the divine properties of the most precious of all physical substances, freshwater, with the established religious tradition at that time. Water management features were also integrated into elite architecture at sites like Kato Zakros and Knossos during the Neopalatial period. This display of freshwater in elite contexts indicates physically and symbolically that the elites were both associated with water availability and with its control. Depictions of the syncretized Tawaret also increased in the Neopalatial period. The paper then attempts to explain the crescendo of water shrines and symbolism on Crete by first placing the Minoan features within the greater cult and religious movements taking place around the eastern Mediterranean basin, and then by understanding the evolution of water ritual on Crete within its appropriate climate context. The paper concludes with an analysis of the geochemical variables – water chemistry and geology – at several sacred landscapes in order to determine if the physical and chemical properties of water from these places correlate with the sites perceived metaphysical function.

Karen Polinger FOSTER

Animal Hybrids, Masks, and Masques in Aegean Ritual

At the PHYSIS conference, I proposed that the rendering of fur and feathers, especially of the palatial bestiary, served as important emblematic elements in Aegean art and thought. The parameters of METAPHYSIS offer a welcome opportunity to build on that work to investigate a subject that has hitherto received little systematic attention. This involves the dual, interdependent aspects of animal/human hybridity: on the one hand, the heterosomatic, that is, people shown costumed in particular kinds of fur and feathers, and on the other, the homosomatic, that is, furred and feathered creatures depicted performing human activities. In this paper, I suggest that both played significant roles in ritual animal masques that bridged the secular and sacred realms of the Aegean Bronze Age world.

Florence GAIGNEROT-DRIESSEN

The Lady of the House: Trying to Define the Meaning and Role of Ritual Figures with Upraised Arms in Late Minoan III Crete

During LM IIIC, independent bench sanctuaries housing large feminine figures with upraised arms and their ritual equipment (kalathoi, snake tubes, and plaques) appear in newly founded Cretan sites such as Vronda, Chalasmenos, or Vasiliki Kephala. Evidence from a series of earlier ritual contexts found at Sissi, Malia, Kommos and other places on the island seems to indicate that these terracotta wheel made figures, traditionally considered as 'Goddesses', were a later addition to an already constituted ritual set that existed in LM IIIA-B. Moreover, the variation and absence of codification of the symbols associated with these figures make their interpretation as cult images doubtful. Their number within a single sanctuary combined with the poverty of their material and technology rather suggest that they were mere votive offerings.

The aim of this paper is to reconsider the meaning and role of the figures with upraised arms in the broader context of social and political transformations attested in LM IIIC Crete. From the study of settlement patterns, urbanism, residential architecture, and funerary practices observed on Crete during this period, the existence of larger social groups can be shown. In this context, the remarkable standardization of cult in LM IIIC and the variety of the symbols characterizing the figures with upraised arms will be regarded as evidence for competition between the different social groups. The emblematic role of these figures, in the perspective of a House society, is explored. From a diachronic point of view, their role in defining and representing social and political structures is also suggested.

Chrysanthi GALLOU

***‘ἀμενηνά κάρηνα’* or Actors in Mycenaean Metaphysics? The Role of the Skull and of Bodily Fragmentation in Mycenaean Ritual**

Bodily fragmentation with particular focus to the detachment of the head, formed part of a complex system of post-mortem rites and ancestor cults in prehistoric societies. In Neolithic Greece secondary burials or cremations entailing preferential selection of the skull have been mainly associated with enchainment practices. In Minoan Crete the ritual interference with the skeletal remains (with particular emphasis on the retention of the skull) in tombs and cemeteries, and the increasing evidence for the use and display of skulls and ‘specially curated skeletal remains’ in domestic contexts, have been taken to reflect the performance of an ancestor cult. On the mainland, the retention and/or removal of the skull is only occasionally attested in EH and MH (post)funerary contexts. On the other hand, headless skeletons and disembodied skulls appear more frequently in the Mycenaean mortuary record but still little research has focused on the religious and social ramifications of the practice. Thus, by bringing together the available evidence, the aim of this paper is two-fold; to address questions on the character, functions and symbolic meanings of LH ‘skull rituals’ and bodily fragmentation, and to offer insights into how these rituals might have been used to preserve community cohesion and to re-establish social identities and ancestral ties in Mycenaean society.

Mercourios GEORGIADIS

Symbolisms, Rituals and Religious Beliefs at the Peak Sanctuary of Leska on Minoan Kythera

The research conducted to the recently discovered peak sanctuary at Leska top, on Mt Mermigkari, has produced a more complex image for this type of sanctuary. Peak sanctuaries do not offer only liminality due to their location, but also a cosmological appreciation of the position of the individual within their surrounding world. Landscape appears to play a rather central role in the symbolisms of this sanctuary since on Mt Mermigkari a complex sacred landscape had been developed, including a burial ground, a sacred cave and a peak sanctuary. The proximity of these sites and their diverse character forms a unique Neopalatial sacred landscape for Kythera and one of the most complicated in the contemporary Aegean. The symbolic importance of intervisibility has been raised in a number of cases for the Cretan peak sanctuaries, but no convincing hypothesis has been proposed based on any evidence. However, in the case of Kythera the landscape position of the two peak sanctuaries, Leska and Ayios Yeoryios sto Vouno, provides a strong symbolic link between them through intervisibility. The material culture from Leska is equally important, suggesting the character of the rituals and beliefs associated with this particular sanctuary. The predominance of cups and the popularity of cooking vessels and jugs seem to support a strong case for feasting taking place at this sanctuary. Moreover, the lack of certain evidence, such as bones and fire/ashes, argue that certain taboos may have existed among the beliefs and practices related to this sacred site. Other types of finds were also placed as offerings in the sanctuary, such as pebbles, clay balls, pieces of chert, clay horns of consecration and an animal figurine, which provide further information regarding specific rituals and practices. There will also be a discussion on a special part of the peak sanctuary at Leska, which will be argued that it has acted as a 'baetyl' and rituals related to an epiphany have been taking place there. This locale is differentiated topographically within the sanctuary space, while a unique material assemblage has been associated with it, emphasizing its special character. Overall, an assessment and interpretation of the peak sanctuary at Leska will be offered aiming at understanding the symbolisms, rituals and beliefs that existed at this site. Finally, the evidence of the landscape and the material culture will be analysed and will form the basis for proposing the character of the deity worshipped at this peak sanctuary.

Stefanos GIMATZIDIS

The Tree of Life: the Materiality of a Ritual Symbol in Space and Time

The iconography of a tree or a similar motive standing between two antithetical human or animal figures was widely spread in the Near East and the Aegean during the 2nd and 1st millennium BC. This motive is usually regarded as borrowed from the Orient in the Aegean during the Bronze Age. In both regions it usually derives from contexts that clearly attest to its symbolic significance.

The biography of this symbol presents a good opportunity to explore the semiotics expressed through time by a particular iconography in different socio-political contexts and periods as well as the changes in its function through that time. More than that, its study has something new to add to our historical knowledge concerning the highly debated issue of continuity or discontinuity in Greek iconography from the Late Bronze to the Early Iron Age. The motive of the tree of life that was already familiar from frescos, seals, etc. during the Bronze Age in the Aegean disappeared in the aniconic period of the Early Iron Age and reappeared – exactly as several other motives did – during the Late Geometric and Archaic periods. At the same time, it was always present in the imperial and ritual iconography of the Orient.

The question arising is whether the appearance of this motive in the Aegean during the Late Geometric period is due to a long continuous tradition in the local iconography on materials other than pottery that did not survive or if it was borrowed anew from the Orient. Apart from that this paper will comparatively study the function of this symbol in the Orient and in the Aegean through time and will examine whether it was adopted or adapted in the Aegean. In other words, did it maintain the same connotations through its periods of use, did it serve similar purposes in both regions, and if so, to what degrees. More interesting is to see in which way its function altered in time through the entanglement with and among vigorously changing social agents in distant geographical contexts. A point of interest is the contrast in its use as a symbol of dominance in the imperial Assyrian iconography during the Early Iron Age to its appearance as a more or less decorative motive on Greek Late Geometric pottery.

Luca GIRELLA

Regional Cemetery Patterns, Aspects of Ritual and Changes in Funerary Practices between MM II and LM I on Crete

Being one of the main sources for the study of status relations, social structures and political dynamics of past societies, research on funerary data has been quite productive on Crete, especially for Prepalatial (EM I-MM IA) and Postpalatial (LM II-III) periods. However, not so much for the two 'palace periods' (MM IB-LM IB).

While the majority of information concerning Prepalatial Crete comes from burial and tomb data, in the following palatial periods, social and cultural aspects of Cretan communities are reflected more in the settlement data. Such a perspective has generated the assumption that funerals and mortuary rituals occupied only a marginal role in the palatial societies. Indeed, if one looks at Prepalatial Crete, the abundant mortuary record reveals a considerable investment of effort in the creation of major cemeteries, which also acted as a *social arena* for the communities. Afterwards, it seemed that funerary rituals and spaces were no longer important *arenas*, where social bonds were defined and negotiated. As a consequence, the later Protopalatial and Neopalatial funerary sphere remains almost completely in the darkness. There are several reasons for this but mainly the awkward dearth of data at disposal. However, three main questions remain still open: Are there significant changes in ritual and mortuary practices between the two palatial periods? Can the funerary evidence reflect major transformations in social complexity and elite power? Does the political transformation after the Protopalatial period generate different efforts and mobilization of groups in ceremonies and ritual activities in cemeteries?

Starting from the analysis of cemetery distribution and burial assemblages the paper will explore patterns of regionalism and diversity in funerary rituals during MM II, MM III and LM I. By paying attention to the active role and variation of few cemeteries in different landscapes, questions about political instability, isolation, and social composition and complexity of Cretan communities will be raised. Finally, this paper suggests that the essential difficulty in examining the record after the Prepalatial period resides in the fact that the creation of palatial structures generated an intensification of symbolic display (mostly in architecture, iconographies and craft production), which was not necessarily a sign of new emergent elites but a new code of communication to maintain elite group identity.

Ute GÜNDEL-MASCHEK

**Establishing the Minoan ‘Enthroned Goddess’ in the Neopalatial Period:
Imagery, Architecture, and Elitist Ambition**

The Neopalatial period was characterized by the introduction of many new features in architecture and imagery. The often-cited proliferation of the ‘palatial architectural style’ with its specific room types and design was matched by the emergence of a new pictorial language expressing its contents in a peculiar style and by means of a new pictorial repertoire. Among these new creations, the ‘enthroned goddess’ made her appearance, showing up within a range of pictorial contexts on gold rings and other objects of high quality as well as on the walls of rooms designed with elements of the ‘palatial architectural style’. Griffins, ‘half-rosettes’, biconcave bases and façade architecture variably served to characterize her as well as the location of her appearance, using prevalent pictorial formulas to symbolically express ideas and qualities associated with her. Furthermore, the ‘enthroned goddess’ rarely appears alone, but was usually socialized with members of the Minoan ‘elite’. This indicates that the motive behind these images was not the representation of the ‘goddess’ in her own right, but of elitist members interacting with her – a privilege exploited for elitist legitimization purposes?

At roughly the same time, the placing of the ‘enthroned goddess’ within the built environment of the Neopalatial period took two different forms: On the one hand, her pictorial appearance was executed on the walls behind *polythyra* to form the focal point for the performance of rituals (e.g. building Xesté 3 at Akrotiri). On the other hand, a revision of the architectural and stratigraphical evidence suggests that an ‘enthroned person’ was already now installed in the Throne Room at Knossos, thus providing a ‘real performance’ of a similar kind at the same time as the pictorial formula was introduced to imagery.

The aim of this paper is to elucidate the implications of this installation of the Minoan ‘enthroned goddess’ in the Neopalatial period. The focus will be laid on the symbolism of her pictorial setting, on her involvement into ritual performances and on the conclusions that can be drawn from the contemporary and systematic introduction of both an ‘enthroned person’ in the palace at Knossos and the pictorial proliferation of an ‘enthroned goddess’, thus linking the metaphysical realm to social and political differentiation in the real world.

Louise HITCHCOCK & Aren MAEIR

The Entanglement of Aegean Style Ritual Actions in Philistine Culture

This paper proposes to examine identity as a category is structured through processes of ritualized behavior, belief, and encounter with the 'Other', an approach that opposes the Cartesian duality of mind and body. Instead, it is influenced by the ideas of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, that human identity, including thought, is lived through the body as a practice of embodied experience and of Anthony Giddens, that there is a duality of structure that constrains and enables human behavior. To the extent that individuals are capable of changing their lives through manipulating the spatial organization of their culture, they are modifying their routines and transforming their identities. Thus, examining the habits orchestrated by architectural spaces and the ritualized use of objects with a clear archaeological context present the best sources of evidence for understanding the Aegean connections to Philistine identity. Behavior and belief can be interpreted through analyzing the spatial distribution of artifacts in their archaeological contexts such as courtyards and temples in order to reconstruct the daily routines of individuals living out their lives. These routines can then be compared to those of the Aegean, Cyprus and the Levant in order to identify similarities and differences, distinguishing the introduction of new social strategies, from the persistence of indigenous ones. Another consideration is continuity in the perseverance of Bronze Age routines and preferences in contrast to the transformation of Philistine culture through both unconscious and conscious changes in the formulation of their material culture. Such transformation emerged in the Iron Age as a process of preserving social memory, appropriation of various artifacts and social practices, entanglement of foreign and local objects and uses of those objects, and encounters with alterity. Symbolic items and ritual behaviors to be considered in this paper include the triton shell and double axe, curation practices, use of open spaces, and architectural arrangements. This approach to Philistine identity treats it as an outcome of cultural entanglement and privileges cultural preferences and choices over a search for origins.

Barbara HOREJS & Alfred GALIK

The Role of Rituals for the Formation of Identities in an EBA Metal Production Centre in Western Anatolia

The focus of this paper is a process of transformation in societies at the dawn of the Early Bronze Age and the role of rituals in approaching identities of a distinct community as a case study in this period.

Excavations at Çukuriçi Höyük at central Aegean coast of Western Anatolia in the delta of Kaystros River revealed a settlement dated in EBA 1 and early 3rd millennium BC. Beside its domestic function comparable to simultaneous sites in Eastern Aegean-Western Anatolian region, Çukuriçi Höyük is characterized as an early production centre with intensive metal industry as well as a possibly gateway community for distinct raw materials. These special properties in combination with the structure of the settlement, its architecture and space management let assume a specialized community living and working at the tell, whereas basic subsistence (life stock and agriculture) was possibly recovered off-site. The tell's community situated in a compact village with functionally designed houses without a distinct exposed area or building. Based on studies of material assemblages, neither an extraordinary group of the community like an elite nor an exceptional area in the settlement are detectable. So far, this EBA 1 specialized society appears homogenous without clear social differentiation in a period, when crucial social transformation should probably took place and finally lead to the well-known dominating EBA 2 centres in the whole region.

Analysing the communities' rituals could offer a deeper insight in its identities, although definable areas of cult practice are unknown. Nevertheless, mobile objects of possible cultic or ritual function (figurine, prestige weapons) and their spatial and functional analyses give hints for further modelling of cult practice.

Food and the way of food allocation may define cultural and ritual affinities as well. The EBA diet characterises three finite categories, marine food collected or fished, protein provided by husbandry and finally to certain but not least extend hunted animals. Squirrel, marten and weasel or wild cat in low abundance and in higher proportion hare verified hunting on small game and fox, wolf, leopard and bear prove killing of larger carnivores. Besides, a few remains that could represent Aurochs, wild boar appeared to be of higher importance. However, the overwhelming part, excluding antler remains, signifies rigorous hunting on fallow deer. The size of their remains suggests an accentuated kill of large and male individuals. Despite of the nutritive value of such individuals, this pattern combined with large carnivores like bear and leopard leads to a focused hunt on large and prestigious game by the EBA inhabitants of the tell. Finally, the role of hunting as a systematic social ritual appears significant in societies of the metal production centre at Çukuriçi Höyük.

Bernice R. JONES

The Ritual on the Thera Adyton Fresco: New Light from the Ancient Near East

Ever since it was excavated, the ritual depicted on the fresco above the adyton on Thera, although receiving various interpretations, remains enigmatic. Nanno Marinatos initially believed that the ritual surrounded a vegetation goddess. She later proposed that the three figures incorporate various aspects of puberty rites before a bloody shrine symbolic of menstruation and childbirth. Rehak believes the ritual surrounds rites related to menstruation. Gesell eschewed the idea of blood on the shrine and believes the red drops are crocus styles which connect the ritual to the goddess scene above.

This study looks instead to the Near East for a solution to the blood symbolism and the ritual, since that is where the origins of many rituals and ritual dress of the Aegean occurred. Especially noteworthy is that the fresco located directly above the adyton that depicts the presentation to the goddess flanked by monkey and griffin traces its origins to Syria (on a Kultepe sealing). In addition, the origins of the Minoan multicolored flounced skirts and the identification of their wearers as religious figures (i.e. the Knossos snake goddess), lie in the Near East where they were worn by deities and the priesthood.

The paper explores Near Eastern and Egyptian visual and textual evidence which provide parallels for our adyton scene where blood is a symbol of ritual purification, sacred trees are planted beside shrines, and the roles of religious figures can be equated with the Theran veiled maiden, wounded woman, necklace bearer and male figures in a ritual scene involving the induction of the High Priestess.

Reinhard JUNG & Marco PACCIARELLI

A Minoan Statuette from Punta di Zambrone in Southern Calabria

Punta di Zambrone is a fortified settlement located on a promontory projecting into the Tyrrhenian Sea opposite the Aeolian Island of Stromboli. It was inhabited during most of the 2nd millennium BC. Imported artifacts of various classes show that the inhabitants maintained intense contacts with the Aegean during an advanced stage of the Recent Bronze Age. Among these imported objects there is a small statuette made of ivory. It depicts a man with Minoan dress and is sculptured according to the rules of the Minoan Neopalatial style.

In our paper we will discuss the significance of this object with reference to its Aegean region of origin as well as to its final depositional context in southern Italy.

Artemis KARNAVA**On Sacred Vocabulary and Religious Dedications: the Minoan ‘Libation Formula’**

Among Minoan cultic paraphernalia the so-called ‘libation’ tables inscribed in Linear A are listed as highly prominent. The inscriptions they attest to, together with inscriptions on stone vessels of different shapes and some other objects, have long been noticed to share a common vocabulary, i.e. they exhibit a repetition in the words they contain, so much so that these inscriptions have been dubbed the ‘libation formula’.

The distribution map of objects attesting to this ‘formula’ includes sites in the eastern end of Crete (Petsofas), to the central (e.g. Troulos in Archanes, Syme Viannou, Iouktas, Kophinas), while the sites of Apodoulou and Vrysinas function as the western limit of their expansion on the island of Crete. They are found in sanctuaries and settlements alike and it is commonly assumed that their production falls within the limits of the Neopalatial period. Without really understanding how this shared ‘formula’ functioned or what it actually meant, it contributes to our image of a religious Minoan Neopalatial ‘koiné’, which was not only expressed through a common language (as is attested in the Linear A inscriptions), but also through shared practices, such as the dedication of these (inscribed or not) stone implements.

Within the frame of this proposed contribution, information on the ‘libation formula’ will be updated and reviewed, and the ‘formula’ will be defined and investigated. It is noteworthy that not all of its samples were retrieved in ‘sacred’ sites, and that some overlap can be observed between the ‘formula’ components and the administrative ‘secular’ sphere; additionally, while the ‘formula’ is considered as a sample of Linear A writing, it does share certain elements with the Cretan Hieroglyphic script, and it is thus far the longest-lasting feature of the Cretan scripts, since it was last attested on a clay figurine dating to LM IIIA.

Robert B. KOEHL

The Ambiguity of the Minoan Mind

Recently, scholars have introduced the metaphysical constructs of memory and nostalgia as interpretative models for explaining the material culture of the 12th century in the Aegean. This paper argues that another metaphysical construct, ambiguity, was embedded in Minoan culture, beginning in EM III, when a Minoan identity can be said to emerge. Examples from several categories of Minoan culture serve to illustrate the point. In vase painting, when the diverse wares of EM II devolved into the light on dark and dark on light wares of EM III, the spiral, a quintessentially ambiguous motif without a definable beginning and end, becomes a mainstay in Minoan non-figural ceramic decoration. Ambiguity is clearly the intention of vase-painters who manipulated negative and positive space in Kamares Ware, enabling a motif to be perceived simultaneously from multiple perspectives. In the figural arts, such as wall-painting, ambiguity is expressed through the hybridization of plants and animals, where species are intermingled and thus defy clarity of definition. In representations of humans, ambiguity surfaces in the blurring of facial features, as on the gold rings, which are otherwise masterpieces of detail, and in the activities in which they seem to be engaged. Hence, so-called narratives, such as the miniature painting from the West House at Thera, continue to spur debate regarding even its broadest interpretations. Perhaps the most obvious material expression of ambiguity is the double axe, the emblem of Minoan religion, which has no distinguishable front, back, top or bottom. Ambiguity also lies at the heart of 'rites of passage', a fundamental Minoan social structure, in which an initiate exists in an ambiguous or transitional stage of life that is only resolved through the completion of specified ritual actions.

A society in which ambiguity is elevated to a collective metaphysical state surely begs for explanation. It is argued here that this world view was adopted in reaction to the radical changes in the demography of Crete which occurred at the end of the Neolithic, with the arrival of populations from the Cyclades, western Anatolia, and probably the southern Levant. Following what seems to have been a period of turbulence at the end of EM II, conflicts between these culturally diverse groups, perhaps for control of territories and resources may have been negotiated during EM III and a long period of social stability ensued. Large-scale communal projects, like the construction of palaces, roads and dams, rather than of massive fortifications, as in the contemporary Near East, emphasize cohesion rather than division. Seen in this light the ambiguities or multivalent elements in Minoan culture may thus have evolved from a need to forge a homogeneous identity out of a heterogeneous island population.

Eleni KONSOLAKI-YANNOPOULOU

The Symbolic Significance of the Terracottas from the Mycenaean Sanctuary at Ayios Konstantinos, Methana

The paper examines the symbolic significance of the terracottas included in the votive deposit of the Mycenaean sanctuary excavated at Ayios Konstantinos on Methana and discusses the nature of the cult based at that shrine. The majority of the figurines found upon or near the bench of the cult room (Room A) were common bovines, but some unusual types of Mycenaean terracottas also occurred in several examples. Human representations appeared, almost exclusively, in association with equids or bovinds (toreadors, horsemen, and riders of chariots drawn by horses or oxen). On the ground of the principle of homology, the terracotta offerings may be proposed to highlight the primary cult of a male divinity whose functions were similar to those attributed to Poseidon in the Greek religion (cf. the epithets *Taureios* and *Hippios*). One female figurine alone, of the uncommon, Hollow Psi type, was contained in the votive deposit. The outstanding position of that figurine in the context and the fact that most of the chariot models had two embracing figures in the box suggest that a female deity may have accompanied here the principal god, perhaps in a subordinate role. The fact that some of the votaries occurred in pairs also seems to reflect a duality in the cult. Both Poseidon (*Po-se-da-o-ne*) and a female counterpart (*Po-si-da-e-ja*) are documented as Mycenaean divinities in Linear B tablets from Knossos and Pylos. Given that those terracottas come from a cultic context, the numerous bovines included in the assemblage may be interpreted as substitutes for animal sacrifice. The human representations may be viewed either as effigies of the venerated divinities or as images of celebrants taking part in festive activities pertinent to their cult (e.g. chariot parades, horse races and bull jumping or grappling). One of the bull-and-toreador groups retrieved in that shrine was a large, coil-made bovid with a human figure perched on its head and clasping its horns firmly with outstretched arms. This figure may have played the role of a cult image, as the gesture of the man displays power and the find-spot of that terracotta indicates that it stood on the top of the stepped bench, occupying asymmetrically the most prominent location in the room.

Petros KOUNOUKLAS

Griffin at Kynos. How, Why, and When

At the excavation of Kynos the LH IIIB period is strongly represented by structural remains, relative pottery and artefacts, among which a pithos was discovered lying on a burnt floor surrounded by various artefacts.

The vessel displays a rare decoration of impressed griffins on a relief band around the belly.

Griffin as a motif of decoration is not common in the area of East Lokris and the example of Kynos represents, so far, its first and only appearance. Even in whole Central Greece the motif of griffin is rare and it is acquainted only on seals.

The main aim of this contribution is to trace the provenance of this motif, its distribution and perhaps its meaning for the settlement of Kynos.

Tobias KRAPPF

Symbolic Value and Magical Power: Examples of Prehistoric Objects Reused in Later Contexts in Euboea

The reuse of prehistoric artefacts, especially of Mycenaean date, in later periods is well attested, as the Tiryns treasure and the Bronze Age grave offerings accompanying Early Iron Age burials at Lefkandi prove. Such objects are often interpreted as heirlooms, status enhancing goods due to their provenance from a distant past.

The fact that some sort of metaphysical power could have been ascribed to such artefacts, is corroborated by the discovery of two Neolithic polished stone axes, found alongside medical instruments in a 4th c. BC house in the West Quarter of Eretria. A bronze spearhead, found in a Late Geometric tomb at the nearby West Gate Heroon has also been discussed as a case of reuse but its Bronze Age date has been recently put under dispute.

However, the phenomenon appears as early as the prehistoric times: recent excavations by the Swiss Archaeological School in Greece brought to light a marble Cycladic figurine on the acropolis of Eretria, deposited in a Middle Helladic funerary context. The specimen belongs to the Spedos type and dates to the Early Cycladic II period. Yet, Early Bronze Age II human presence has only been identified in the coastal plain of Eretria but not on the 120 masl altitude of the hill. The function of the Cycladic figurines remains a matter of discussion and therefore the purpose the figurine of Eretria was supposed to fulfil is even vaguer, as it is found far from the Cyclades and in a much later context. It would be reasonable, though, to speculate that this rare offering was appreciated for the symbolic value it bore, drawn from its exotic and old nature. This poster intends to explore and re-approach the various symbolic connotations such 'antiques' had, by focusing on the Euboean evidence.

Olga H. KRZYSZKOWSKA

Warding off Evil: Apotropaic Imagery and Practice in the Aegean Bronze Age

While great strides have been made in documenting Aegean cult practices, retrieving underlying systems of belief through iconographic, artefactual and archaeological evidence remains a challenge, especially given the paucity of texts. Certainly in comparison to contemporary cultures in Egypt and the East, our grasp of Aegean cosmology is both patchy and unsure. So far only limited consideration has been given to the forces of good and evil, which preoccupy the religious beliefs and practices of most cultures, evidenced through rituals, prayers and sacred texts, myth and iconography. In the Aegean we dimly perceive that certain religious rituals may have been devised to propitiate the gods, and thereby to maintain a harmonious equilibrium between this world and the 'other'. Some practices were evidently intended to bring about beneficial results in a range of mundane (though no less vital) concerns, e.g. good harvests, healing, smooth passage on death. Ritual responses in the wake of natural catastrophe, pestilence, warfare and the myriad misfortunes that could befall communities and individuals may also leave traces in the archaeological record. But whether all such calamities were ascribed to failures in appeasing destructive metaphysical forces is unknown.

Imagery that is specifically apotropaic in nature is surprisingly hard to identify with certainty in the Aegean world, though such a role may with reason be posited for symbols and insignia (e.g. 'horns of consecration') that are regularly depicted in cult scenes or are found in places of ritual significance. Hybrid creatures, whose very forms stress their liminality, may also be construed as having an apotropaic character. Most are imported exotics, e.g. the griffin, sphinx, 'dragon', and 'genius', which arrive and are adapted during MM II, eventually coming to play a special role in palatial iconography as attendants or 'familiars' of deities or their representatives. Their roles and development are well documented. More perplexing is a group of seemingly home-grown hybrids, often portrayed as disembodied heads with bulging eyes and snaky-locks. Grotesque in appearance, they are sometimes likened to later 'gorgoneia' and have been ascribed (with little critical evaluation) an apotropaic function. A full-length figure, depicted on a recently-discovered seal from Petras Siteia, not only reveals striking affinities to the previously-known 'gorgo heads' but also to the Egyptian demon Bes, prompting fresh questions as to the creatures' origin(s) and purpose. Although related imagery ranges in date from MM II-LB III, it cannot be described as common. Why was the monstrous and grotesque so rarely depicted in Aegean iconography? Does this imagery represent a sub-stratum of 'popular' or 'folk' belief, never wholly integrated in 'officially' established rituals and iconography? Can we be sure that such imagery was actually conceived as a means of warding off malevolent forces?

Artefacts present similar challenges. While the wearing of amulets, talismans and good luck charms is a widespread human practice, identifying an apotropaic purpose in individual cases or even whole classes is fraught with difficulties. In this respect, the so-called 'talismanic' seals of MM III-LM I – a large style-group bound by engraving technique and iconography – offer a salutary lesson.

Drawing on comparative data from both ancient and traditional societies, this paper will survey a range of iconographic, artefactual and archaeological evidence from Minoan Crete and Mycenaean Greece in an attempt to establish more rigorous criteria for identifying apotropaic imagery and practice in the Aegean. We must accept, however, that a substantial range of activities intended to ward off evil – nowadays generally dismissed as

'superstitious' – involving words, gestures and perishable materials, will always fall beneath the archaeological radar.

Evangelos KYRIAKIDIS

Tracing the Supernatural in Minoan Religion

There is strong evidence that the, so called, Minoan Goddess, is not the only god of Minoan Crete. In this presentation we are going to study Minoan Neopalatial iconography of various media (frescoes, seals, rings, figurines, statues and other) in order to discern what we know about 'Minoan' religion and more specific, the supernatural. Some humans depicted in three dimensional, miniature and large two dimensional iconography have sufficient attributes to be called 'supernatural'. It is hard to know whether they all were of the same status in religion (cf. titans, gods, and giants) and what was their exact function. We believe however that there is sufficient evidence to place them in the supernatural sphere which has enormous implications for our understanding of 'Minoan' iconography and religion for the Neopalatial times.

Michael LINDBLOM & Gunnel EKROTH

Heroes, Ancestors or just any Old Bones? Contextualizing the Consecration of Human Remains from the Mycenaean Shaft Graves at Lerna in the Argolid

How did the Mycenaeans perceive their dead and their belongings? Were these simply seen as the remains of departed relatives, of interest only to the immediate family at the time of the burial, or could they be recognized as ancestors of concern to a larger group in society or even as heroes receiving a public cult similar to that of heroes in the historical period? This paper will explore the manipulation of the bones of the departed and their grave goods within the wider context of Mycenaean funerary ritual practices, in order to discuss both the ancient conceptions of the dead and how we, modern scholars, are to characterize them.

The starting point will be two Early Mycenaean shaft graves at Lerna in the Argolid which were found almost completely devoid of human remains when excavated between 1956 and 1958. In the second grave, some foot bones (tarsals and metatarsals) of an adult found on the floor indicate that there had initially been interments in the graves. Several strands of evidence suggest that both graves were opened in LH IIIA2, roughly 300 years after their construction, the bodies and funerary remains carefully removed, and a drinking ceremony performed before the graves were backfilled.

There is a terminological and conceptual ambiguity in how to describe and interpret the intentional handling or manipulation of funerary remains of previous generations during the Mycenaean period. While it can be assumed that such encounters were guided both by ideas about the past and by perceptions of death and the underworld, the question remains which criteria are methodologically useful to identify and distinguish. Is it possible to differentiate between various categories of 'dead' by the patterning of material remains? Does the handling of these dead, and in particular of their bones, indicate that they were accorded a status different from that of the regular dead, and in that case, how shall we define that status?

The Late Bronze Age tombs attracted widespread cultic interest in the Geometric and Archaic periods, a phenomenon identified either as funerary cults directed towards ancestors or as the earliest instances of 'heroes' as religious figures. The question is how the Lerna evidence relates to the development of hero-cults, usually thought not to arise until the Iron Age, though then often directed to or stimulated by Bronze Age burials but also to the spread of the Homeric epics. The Argive evidence will therefore be discussed both in relation to the treatment of the dead in Homer and to the primary characteristic of a heroic cult in later periods, namely the handling of the hero's bones and the power inherent in these. Could hero-cult have in fact have been a Mycenaean phenomenon? The handling of the Lerna graves can be considered as one further aspect of the contested relation between the Bronze and Iron Ages within the discussion of continuity in religious practice and belief.

Susan LUPACK

The Sanctuary of *pa-ki-ja-ne* and its Special Relationship with the *Wanax*

In Linear B texts the word *pa-ki-ja-ne* denotes both a sanctuary site and one of the nine administrative districts of the Hither Province that fell within the realm of the *wanax* who ruled from the palace at Pylos. The district of *pa-ki-ja-ne* is found among the other districts on several tablets that record their economic transactions with the palace. Thus *pa-ki-ja-ne*, the district, was part of the palatial economic system. Nonetheless, the fact that the religious aspect of this particular district was of *original* importance is found in the root meaning of its name: *pa-ki-ja-ne* can be associated with the Greek root σφαγ-, which in historical Greek produces the verbs σφάζω and σφαγιάζομαι, both of which mean ‘to slay a victim’ or ‘to sacrifice’. Thus we may translate *pa-ki-ja-ne* (as Palaima does) as ‘the place of slaughter’, and infer from this that the district acquired its name from the religious site, which may itself have had a long history.

Several scholars have thought that *pa-ki-ja-ne* was located very near to Pylos, as Tn 316.2-3 implies. Its most likely location is in (or under) the modern town of Hora, where the chamber tomb cemetery of *Volimidia* was found. The habitation finds from *Volimidia* are unfortunately scanty, but Marinatos did find LH I and III pottery associated with some walls. It is possible then (if we are correct in identifying *pa-ki-ja-ne* with *Volimidia*) that the palace of Pylos and the religious site of *pa-ki-ja-ne* developed alongside each other, or, to make the situation more personal, that the *wanax* of Pylos and the religious functionaries of *pa-ki-ja-ne* interacted with each other for many generations. The end result of that interaction is seen in many tablets, but most prominently in Un 2, which shows that the *wanax* was initiated in some way by the religious powers at *pa-ki-ja-ne*, and Tn 316, which details the offerings (the most costly of the Linear B tablets) given to the shrines of *pa-ki-ja-ne*. These tablets seem to imply that the *wanax* supported the power wielded by the religious functionaries and perhaps was in a way subject to it. The power of the *wanax* seems intertwined with that of *pa-ki-ja-ne*.

I have recently proposed that the offerings sent to the *wanax* on the Fr tablets indicate that the Mycenaeans worshipped an ancestral *wanax*. At Mycenae one can point to Grave Circle A and its refurbishment as supporting the idea that the *wanax* of the LH IIIB period promoted the worship of such a deity, but no such evidence has been found in the vicinity of Pylos. However, I think that if we were to look for a place where such a deity was worshipped, it would be at *pa-ki-ja-ne*.

Nanno MARINATOS

Myth, Ritual, Symbolism and the Solar Goddess

One of the many problems that confront the specialists of Bronze Age religion is the lack of decipherable texts. The Mycenaean Linear B tablets have not substantially helped in this respect because of major discrepancies that exist between the list of Mycenaean gods and the images of Creto-Mycenaean art. A solution has been (even before M. P. Nilsson's *Minoan and Mycenaean Religion*) to project Greek myths on to the Minoan and Mycenaean evidence. But this is a methodologically dubious practice as it assumes unproven continuities. This thesis has been fully argued in *Minoan Kingship and the Solar Goddess* and will not occupy us further here; suffice it to state that images are the only reliable primary sources.

The material that will be discussed in the paper are some frescoes from Xeste 3, Akrotiri, Thera (some of which have been only recently restored). Three themes will be presented:

1. The reconsideration of Sir Arthur Evans's concept of monotheism: one goddess many manifestations.
2. The relationship between scenes of ritual and scenes of mythical content on the above mentioned murals.
3. A possible Minoan myth.

It will be argued that the (solar) goddess of nature appears in three different guises within the same building. First she has the form of a wounded female, her suffering being reflected by her bleeding shrine. Second she takes the form of an enthroned queen flanked by a griffin and monkey. Finally she appears as transubstantiated in the abstract form of whirly spirals associated with the solar disc or stars.

The goddess presides over human rituals but only in the imagination of few ecstatic worshippers; the others do not see her or interact with her directly. This approach opens some new possibilities about the relationship between ritual action and mythical imagination.

Marisa MARTHARI

The Libation Ritual on Thera: the Evidence from Akrotiri Pictorial Pottery

In 1999 a significant find came to light at Akrotiri. It is a pair of LC I clay chalices (Akr. cat. nos. 8112 and 8113) excavated in pillar-shaft 59A. They derive from a new building of the Volcanic Destruction Level. Three figure-of-eight shields rendered in linear manner, with the lobes, the rim and the suspension strap shown, decorate each.

The linear shields on the two chalices prompt the hypothesis that the even simpler small linear figure-of-eight motifs that adorn the neck of a series of LC I nipples ewers with horn-shaped projections and cylindrical rhyta are in fact representations of figure-of-eight shields. It should be noted that the nipples ewer with horn-shaped projections is the only variation of the Theran nipples ewer which is depicted on the surfaces of other vessels. From the entire decoration of the real vase only the figure-of-eight shield has been selected for depiction on its painted image, obviously because of its important symbolism. On Theran LC I vases this image appears surrounded by foliate branches and/or in combination with barley, vetches, grapes and olives. The iconographic evidence suggests that the rituals in which the nipples ewers with horn-shaped projections were used at Akrotiri must be related to the promotion of agriculture.

As far as the ceremonial of the rites is concerned, the Theran libation set kept in a special cupboard in many houses at Akrotiri is quite revealing. It consists of one or more nipples ewers with horn-shaped projections, five or more cylindrical rhyta and one chalice or a pair of chalices. This set brings to mind both the representation on the gold ring from Tiryns and on a Theran late MC piriform jug. The jug was found in a MC building in pillar-shaft 67 (Akr. cat. no. 8960). On the ring, an enthroned goddess points to a chalice, probably to be filled by the four genii holding beak-spouted jugs and leaving behind them vertical boughs over which one might suppose they have already poured a libation. On the Akrotiri vase, two young boys face each other as they pour a libation over a vertical bough. One boy holds a nipples ewer that he tips towards a rhyton, which the other holds over the bough.

Christopher MEE[†] & William CAVANAGH

Feasting with the Dead

There is often an assumption that the mourners held a ceremony after a Mycenaean tomb was closed, which involved a toast or a libation poured in honour of the dead person. In some cases there may even have been a feast, which is evident from the animal bones or the vessels which were left behind. However, our analysis has shown that, while rituals of this sort were certainly celebrated in some cemeteries, there was also variation within and between regions. Moreover, we also find differences between the type of tomb. This practice seems more common in chamber tombs than in tholoi, built or simple graves. We must also take chronology into account. There are examples in the Early Mycenaean period, then they become more widespread in LH IIIA-B. Palatial involvement could be suspected but there are LH IIIC instances as well. We end the paper by examining what the ritual would have meant to the community concerned.

Madelaine MILLER

The Boat - in between the Land and the Sea

Archaeological evidence along with iconographical material from Minoan Crete, imply that people had sailing knowledge. The favourable location of the island meant that a number of people were involved in maritime trading activities. Beside these ventures a number of people most likely were dependent on the sea for their living albeit on a more local level, with coastal and/or deep-sea fishing. Thus, living on the island, the lives of many people were intertwined with the sea in several ways. Despite long experience of seafaring, inherited from generation to generation, it was nevertheless a dangerous place in particular when sailing several days without a sight of land. There were a number of potential dangers that could occur like bad weathers and storms, the risk of running aground as well as meeting pirates. The high risk of being at sea contributed to the fishermen/sailors superstitions. It is evident from later periods that the dangerous life on board also meant that a number of rules had to go by, like no fish was to be eaten while on board of the ship, certain words were avoided, or women were not allowed on board, and so on. Particular rituals had to be conducted in order to assure a safe passage or a good catch. In order to cope with the dangerous life at sea religion, rituals and superstitions became much needed tools for the seafarers.

For those involved in different types of maritime activities a deep understanding of nautical knowledge was a necessity, not only of seafaring practices but about ships and boats. It meant that you had to 'learn to *think with the boat*'. As a sailor/fisherman you had to become skilled at a number of things that were all related to the boat – rescue, leakage, reusing old parts of the boat in a new vessel, submersion and so on. It also meant living closely in connection with the nature as well as having the experience to understand warnings of upcoming bad weather in time, understanding of the tracks of the birds, and knowledge of the best fishing grounds. In this context the boat could be seen as a 'liminal agent', as an extension of the human body, and as a portable link between sea and land.

Ships in the Mediterranean are most often depicted with land animal heads like horses or birds at the stem or stern. It has been suggested that the land animals, or the heads of them, could have functioned as being the carrier of powerful and magic strength that would protect the boat and those travelling on it, as well as the cargo (Westerdahl 2005). The material in itself, the wood, could moreover have had a protective significance. From classical times it is known that different spirits was believed to protect the seafarers on the ship. This could take different forms like a totem, a representation of a deity, painted eyes and the names of the ship.

In this paper I would like to discuss the various symbolic aspects of the boat in Minoan Crete, as a representation of the two worlds, sea and land, but also as a representation of the immaterial concepts of cosmology. By using comparative material from other ancient as well as contemporary maritime societies I would, moreover, like to draw attention to a part of the religious life that I believe existed among groups of seafaring people in the Aegean world.

Barbara MONTECCHI

The Labyrinth: Building, Myth and Symbol

The main themes of my proposal are myth and symbolism in the Mycenaean Age (liminality, irrationality, hybrid creatures, mythology, symbols, iconography).

In three Linear B tablets from Knossos (Gg 702, Oa 745[+]7374, Xd 140) the term *da-pu₍₂₎-ri-to(-jo)* is attested as part of the goddess Potnia's title. In these texts it seems to be the name of a cult place, possibly a building or, less likely I think, a sacred cave. L. R. Palmer (*BICS* 2, 1955, p. 40) was the first to recognize the word $\Lambda\alpha\beta\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\nu\theta\omicron\varsigma$ in it. Moreover, on the *verso* of a tablet from Pylos (Cn 1287), we find a drawing that already represents a labyrinth in the shape of the symbol that will be widespread in the 1st millennium (for example on the Hellenistic coins from Knossos, where the reference to the labyrinth of the Minotaur is obvious) and that is still today represented and used. Our starting points are that the drawing on Cn 1287, independently from its origin, does not represent by any means a true architectural plan, and that the labyrinth has a material presence and a place in the mind since the Mycenaean Period.

So far numerous studies on the subject of the relationship between the 1st and the 2nd millennium labyrinth, have focused on different aspects of the matter: for example, the analysis of the Linear B text and the Greek literary sources, the etymology of the word, the recognition of the labyrinth in the Knossos Palace or in other buildings or natural caves, the origin of the drawing (from Egyptian or Near Eastern solar symbols, or from the plan of the Knossos Palace), and so on. I intend to walk the demarcation line between the two points of view from which the labyrinth can be approached: the physical and the metaphysical. We can consider, in fact, the labyrinth both as a real or an imaginary building (i.e. the cult building attested in the three Knossian tablets and the building in which the Minotaur was segregated according to the myth), and as a unique configuration with certain well-defined and rigid characteristics (i.e. the widespread labyrinth symbol). Thus, the metaphysical approach to the question involves, at the same time, both the myth and the symbol. As far as the first is concerned, we ask whether there is a link between the Knossian *da-pu₍₂₎-ri-to* and the Pylian drawing (for example, we will take into consideration the chronological gap, the religious purposes of the texts inscribed on all these four tablets, etc.), and when and where the myth of Ariadne, Theseus and the Minotaur was born (have we any further evidence for the existence of a Mycenaean narrative core of this myth?). As far as the second is concerned, we remind that the metaphorical notion of *inextricabilis error* is already prevalent in poetic and figurative speeches beginning from Plato (*Euthyd.* 291b). In this context, attention will be paid to the fact that the labyrinth building, according to the literary sources, is characterised by a complex and confusing series of pathways, whereas the labyrinth symbol, starting from the Pylian drawing, has a single through-route, with twists and turns but without branches. It is not designed to be as difficult to navigate as the building in which Theseus would have risked getting lost if he had not had Ariadne's thread. Therefore, ultimately, what is at stake in the definition of the departure from the labyrinth? It seems to me that the concept of centre embodies the symbolic value of the entire labyrinth and for this reason, still today, as a microcosm of social order, it acts as a powerful metaphor for the damnation of the whole human race, when we feel like blocked and paralyzed souls, prisoners of our own institutions.

Lyvia MORGAN

The Transformative Power of Mural Art: Ritual Space, Symbolism, and the Mythic Imagination

Mural paintings and reliefs, through their architectural placement, relate images and ritual space. Such relationships invest the images with a transformative power affecting human action and response. Their efficacy depends on orientation, directionality, visibility and accessibility. This phenomenon is observable in temples, shrines and tombs throughout the world. New Kingdom Egypt provides striking examples. The temple was conceived as a microcosm of the universe with the mythical mound of creation at its core, architecture and images progressing inwards for the participants in ritual, outwards for the divinities. In temples and tombs, entrances constitute the liminal zone between this world and the other, images symbolically expelling chaos from the exterior; inside, rituals are perpetuated in images on the walls of rooms leading to the inner sanctum with the cult image or *ka* statue, the recipient of the ritual actions. The agency of these images lies in their power to transform: in temples to activate divine life; in tombs to transition the deceased into the Afterlife.

While different in context, Aegean wall paintings and reliefs also relate ritual space and human action, investing them with a transformative power. Bulls at entrances, processional figures in corridors, heraldic beasts flanking a throne are all directional and focusing in intent. While the sample is relatively small, patterns are perceivable in the placements of paintings, with implications for their efficacy. Miniatures focus on public festivals, each situated within a room overlooking a public space. Their small scale and high position marks the murals as referents rather than enveloping experiences. With their complex action and detailed settings, their efficacy lies in the realm of social memory, signalling time and place through ceremonial events and significant locations. In contrast, large-scale figurative paintings were contained within relatively small interior rooms, and focus on the ritual and mythic realms. The images would have enveloped the viewer. Their efficacy lies in their power to enhance the experience of ritual action.

Xesté 3 at Akrotiri, Thera, provides a unique case-study of how images worked on several levels within a single building. The paper examines how the images progress both inwards and upwards through the building, leading from the terrestrial world through into ritual action, mythic symbolism and the divine sphere, access and visibility to each zone controlled through architectural structure. Ritual space is organized both horizontally and vertically, the images above linked to those below. Symbolic images guide the participant from this world towards the other, ritual, myth and symbolism integrated with human action.

Christine MORRIS

The Metaphysics of Touch: the Tactical Qualities of Minoan Sacred Objects

Minoan sacred objects include many of the most beautiful of all Minoan artefacts: vessels of stone, metal, and ceramics, sealstones, gold rings and sacred symbols, statuettes and figurines. And yet we only experience these things through the appreciation of sight – they enclosed behind museum glass, or reduced to two dimensions on the page. This misses one of the most important aspects of their being – the fact that they were made to be held, touched, carried, worn, offered and received. They have a tactile, kinaesthetic quality, which was intended to be expressed through ritual action - ritual actions with multiple aspects.

Although religion is often defined as a system of belief in deities (one or many), the most recent and interesting of approaches to Minoan religion have tended to emphasise its performative aspects. Rituals and the spiritual experiences engendered by ritual action are more important than the minutiae of intellectualized belief. Objects and the physical manipulation of objects lie at the heart of these rituals, both as the source of spiritual experience and as the physical expression or manifestation of that experience.

The case-study taken for this paper is the corpus of votive clay figurines from the Minoan peak sanctuaries. It has long been understood that the figurines of the three main types: humans, animals, and votive limbs, are expressive of the concerns the worshippers, the health and well-being of themselves and their animals. Each figurine has a specific biography of manufacture, transport to the sanctuary, and deposition, which expresses the personalized concerns of an individual. They were made for a purpose, which linked the individual to the ritual.

In our study of the figurines from the Atsipadhes peak sanctuary and our more recent experimental work on the figurines from the east Cretan peak sanctuaries, it has become extremely clear that they have a strongly tactile quality. Made by hand, made to be carried in the hand, or worn around the neck – these actions decisively fostered a personal connection between the individual and the votive object. This creation of a physical relationship between the object offered and the person who offered, definitively added resonance to the religious act of offering – touch, action, and spiritual experience merge into a profound metaphysical expression.

From this case-study, it will be argued that these tactile, kinaesthetic principles lie at the heart of Minoan religion. We can extend them to understand the processes and principles that underlie the uses of all Minoan sacred objects. It is only by engaging those tactile, kinaesthetic qualities that we can transform our understanding of Minoan religion from an intellectual abstraction to a dynamic metaphysical performance.

Joanne MURPHY

The Power of the Ancestors at Pylos

Over the past few decades, archaeologists have assigned the ancestors significant roles in the supernatural orders of most ancient societies. They argue that ancestors, through their connection to the divine, wielded a power that could transform society and grant exclusive rights over limited resources to those who have access to the dead. These arguments are primarily derived from ethnographic research carried out on communal, formal burial areas that were used for long periods of time.

In this paper, based on a detailed examination of the location and date of the artifacts in the tombs at Pylos, I argue that the metaphysical components and significance of the mortuary arena and ancestors at Pylos were limited and short lived. Our recent restudy of the formal tombs around the Palace of Nestor shows clearly that the tombs were used for a relatively short period of time. It also illustrates that ritual, as a repeated pattern of activity/practice, at the tombs was predominantly limited to the placement of repeated groups of objects with the dead and that there is little evidence for any ritual activity around the exterior of the tombs or in the dromoi. Furthermore, there is no direct evidence for post-funerary activities that involved the bodies, which one would expect if the ancestors had powerful social significance. The patterning of the bodies in the tombs suggests that the living only came into contact with the dead when they wished to place another person in the tomb. At the time of a new funeral, if necessary, the older skeletal remains were moved to the side to make room for the new burial. These depositional patterns that focused on the dead body during the funeral suggest that the dead were at their most socially significant at the time of burial. Thus the short time span of the tombs' use, the location of the artifacts inside the tombs, and the limited post-decompositional interaction with the remains suggest that the ancestors' and the mortuary arena held limited socially transformative power at Pylos.

Sylvie MÜLLER-CELKA

Caring for the Dead in Minoan Crete: a Reassessment of the Evidence from Anemospilia

Minoan burial customs and related iconography demonstrate that the response to the death of individuals included family or, more likely, community gatherings (funerals, secondary burial ceremonies, memorials...) and ritual acts. The dead body had to be prepared, either for public display before deposition in the grave or for being fitted into a larnax or burial pithos. Funerary public ceremonies involving the consumption of possibly dedicated food and drink no doubt necessitated storage and cooking facilities, and perhaps specific utensils and skilled labour as well.

One could therefore ask whether particular places other than cemeteries were reserved, or used occasionally, for activities related to death management, and whether such places might be traced in archaeological remains. This provides an impulse to revisit specific cases, such as those where human bones were found outside cemeteries, and for casting new light on old sets of data, such as that of Anemospilia.

This paper questions the interpretation of the ritual that was being performed at Anemospilia at the time the building collapsed; it suggests that this archaeological context might offer tangible evidence for the preparation of a corpse for the death ritual.

Wolf-Dietrich NIEMEIER

Ritual Behaviour in the Mycenaean Sanctuary at Abai/Kalapodi

After the first period of excavation (1973-1982) in the sanctuary near Kalapodi in ancient Phokis, LH IIIC Early, the time immediately after the fall of the Mycenaean palace centres, was considered the time of the foundation of this sanctuary, at that time identified as the sanctuary of Artemis Elaphebolos of Hyampolis. Topographical and epigraphical evidence now make certain that it is the oracle sanctuary of Apollon of Abai, possibly with a more ancient cult of Artemis.

The new excavations from 2004 on have shown, that the sanctuary's history reaches back at least to LH IIIA1, perhaps even earlier to the Middle Helladic period. The first south temple was built in LH IIIA1. It is the first in a sequence of ten south temples extending over more than 1 and a 1/2 millennia from the Mycenaean to the Roman Imperial period. The first three south temples are Mycenaean. No. 1 was followed in LH IIIB by no. 2, no. 3 is to be dated to LH IIIC. The cultic installations in these temples, altars and platforms for the immolation of animals, and the movable finds, especially rich from south temple 3, among them terracotta figures and figurines, weapons, personal ornaments, large numbers of ceramic vessels of open form, many animal bones, as well as pithoi filled with grain and pulses provide evidence for the reconstruction of the rituals performed which will be discussed in detail: processions, immolation of animals, libations, elite feasting, deposition of votives. A special case is formed by the deposition of numerous votives on the ruins of south temple 1, apparently as foundation offering for south temple 2: beads of glass, faience, rock crystal, steatite and other stones, as well as not less than 24 engraved seals of steatite, glass and fluorite.

Marianna NIKOLAIDOU

Religious Symbols in the Repertory of Minoan Pottery: Evidence for Materialised Myth and Ritualised Realities

This paper explores the mutually enforcing dynamic between religion and myth, on the one hand, and the realities of material existence, on the other, in the Minoan context. I discuss the adoption of the symbols of double axe, double horns, and bucranium as decorative elements and marks on pottery. These three symbols were key components of the religious thought and ritual apparatus throughout the Minoan era, prominent in a wide spectrum of material forms and representations. Pots decorated and marked with these motifs also span the time from pre- to post-palatial, albeit in varying spatio-temporal distributions. Two interesting traits of ambiguity distinguish these ceramics from other material supports of the same iconography (including frescoes, larnakes, metal- and stonework, plastic arts, seal imagery). First, the non-narrative, often highly decorative or schematised style of depicting the sacred motifs isolated, arranged in repetitive or emblematic patterns, or integrated in elaborate compositions. Second, the potentially fluid and multiple function of the pots –as tableware, offering containers, storage or burial receptacles, household utensils and cultic paraphernalia. In this capacity, ceramics bridge across maintenance activities and ceremony, domesticity and communal affairs, economy and ritual, production and social reproduction.

Through their evocative iconography and ambivalent function, the symbol-bearing pots can be interpreted as material references to an archetypical, ritual order which informed, and was in turn informed by, real-life experience. I consider these symbolic possibilities in two case studies from the protopalatial and the postpalatial periods, respectively. In the former, the contextual scope includes administration, signification, and collective ceremony. In the latter, I concentrate on popular cult and burial rites, with reference to contemporary larnax iconography and textile arts.

Monica NILSSON

Minoan Stairs as Ritual Scenes

Stone blocks with inscribed signs or cup-holes have been discovered in many different types of contexts in the Minoan palaces and they have been discussed as religious/ritual symbols, masons' marks, kernoï and game boards. Their variety of execution and position would make all interpretations plausible for some of them, but such signs and cup-holes are isolated figures even when found grouped together. An altogether different type of cutting was long neglected although exposed to the public for a century. It is the meandering cutting across the steps of 'grande propileo' in Phaistos, of which a sketch was only recently published.

Digital measuring for a 3D-model of the 'grande propileo' and its cuttings has now been carried out, giving a clearer and more detailed view of the architecture, suggesting that the structure should not be seen primarily as a monumental entrance, but, rather, as a scene for ceremony and ritual performed for a gathering of people in the open court below. The platform above the steps would be the actual focus of ritual, but the steps with their cuttings are also incorporated in the scene. The architecture in combination with the finds from the area, in addition to evidence from other Minoan palaces – Knossos and Malia in particular – give strong indications as to the nature and execution of such rituals.

Marcia NUGENT

Portals to the Other: Stepping through a Botanic Door

Botanic motifs provide unique access to both the physical and other worlds of the ancient audience. When depicted naturalistically, a botanic motif can illuminate details about the environment experienced by the viewer. With contextual analysis, the use and deeper meaning of the motif and plant may be revealed.

The author has undertaken a contextual analysis of over 420 objects and over 540 botanic motifs from the Bronze Age Cycladic Island sites of Phylakopi (Melos), Ayia Irini (Kea) and Akrotiri (Thera). Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the form and the physical and societal context of the botanic motifs has been used to build a multi-levelled interpretation about identity, belief, ritual and trade.

Using data from the analysis, this paper focuses on botanic motifs as symbols that open a portal to the other for the ancient viewer. They also act as a portal to that experience for the modern observer. The physical aspects of the botanic symbol; that is, the plant's smell, taste, touch and effect on the human body, are important elements of its role as a symbol, just as they may be important to the corporeal experience of the ritual and the perceived stepping through into the ethereal other.

The greater the range of senses that are touched in ritual, the stronger the ritual is embedded into the memory of the participant and consequently into their sense of identity and belief system at a personal level. Re-activation of sense memories formed in the ritual may continue to activate the portal to the other and recall the status, message or lesson learned or earned in the ritual. In this way, the botanic motif may act as a portal back into ones experience as well as a doorway to the other.

This paper will explore the nature of the botanic portal via a number of botanic motifs, including the ivy, lily, olive and cistus. The form of the motifs will be summarised, followed by presentation of contextual analysis and interpretation of the motif and its role in opening a portal to other worlds – both external and internal.

Thomas G. PALAIMA

**The Metaphysical Mind: Heroes, Individuals, Social Groups and Gods
in Mycenaean Times and in Homer**

One of the clearest distinctions between what we know of the metaphysical aspects of society in the Mycenaean palatial period (1400-1200 BC), as documented in the material record and Linear B tablets, and the society reflected in the Homeric poems, cautiously considered to have taken their present forms during the 8th to 6th centuries BC, but retaining and reflecting evidence from earlier periods, is in the degree of 'interiority' and 'individuality' of the human experience of what lies beyond the physical and material perceptions of human beings.

While this is partly conditioned by the kinds of evidence we have available to us (contrast the contents of the entries on the Linear B tablets with the hexameter lines of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*), we can still consider why activities connected with ritual actions recorded in the Linear B tablets and manifest in the archaeological remains and iconographical record from the Late Bronze Age look so collective and group-oriented (and non-personal insofar as it pertains to the 'missing' sole rulers of palatial kingdoms), while the Homeric poems are so intensively focused on individuals and their particular senses of the metaphysical, even when those individuals are the *poimenes lāōn*, i.e., the single supreme rulers of palatial territories and their peoples.

In this paper, I will continue the practice of my *Aegaeum* papers for Epos, Dais, Kosmos and Physis. I will concentrate on particular items of vocabulary that are important for expressing 'metaphysical' notions, as they, and related terms, occur in the Linear B and later historical Greek texts.

I include here notions concerning gods and ceremonies of worship. But I shall also try to recreate how power figures and holy persons would have thought about the atmospheres created by the architecture and iconography of sacred spaces within Mycenaean palaces, if they possessed, as they must have, even a small part of the metaphysical sensibilities of the heroes of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in regard to contact with and influence from supernatural beings and forces.

Probable terms of focus include *theos*, *daimōn*, *potnia*, *hērōs*, *thūō*, *katharos*, *menos* and *mēnis*.

Alan A.D. PEATFIELD

A Metaphysical History of Minoan Religion

Religion has been at the heart of interpreting Minoan and Mycenaean civilisation since Arthur Evans wrote 'The Mycenaean Tree and Pillar Cult'. After more than a century of scholarship we are very familiar with cult symbols, images of rituals, settlement shrines, and rural sanctuaries, statues of deities, figurines of worshippers and all the other paraphernalia that we lump together under the term Minoan religion. Yet the reality is that even with all this evidence and knowledge our standing of the metaphysical structure of Minoan religion, its operational spirituality is partial and flawed.

There are two key reasons for this. First, there is the problem that we have consistently conceptualised Minoan religion as a single construct. Even the most sophisticated studies have drawn together evidence from widely separated periods within the two thousand years of Minoan civilisation, with little concern for social or historical context. Until we recognize that 'Minoan Religion' is actually an academic artifice, we have little chance of penetrating the subtleties of Minoan spirituality as it changed through time. We have made great progress in recent years in appreciating the historical development of Minoan civilization, in relation to social and political changes as well as specific events. Yet we have not applied that understanding to the developments in Minoan religion appropriate to those changes.

Linked to this monolithic notion of Minoan religion has been the consistent and unquestioning application of theistic analogical models to the interpretation of Minoan religion. Even the perennial question of Minoan religion as being monotheistic or polytheistic reduces our thinking to an unsophisticated choice between a Christian model or a Greco-Roman model. We have ignored the richness of other more varied religious and spiritual analogies, long explored in the phenomenology of religion: ancestor cult, animism, pantheism, shamanism and related ecstatic models, magic, crisis cult, etc.

The purpose of this paper will be to chart a metaphysical 'history' of Minoan religion, one that contextualizes the evidence in relation to what we understand of the social and political structures of the periods. For example: if we perceive in the settlement and funerary architecture of the Prepalatial period a kinship structure indicative of extended families and clans, is not ancestor cult the most appropriate spiritual and religious structure? As the Protopalatial period explodes with the political experiments which became the first palace states and their artistic achievements, we witness a rich variety of spiritual forms: shrines co-existing in cemeteries, settlements, and on mountains, a tension between popular and elite cults, and evidence which accentuates the flexible spiritual experience of the worshippers, not the fixations of defined belief. In turn, the centralizing impulses of the Neopalatial state is clearly evident in palatial art, where ritual narratives obsessively celebrate elite dominance, validating it through direct association with religious symbols and spiritual experiences. If Knossos really was vying for political dominance in this period, then its preference for a single, all-encompassing deity is hardly surprising, and is itself a precise and self-contained socio-political context within which the idea of Minoan Goddess is an appropriate interpretation. By contrast, the Postpalatial period is marked by political and economic fragmentation, understandable in the wake of the period of the 'troubled island' and fall of the palace states. That fragmentation is matched spiritually in the careful distinction of separate deity images (the Goddesses with Upraised Arms), and pictorial images on larnakes, which increasingly suggest a disintegration of the meanings and associations of familiar religious symbols and ideas.

From this perspective, Minoan religion was never one thing, one belief system, that forces us to try and fit the evidence into our own cultural preconceptions. Rather it was a dynamic metaphysical process that expressed the emotional force that gave life to socio-political changes of Minoan history. Equally, we should be sensitive to those changes, recognizing that evidence reveals the variety of Minoan spirituality, not the singularity of a constructed religion.

Marco PIETROVITO

**Beyond the Earthly Shell: the Minoan Pitcher Bearers
(Anthropomorphic Rhyta of the Pre- and Protopalatial Periods; Differentiating the Sacred from the Divine)**

In comparison to zoomorphic rhyta, the number of anthropomorphic rhyta found from Bronze Age Cretan contexts are few and far between. This is in fact true of most of the Mediterranean cultures and beyond with few exceptions (e.g. the Pre-Columbian Mochica culture). Understandably, much fuss has been made over them to the point of attributing divine titles to some of them by the archaeologists who oversaw their return to the light after millennia of dormancy within their earthen shrouds.

Among the members of this restrictive club are such objects as the 'Goddess of Myrtos', the 'Snake Goddess of Koumasa', the 'Mother Goddess' of Mallia and the 'Priest' from Mochlos. Further members include two rhyta from the cemetery of Phourni, Archanes and several fragmentary examples from Xanthoudides' excavations in the Messara. Very few indeed for a period which extends from EM II, at the earliest, to MM III, at the latest, but significant in that they span from Prepalatial to Palatial Crete. They are also not limited to the Messara and its environs, but are found from South to North within Central Crete.

Interestingly enough, only four among them have received titles of any sort, (i.e. the Myrtos, Mochlos, Mallia and one Koumasa example), all among the earliest uncovered and all, if not particularly well made, significantly decorated. The several fragmentary examples documented by Xanthoudides and those from Phourni were given no title, but their significance is no lesser than their be-titled compatriots in that they represent as a whole, not only a class of objects, but an idea, an idea that for us constitutes a message.

Mute as they are, they have a message to impart to us about themselves, those who manufactured them and those by and for whom were poured their first and final contents into cups, onto stones or over the soil of Minoan Crete.

This then, is an exhaustive study of those vessels. Though divine attributions are thoroughly out of the question for the present author for reasons that will become clear, their sacred nature is beyond debate. As we have yet to uncover or decipher what constituted a Minoan divinity in the plastic arts, it is perhaps for this reason that the most recently excavated examples, those from Phourni, received no title. However, what the Minoan mind considered Sacred is readily available to be seen, and it is upon that which we shall focus our attention. These vessels formed an expression of the Sacred, so much so that even we, separated by millennia, recognize something of the divine, the sacred and the spirit, beyond the earthly shell.

Santo PRIVITERA**The Tomb, the House, and the Double Axes: Final Palatial Ayia Triada as a Ritual and ‘Mythical’ Place**

The renown ‘Painted Sarcophagus’ from Ayia Triada has traditionally raised the scholarly interest for the evocative, and yet enigmatic character of its decoration. Conversely, the archaeological context of such an artefact has only recently been discussed, due to the re-excavation of the related tomb by La Rosa in 1998, which has ascertained its LM IIIA2 chronology. During this latter phase the settlement at Ayia Triada underwent an ambitious renovation program, which encompassed the laying out of a large court (so-called Agora), mostly framed by storerooms and silo-complexes.

Against such an architectural frame, the reassessment in 2008 of the find-spot of a well-known deposit of LM III wall paintings, which match both the style and themes of the decoration of the sarcophagus, has enabled the author to point out a straightforward connection between the latter and the reshaping and enlargement of an impressive building (so-called ‘House of the Progressively Adjoining Rooms’, in Italian ‘Casa VAP’), which seemingly functioned as the residence of the elite in charge of this site through its abandonment in LM IIIB. It becomes consequently possible to put forward a fresh interpretation of Ayia Triada at a time in which it was turned, as has been suggested, into a ‘Ville Capitale’ of the Mesara plain in central Crete.

At LM IIIA2 Ayia Triada, both the buildings and the open spaces were clearly intertwined not only by a complex of diversified practical functions, but became components of a built environment endowed with symbolic connotations, which encompassed as well an outlying burial area, in use over more than a millennium. In such a perspective, both the finds from ‘Casa VAP’ and the decorated panels of the ‘Painted Sarcophagus’ can be validly exploited to highlight the social behaviour underlying the self-representation of the local ruling group. While being portrayed on the ‘Painted Sarcophagus’ in a setting that appears as a ‘Painted Town’, the members of such a group seemingly carried out rituals such as animal sacrifices, offerings, and libations; stepped altars and double axes standing on pyramidal bases help define the local setting as a ritual place. Eventually, the supernatural beings depicted on the short sides of the ‘Painted Sarcophagus’ lead one to wonder whether they were aimed at linking such a setting to a ‘meta-physical’ dimension, the character of which was probably explained by lost mythical tales.

Olga PSYCHOYOS & Yannis KARATZIKOS

The Mycenaean Sanctuary at Proph. Ilias on Mount Arachnaio within the Religious Context of the 2nd millennium BC

The site of Proph. Ilias, on the summit of mount Arachnaio, is known from surface remains as a cult site from the Geometric period onwards. Investigation in depth has brought to light evidence of its use as an open-air sanctuary also during the Mycenaean period. The presence of a site that possesses the features of a peak sanctuary in the vicinity of Mycenae and Tiryns, is a step forward towards the knowledge of Mycenaean religion within the context of the 2nd millennium BC in the East Mediterranean region. It is extremely significant in the study of Mycenaean religion and its relation with the profane and opens new prospects in the interpretation of Mycenaean texts and iconographical material.

Dario PUGLISI

Dressing the Girl or Dressing the Goddess? Looking for a Connection between Initiation Rituals and Enacted Epiphanies in Minoan Crete

Enacted epiphanies and initiation rituals are two of the ritual practices most frequently attested in Minoan Crete by iconographical and archaeological evidence. Traditionally, they are considered as autonomous ceremonies with different aims: respectively to honor the divinity by offerings and to define the social role of the initiate by means of a public ritual. On the basis of a contextual analysis of architectural and iconographical data, I propose that these ritual practices were in fact two moments of the same ceremony or, in other words, that the female (or male) initiate was the person who enacted the goddess (or the god) in the ceremony. I support this hypothesis with a discussion on the following points:

- 1) the relationship between space and images in Xesté 3 at Akrotiri, with a specific attention to the figure of the young 'Cloth-bearer' in room 3b, that can be interpreted at the same time as a servant carrying the sacred robe for the Minoan goddess and as a male assistant involved in the female initiation ritual performed in the nearby lustral basin;
- 2) the similarities between spatial organization of Xesté 3 and other Cretan quarters with lustral basins and polythyron halls, in particular the occurrence of spaces of interaction similar to room 3b in other Minoan lustral basins;
- 3) ethnographical evidence concerning initiation rituals and, in particular, the symbolical processes of deification of young initiates;
- 4) some Greek rituals showing the role of the initiate in enacting the divinity, such as in some mystery ceremonies and in some ritual practices connected with the lyric poetry of archaic period.

Jörg RAMBACH

Early Helladic Romanos/Messenia: Filling a Well

During salvage excavations (2007-2011) in the area north of Pylos in Messenia an extended EH II settlement was discovered and excavated. An EH II well was of special interest. Presumably due to an earthquake half of the stone built circular brim and lining of the well's shaft had collapsed and blocked the shaft in a depth of about 3m below the well's mouth. Already in Early Helladic II times the remaining empty shaft was in more or less one move densely filled up to the well's mouth with hundreds of EH II pottery vessels, some obsidian- and chipped stone tools, limited traces of charcoal and some animal bones. Astonishing was the fact that many of the pottery vessels, mainly pots usable for drinking and pouring, were completely restorable or even totally undamaged. This was even valid for some large pattern painted bridge spouted basins on raised bases and for a huge pattern painted 'super-sauceboat' on a broad stemmed base with two leaf-shaped spouts at the lateral sides of the basin's rim and a large raised spout in front, vessels, which could have been used during feasting, i.e. communal drinking and eating. These observations make us argue that the filling of this well in the EH II period may not have been only an act of eliminating a hole but may have had some ritual background.

Alessandro SANAVIA & Judith WEINGARTEN

The Transformation of Tritons: Some Middle Minoan Decorated Triton Shells and an Anatolian Counterpart

Bronze Age Cretans certainly attributed a symbolic value to natural Charonia (triton) shells as well as to imitations in stone and clay. A recent, systematic review of materials in the Phaistos storerooms brought to our attention a large number of such tritons. One pair of natural shells from Room IL in the south-west quarter of the First Palace was carved in relief and then decorated with white and (possibly) red paint, traces of which remain. Such examples are evidence for carving shells on the site and probably also for an intentional darkening of their surfaces in order to emphasize the painted decorations. Indirect evidence for such decoration of natural shells is seen on clay reproductions of tritons from Phaistos and Knossos which were painted in Kamares style with white slashes on a black ground and, in one case, with added red. The purpose of darkening and decorating the triton shells presumably was to prepare them for ritual display. We then discuss a decorated triton shell from MBA Kültepe which had been treated in a surprisingly similar manner. The Anatolian shell was also incised with figurative decoration and ritual insignia, which provides a suggestive parallel for the incised Minoan Genii on a stone triton-rhyton from LM IA (?) Malia. Finally, we consider the significance of these decorated tritons in religious performances.

Ann-Louise SCHALLIN

The Liminal Zone – the Evidence from the Late Bronze Age Dendra Cemetery

Axel W. Persson, the first excavator of the Dendra cemetery in the Argolid, presented his explorations in two volumes, which were published *c.* 75 years ago. His excavations comprised a Mycenaean tholos tomb and a number of chamber tombs. From his detailed accounts, it appears that the tombs contained a rich material and moreover, the cemetery offers valuable information concerning ritual activities associated with the burials, which has been confirmed in later investigations. In the present paper the evidence from the Late Bronze Age cemetery at Dendra is used as a basis for studying concepts of liminality.

Death is one of the moments of transition in life. For the living it is important to effect this event through ritual activities and both pre-liminal rites concerned with the separation from the existing world and post-liminal rites – the incorporation into the new world – are performed.

When the Mycenaeans experienced death, they performed specific and appropriate rites and ceremonies in order to connect with the transcendental world and bridge the gulf between this world and the other beyond. This world and the other world were separated by a liminal zone, which partakes of the qualities of both and this is where the focus of ritual activity takes place. Special requirements of purity may exist here and a heightened awareness is appropriate, since there is risk of pollution where transition between life and death takes place. The liminal zone is a special and mysterious region, which carries the risks of hidden dangers. The ritual actions of propitiation directed towards the supernatural powers consist of food and blood sacrifice, libations, gifts of non-consumable material objects, prayer and the payment of respect.

The present paper aims at a reconstruction of the ritual activities performed at the Dendra cemetery through the reflection of the material remains and the analysis of the structural components of the tombs: the dromos, the stomion and the chamber.

Norbert SCHLAGER

Mysterious Creatures: a Paleontological Approach

Bronze Age Aegean art shows a vast array of fantastic beings who by the lack of written sources remain absolutely nameless to us and defy any ready interpretation. Though griffins, sphinxes and an isolated Minotaur (not to be confused with the series of monsters made up of head, the upper body and foreparts of a quadruped combined with human legs) are easily identified and given familiar names when compared to their Egyptian, Near Eastern and later Greek equivalents, others do not have close parallels and are dubbed Minoan Genius or Minoan Dragon quite arbitrarily. Their particular iconographies seem to be well assessed, but a close look at their anatomical features reveals certain peculiarities that are not straightforward explained. Moreover, their specific role and meaning in pictorial representations, often interpreted as cultic scenes or mythological events, are far from being fully understood, let alone their assumed presence in legends, folklore and superstitious popular beliefs. And what of the many unexplained *Phantastische Kombinationen* within the Zakros sealings? Are they to be perceived solely as imaginary hybrids without any significance at all? Or may they still represent some viable creatures despite their nonsensical anatomy?

Drawing on the fossil record of Crete and the Aegean islands, some useful hints as to the iconography and anatomical details of many a mysterious creature in the Aegean Bronze Age can be provided by modern paleontology. Given the well attested knowledge of widespread fossil remains referred to by ancient Greek and Roman writers, the Neolithic and Bronze Age inhabitants of Crete and the Aegean must also have been aware of the ubiquitous presence in their natural surroundings of skeletal and fossilized relics. Various components of large and small proboscideans (*Deinotherium* sp., *Mammuthus* sp., *Elephas* vs. *Palaeoloxodon* sp.), hippos (*Hippopotamus* sp.), giant deer (*Candiacervus* sp.), giraffes (*Helladotherium* sp.), giant swans (*Cygnus* sp.) and other extinct animals are found frequently embedded in weathered rocks, or mingled up and exposed upon the earth's surface. Even fossil man would have been encountered now and then as well as his primitive artifacts. As did their Greek descendants, the Bronze Age people would have declared skulls, teeth, horns and bones as the remnants of extinct monsters and earthborn Giants from a distant past, who stirred their imagination and gave rise to numerous gruesome tales, but also to manifold artistic expression. Eventually, such tales of local lore may have evolved into mythological concepts depicted in various artistic media, thus creating the strange creatures found in Bronze Age Aegean art possibly even with religious connotations.

Irene SERRANO LAGUNA

di-u-ja

di-u-ja is a Mycenaean theonym traditionally interpreted as Zeus' female counterpart, because of their mutual Indo-European root. However, considering that *e-ra* (Hera) is also attested in the Linear B tablets, this interpretation creates a problem. Indeed in PY Tn 316 we find both theonyms, *di-u-ja* and *e-ra*, together with *di-we* (Zeus). This fact has been explained as a stage of the Greek pantheon in which Zeus was paired with both an Indo-European and a Pre-Hellenic divinity at the same time. I will propose an alternative interpretation of *di-u-ja* that may shed new light on this old problem.

Cynthia W. SHELMERDINE

Poseidon, *pa-ki-ja-na* and Horse-taming Nestor

The prominence of Poseidon in the Pylos Linear B tablets has long been recognized. His connection with *pa-ki-ja-na*, a significant cult place as well as a district center of the Hither Province, is confirmed by a recent quasi-join in the Fr series (Petrakis 2010). *Metaphysis* seems a good occasion to review what we know of Poseidon in the Bronze Age, his particular significance at Pylos, and his association with *pa-ki-ja-na*. We begin by summarizing the tablet evidence, which informs us about where he is worshipped (not just at *pa-ki-ja-na*), about offerings and festivals, and about his links with other deities.

We also consider evidence for the Mycenaean nature of this god. In later Greek cult Poseidon has several associations: with horses and bulls, with earthquakes, and of course with the sea. How many of these go back to the Bronze Age? It has been argued that the horse/chariot ritual at the sacred grove of Poseidon in Onchestos (*H.Ap.* 229-238) plausibly reflects Mycenaean beliefs (Palaima 2009, who also notes the particular connection to Pylos). The figurines of riders and charioteers along with bovinds in the Mycenaean sanctuary at Ayios Konstantinos on Methana may also reflect worship of Poseidon; his worship was important in the area after the Bronze Age (Konsolaki 2002), with a sanctuary at Kalaureia (Poros). There is no justification, though, for the claim that Poseidon was considered a god of earthquakes by the Mycenaeans. There is a separate deity at Knossos, *e-ne-si-da-o-ne* (M 719, restorable on Gg 717 and perhaps Gg 704), but no reason to equate him with Poseidon, who also appears there (V 52, cf. X 5560). The later Poseidon Ennosigaios may instead be a syncretism of a lesser deity with a greater (cf. Artemis Eileithyia). As for Poseidon's association with the sea, there is little Mycenaean evidence to go on, but a boat model found with the animal figurines at Ayios Konstantinos may be indicative.

At Pylos itself, faunal evidence for bull sacrifice and feasting (with conservation of the femur, humerus and mandible; Isaakidou *et al.* 2002) matches well with both the tablet evidence for feasts in honor of Poseidon, and with his mythical links to bulls. Also perhaps relevant is the decorative program of Hall 64 in the Southwestern Building, a structure that in all likelihood was constructed in LH IIIA (Nelson 2001), when Pylos was first establishing itself as the primary power of the region. The combat scenes in Hall 64, which include chariot and charioteer as well as combat on foot, are an attempt at self-definition by these particular Mycenaeans (Davis and Bennet 1999). Subsequently a scene with several ships has been reconstructed in the same room (<http://classics.uc.edu/prap/reports/HARP2006.html>). The combination of chariot and seafaring forcefully brings to mind Poseidon, the principal Pylian deity, at a formative stage of Pylian self-representation. Other examples of naval imagery in Pylos frescoes predating the final stage of the LH IIIB palace have also been noticed (Shaw 2001; <http://classics.uc.edu/prap/reports/HARP2006.html>).

There seem then to be good grounds for understanding Poseidon at Pylos as a significant god with associations to both horses and the sea. The scene in *Odyssey* 3 provides a nice echo of these Mycenaean realities, describing a seaside feast and offering of bull thighs in honor of Poseidon, by 9 groups of participants, under the supervision of the Pylian *wanax* himself, horse-taming Nestor.

DAVIS, J. and J. BENNET 1999. "Making Mycenaeans: Warfare, Territorial Expansion, and Representations of the Other in the Pylian Kingdom." In R. LAFFINEUR, ed., *POLEMOS. Le contexte guerrier en Égée à l'âge du bronze* (Liège and Austin 1999) 105-120.

- ISAAKIDOU, V., P. HALSTEAD, J. DAVIS, and S. STOCKER. 2002. "Burnt Animal Sacrifice in Late Bronze Age Greece: New Evidence from the Mycenaean 'Palace of Nestor, Pylos.'" *Antiquity* 76 (2002) 86-92.
- KONSOLAKI, E. 2002. "A Mycenaean sanctuary on Methana." In R. HÄGG, ed., *Peloponnesian Sanctuaries and Cults* (Stockholm 2002) 25-36.
- NELSON, M. 2001. *The Architecture of Epáno Englianos, Greece*. Diss. University of Toronto 2001.
- PALAIMA, T.G. 2009. "Continuity from the Mycenaean Period in an historical Boeotian cult of Poseidon (and Erinys)." In D. DANIELIDOU, ed., *Δώρον· τιμητικός τομός για τον καθηγητή Σπύρο Ιακωβίδη* (Athens 2009) 527-536.
- PETRAKIS, V. 2010. "Localising Pylian Religion: Thoughts on the Geographic References in the Fr Tablets Provoked by a New Quasi-Join." *Pasiphae* 4 (2010) 199-215.
- SHAW, M. 2001. "Symbols of Naval Power at the Palace at Pylos: The Evidence from the Frescoes." In S. and K.-V. von EICKSTEDT, eds., *ITHAKI: Festschrift für Jörg Schäfer* (Würzburg 2001) 37-43.

Jeffrey S. SOLES

Priestess, Hero, Goddess: New Evidence for Minoan Religion

The foremost question bedeviling Minoan archaeology today is whether the civilization was ruled from a single center by a king like its contemporaries in the Near East or divided into many smaller independent or semi-independent polities. Exactly how was Minoan civilization organized and sustained through many centuries? And what role did women play in its organization? Recent discoveries from the Greek-American excavations at Mochlos provide new information on the subject. They emphasize the all-important role that religion and ritual played in the social order and suggest a likely answer to the larger question. In particular they provide new information about three figures who played a dominant role in the civilization, one of whom has not been previously identified. The first and most well-known of these is the Minoan goddess herself who appears, sculpted in low-relief, on the ivory lid of a jewelry box found at Mochlos in 2010. The lid pictures her epiphany and belongs to many similar scenes shown on contemporary gold signet rings; many times larger than those rings, however, the lid depicts many additional details. She is seated on a throne in a pose that has many parallels and greets a procession of four figures, two male and two female. The male figure who leads the procession also appears in many signet rings, sometimes alone with the goddess and sometimes with other figures. Whenever he appears, often with outstretched arm, he communicates with the goddess. He has the ability to speak with her directly. In the pyxis he introduces the figures behind him. He is also larger than they are. These two characteristics, his size and his ability to address the goddess, suggest that he was a hero or ancestor figure who, like all such figures, served as an intercessor between god and man. The third figure is the owner of the box who may be identified as a priestess from the jewelry that was found inside. It consisted of numerous ivory hair pins and beads that belonged to necklaces or in some cases perhaps bracelets. It included 80 spherical beads of amethyst and other beads of carnelian, lapis lazuli, silver and glass paste/faience. Many of the latter are representations of the flora and fauna of the physical world, the largest number of which are shaped like grains of wheat and drops of water. Others, including beads in the shape of a papyrus flower, a lily, a bull's head, and a figure-of-eight shield were religious symbols that were related to the goddess iconographically and alone could serve as her symbols. They form the regalia of the woman who owned the box, and like all regalia in all ages, served to link her to the divinity. In 2012 it was possible to excavate a large part of the woman's house, where the pyxis was found fallen into a basement room. The house was located next to the town's main ceremonial center. It was provided with a small 'window of appearances' in its east façade that overlooked a rectangular platform that in turn opened onto a small court. A large offering of emmer wheat was burned on top of this platform in front of the window where the priestess is likely to have appeared in her regalia. The offering was made to a woman who was no ordinary priestess.

The presentation scene on the pyxis lid, in which these three figures play important roles, takes place on a portable stage supported by 'incurved altars', like that shown in the fresco of the Goddess and crocus gatherers from Xeste 3 at Akrotiri. It represents an actual live performance which may commemorate a political, as well as a religious event and serve a propagandistic purpose.

Nancy R. THOMAS

‘Hair Stars’ and ‘Sun Disks’ on Lions and Bulls: a Reality Check on Movements of Motifs and Symbols in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean

Aegean scholars have worked for generations to produce a paradigm for separating *correlation* from *causation* whenever the same motif appears in the Aegean, in Egypt and in the Near East. It is indeed difficult to tell whether an artistic motif was transferred from one culture to another or if, instead, it was independently produced in different places. Some motifs are so visually distinctive – and unnatural – such as the Tawaret, a monstrous hybrid from Egypt, that the appearance of this creature in Bronze Age Cretan art is, in itself, sufficient evidence of intercultural contact and of at least an elementary transfer of image.¹ Problems arise, however, when a natural motif has such a simple shape, like the sun and stars, that the natural and symbolic renderings of it look essentially identical within a culture and also across cultures. At this point, scholars may be lured into seeing inter-regional associations and connections that are unsupported by the evidence.

This problem appears in a study of New Kingdom tomb painting where we read that in the Theban Tomb of Inher-kha (TT 359) red circles atop bucrania are “‘solar disks’ [that can] be recognized as Cretan rosettes, which originally depicted swirls of hair”.² In this statement the scholar equated the disk shape not only with the sun but also with a flower shape in another culture which, she said, sprang from a pattern in real animal fur. Since red solar disks and bucrania have a history in Egyptian art, and since the star-shaped fur pattern is also found – and depicted – on Egyptian cattle, we may wonder why any of these motifs should be given a Minoan point of origin. This one statement about Egyptian tomb decoration reveals three problematic assumptions: (1) confluence of shape with symbol, (2) transfer from culture to culture, and (3) transfer from nature to art. The ‘hair star’ in lion art has also been cited as evidence of intercultural movements of art forms. It, too, is subject to problematic treatment. Even though we now know that this hair pattern is found in real lions and that real lions lived in Bronze Age Greece, we have not yet sorted out the literal from the symbolic in the depiction of this starry motif, either in the Aegean or elsewhere.

I propose to use ‘hair stars’ and ‘sun disks’ on lions and bulls as a test case to see, first, what evidence would be *necessary and sufficient* to establish intercultural transmission of the motifs, and second, if such evidence actually exists. These questions also lie at the heart of other and more complex inter-regional puzzles, such as the minoanizing wall paintings at Tell el-Dab‘a, Malkata, and Tel Kabri. Using a simple motif, we can test the evidence for separating literal from symbolic, local from borrowed. In doing so, we will strengthen our paradigm for distinguishing correlation from causation in shared motifs in the Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean.

¹ J. WEINGARTEN, *The Transformation of Egyptian Taweret into the Minoan Genius* (1991).

² S. HODEL-HOENES, *Life and Death in Ancient Egypt* (2000) 266.

Caroline THURSTON

New Approaches to Mycenaean Figurines in LH IIIC

The LH IIIC variants of the Mycenaean types of human and animal figurines have been acknowledged since the creation of Elizabeth French's seminal typology. However, increased excavation of sites of this period and more focussed studies on the development, interrelation and variation of LH IIIC pottery have made it increasingly apparent that revision and augmentation of current approaches to these figurines is required. This poster considers some of the methodological issues and typological modifications resulting from recent data, particularly with regards to contextual information. In what contexts are figurines found in LH IIIC, and can a 'ritual' function be supported or refuted?

Melissa VETTERS

All the Same yet not Identical? Mycenaean Terracotta Figurines in Context

If religion is conceptualized as a society's belief system expressed in repetitive and formalized ritual acts that form a body of cohesive social performances, the study of material remains may reveal not so much the actual content of a prehistoric religion but rather the impact of religious performances on social relationships. The study of religion in the Mycenaean period has sometimes been approached as if ritual acts that left material remains in the archaeological record stem from a coherent and monolithic belief system.

One step removed from the concept of a static and all-encompassing Mycenaean religion are models that stress the social component of ritual performances that originated partly in idiosyncratic adaptations of Minoan religious expressions and partly in hard-to-grasp Helladic components. With a view to different social practices specific recurrent find patterns have either been ascribed to an official or popular cult. Accordingly, a development of Mycenaean religion has been broadly sketched from an incipient stage in the Shaft Grave period, where Minoan religious symbols were used rather in an emblematic manner to more integrated performative and ostentatious ways of religious ceremonies in the palatial period that reinforced certain social distinctions, mainly between the palace and the populace. Most researchers also emphasize that this body of religious ceremonies was transformed into more diverse ritual acts with the demise of the palaces on the Greek mainland to fit the needs of less hierarchically stratified post-palatial societies. Although all of the above approaches touched upon questions such as how and where religious ceremonies may have been instrumentalized to confer power or prestige onto individuals or certain social groups, they rather promoted a cohesive picture of Mycenaean religion. Thus, idiosyncrasies in regional and temporal patterns have seldom been sketched and the notion that such concepts as official and popular cult would imply the constitution of codified systems of beliefs and widely recognized canonical acts of ritual performance has often been glossed over.

This paper discusses the question of a coherent belief system in the Mycenaean period on the basis of terracotta figurines. These start to appear in the material assemblages of the Greek mainland immediately prior to the emergence of the palaces and continue to feature in domestic, public and funerary contexts until the very end of the Late Bronze Age. It is argued that the three-dimensional, portable and easily reproducible figurines acted as an ideal transport medium to confer new religious ideas adopted by the incipient palatial elite onto the wider populace. The spread of Mycenaean figurines in areas of the previous rather aniconic and austere Middle Helladic societies, however, seems to have gained its own momentum and figurines soon feature in many funerary, domestic and cultic assemblages of the Greek mainland. The aim of this paper is to outline commonalities and differences in ritual acts involving figurines mainly based on case studies from the Argolid. Patterns in the deposition of figurines are traced diachronically to investigate the association of figurines with entrances and hearths in domestic (and burial) contexts as well as their frequent association with miniature vessels, beads and steatite conuli in funerary, sanctuary and even domestic assemblages. One of the main questions regards specific preferences in the selection of individual figurine types within settlement, burial and sanctuary contexts. A short juxtaposition of 'urban' versus 'rural' distributions of figurine types sketches intra-regional differences in the palatial period. The discussion of a few examples of typologically older figurines in cult contexts leads to an assessment of changes in figurine consumption patterns in the post-palatial period and divergent intra-site and regional distribution patterns.

Andreas G. VLACHOPOULOS

Images of *Physis* or Perceptions of *Metaphysis*? The Iconography of the Xeste 3 Building at Akrotiri, Thera

The wall-paintings of Xeste 3 constitute the best-conserved assemblage of Aegean pictorial art of the 2nd millennium BC. From the earlier stages of their conservation until recently these multi-figural compositions from both the ground and the first floor were understood as ‘referring’ to each other, in dialogue within their natural milieu and inextricably related to the architecture of the building they adorned.

The recent restoration of the wall-paintings of the second floor of Xeste 3, where all walls and friezes were decorated with monumental spirals and symmetrical groups of rosettes, has shown that this spacious and much higher upper storey was decorated entirely with colourful geometric subjects in absolutely symmetrical arrangement. This ‘aniconic spiraliform world’ has been commented on in relation to the rites of passage alluded to in the Xeste 3 wall-paintings and has been interpreted as the space reserved for the stage of isolation of the youth(s) awaiting initiation.

Where does *physis* stop in the Xeste 3 iconography and where does *metaphysis* start? Do the peopled scenes of saffron-gathering, saffron-offering and procession only depict the standard Theran environment, where the gender-and-age-differentiated rituals of the community were enacted, or are these flowery meadows perceived as the metaphysical universe where gods, acolytes, nymphs, heroes and mythical creatures emphatically project their didactic / instructive qualities to the young individuals in transitional state? Is the ‘non-human (but anthropomorphic) iconography’ of the lower floors of Xeste 3 in hermeneutic contradiction to the ‘non-figural’ iconography of the upper floor, or is this aniconic but emblematic space complementary to the Late Bronze Age Aegeans’ perception of *metaphysis*?

Sofia VOUTSAKI

The Mycenaean *Cosmos*: the Dead and the Living in the Early Mycenaean Period

This paper discusses the demarcation of the Mycenaean cosmological universe, and more specifically the boundary between the domain of the dead and the world of living as created by means of mortuary ritual and ceremony.

The aim of this paper is to understand changing attitudes to the dead and the ancestors from the Middle Helladic to the early Mycenaean period. This will be achieved in three stages: At first, the slow evolution of mortuary practices during the Middle Bronze Age and their dramatic transformation during the transition to the Mycenaean period will be reconstructed. Second, an attempt will be made to reconstruct the beliefs underlying the mortuary rites by using anthropological literature and historical analogies. Finally, the changes in the mortuary ritual will be placed within their social and historical context.

The main argument in this paper is that the emphasis on cosmological boundaries and the emergence of new conceptions of mortuary contagion and liminality at the end of the Middle Helladic period should be interpreted against the fluidity of social relations and cultural interconnections in this unstable period. It will be argued that the Mycenaean funerary ideology can only be understood if we reconstruct the local Helladic tradition, but also examine the increasing receptivity to outside (Aegean, Minoan, Mediterranean) influences and the growing need to define a local identity in an increasingly interconnected world.

In an attempt to reconstruct both broader processes of change and different local trajectories, the paper will focus on two regions of the southern mainland, the Argolid and Laconia, which share networks of exchanges, but also receive different stimuli. The study will be based on a systematic examination of the mortuary practices (the relation between tombs and houses, the location of the cemeteries in relation to settlements, the design of the tombs, the treatment of the body, the provision with offerings, the ritual accompanying the disposal of the dead, i.e. sacrifices, libations, 'farewell toast', etc.) from the Middle Helladic to the early Mycenaean period. The paper will therefore present some of the results of the Middle Helladic Argolid Project, as well as some first observations on the early Mycenaean cemetery at Ayios Vasilios in Laconia which is currently being excavated.

Jörg WEILHARTNER

Textual Evidence for the Use of Fire in Mycenaean Rituals

The question of whether the ritual of burnt animal sacrifice (θυσία or 'Brandopfer'), involving the ritual burning of bare bones wrapped in fat and covered with small pieces of meat representing the god's portion, was practiced in Mycenaean Greece has been the subject of some discussion. Recently, possible evidence for burnt animal sacrifice was reported for several Mycenaean sites by the means of observation of heavily burnt and carbonized animal bones taken as indication for this kind of offering (as distinguished from unburnt or lightly charred osteological material taken to represent the refuse left from ritual meals). In addition, the entry *di-wo-nu-so-jo e-ka-ra*, the hearth (ἔσχάρα) of Dionysus, documented on tablet Ea 102+107 from Pylos, seems to provide textual evidence for the existence of a sacrificial hearth or altar serving as a structure where the fire was lit and the offering burnt. As a consequence, I will argue for a Late Bronze Age date of the ritual practice of burning certain parts of the victim. In dealing with this subject the discussion of the degree of continuity between some cult practices of the Aegean Late Bronze Age and those of the Archaic-Classical periods will be touched upon in this paper. Another kind of ritual involving the use of fire seems to be indicated by the term *tu-wo*. Of particular interest is tablet Fq 126 from Thebes, which starts with the temporal clause *o-te tu-wo-te-to* (ὅτε θύος θέτο). It will be suggested that this entry is likely to refer to aromatic substances placed on an altar in order to be burnt as an offering. Thus, there is probable textual evidence for two rituals based on fire. Both rituals may have served as a kind of communication between the human celebrants and divinities by means of the smoke rising above from the fire. This paper seeks to investigate the symbolic meaning of these rituals and tries to provide some insight into underlying belief systems.

Helene WHITTAKER

Of Horns and Axes

In this paper I will discuss the connection between the double axe and bulls. The double axe was undoubtedly one of the most important religious symbols in Minoan Crete. There is, however, no general consensus regarding its meaning. That the double axe was associated with the sacrifice of bulls and used to kill or to stun the animal was first suggested by Martin P. Nilsson in 1950 and probably still remains the most common interpretation, although perhaps more by default than for any other reasons. This interpretation is not implausible since the sacrifice of bulls would seem to have been part of Minoan ritual as documented by the iconographical evidence, most notably on the Ayia Triada Sarcophagus. Moreover, the figures carrying large double axes with a definite air of purpose that are depicted on a number of seals could plausibly be identified as sacrificial priests and priestesses (e.g. CMS II.6, no.10). The interpretation of the double axe as a sacrificial implement has all the same been questioned, not least because we have no depictions showing it actually being used as such. The double axes depicted on the Ayia Triada Sarcophagus seem to be symbols rather than cult equipment, but this may be debatable.

The iconographical evidence clearly indicates that there was some kind of symbolic connection between the double axe and bulls, whether this was related to sacrifice or not. Mention can be made of a number of seals which show a bull's head with a double axe between the horns (e.g. CMS II.3, no.11). The same motif also occurs on pottery. In most examples it is only the head of the animal which is depicted in connection with the double axe. The symbolic value of the double axe would seem to have been particularly associated with the head and perhaps specifically with the horns of the animal. It is noticeable that the horns can be shown in many different ways.

The use of axes to shape the horns of cattle is widely attested in eastern African. The axes that are used in this process acquire exceptional symbolic value. This practice has an attested long time-depth and it is believed that it can be traced far back into prehistory and significantly in this context, it seems to be documented in ancient Egyptian iconography. That part of the symbolic meaning of the double axe in Minoan Crete could derive from its use in manipulating the horns of living bulls into a desirable shape is a possible interpretation of the iconographical evidence, which may also be supported by osteological evidence. In the last part of my paper I will discuss the iconographical evidence for the association between bulls and double axes in terms of ritual meaning and cosmological beliefs.

Malcolm H. WIENER

Images of Warfare in Minoan Crete in their Aegean Context and the Denial of their Implications in Contemporary Discussions

Evidence of warfare is abundant in Minoan Crete. Images of warfare (e.g., the Siege Rhyton, images on seals, etc.); state of the art weapons (especially the Type A swords, but already implied in the First Palace Period swords from Malia); and evidence of specialized training for warfare (required by the nature of the Type A swords) are clear examples.

Along with the evidence there is also denial (a concept familiar in the city of Freud). Some, for example, prefer to see Crete governed by competing feasting factions. One proposal has these factions sharing the rule of Crete from their ‘country houses’, or villas, cooperatively building Knossos in order to have a place to hold competing feasts (Hamilakis 2002). Those with a better grip on reality see the appearance of the ‘country houses’ in (uniquely) the Second Palace Period, sitting in the countryside undefended by walls and indefensible in location, as evidence that Knossos had established firm control and with it, peace.

It has also been asserted that Minoan Crete in the Neopalatial Period would have lacked the means to control for a period of time sites in the Cyclades such as Melos (Davis and Gorogianni 2008). The population of Crete in LM IA has been estimated at 300,000–400,000. Bronze for weapons was plentiful. The population of Melos has been estimated at 2,000–3,000. To assert that at it is unlikely that any Cretan center had the resources to administer places like Melos for long is to enter the realm of the delusional.

DAVIS, J. L. and E. GOROGIANNI 2008. “Potsherds from the Edge: the Construction of Identities and the Limits of Minoanized Areas of the Aegean.” In *Horizon: A Colloquium on the Prehistory of the Cyclades, 25–28 March 2004, McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge University*, edited by N. BRODIE, J. DOOLE, G. GAVALAS, and C. RENFREW, 339–48. Cambridge.

HAMILAKIS, Y. 2002. “Too Many Chiefs? Factional Competition in Neopalatial Crete.” In *Monuments of Minos: Rethinking the Minoan Palaces. Proceedings of the International Workshop “Crete of the Hundred Palaces?” Held at the Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, 14–15 December 2001*, edited by J. DRIESSEN, I. SCHOEP, and R. LAFFINEUR, 179–99. *Aegaeum* 23. Liège.

Assaf YASUR-LANDAU

The *Baetyl* and the Stele: Aniconic Traditions in Levantine and Aegean Cult

The study of rounded stones, *baetyls* (or *omphaloi*), as the focal points of Minoan cult activities has been ongoing for over a century. Scholars from Evans to Warren, Younger, and Hitchcock, to name but a few, have remarked on the aniconic nature of *baetyls*, as well as on their strong connection to the world of nature – a fundamental element of Minoan religion. In addition to the find of actual *baetyls*, vivid depictions on gold rings, such as those from Archanes Tholos A, Kalyvia Tomb 11, and Sellopoulo Tomb 4, provide intriguing hints to the ritual activity involving *baetyls* and trees. Younger (2009: 49) reconstructs a ceremony in which “a woman would stand on the pavement while a man or woman would pull at the tree... A man or a woman would embrace the *omphalos* hoping for a sign of favor from the divinity (possibly a passing bird, dragonfly, or butterfly)”.

At the same time, the archaeological study of standing stones, *stelai* or *massebot* (Heb.), found in 2nd millennium BC cultic contexts in the Levant has a similarly long history of research. Such stones have been identified in sites such as Byblos, Gezer, Megiddo, Hazor, and Tel Kitan, mostly in open-air cult places. Most of these stones are aniconic, though few do show symbols of divinity. Differently from the case of Minoan Crete, however, there are readily available literary sources from the second and 1st millennia BC Levant mentioning sacred stones; these have been frequently – yet not always cautiously – used for the interpretation of the cultic significance of standing stones.

This paper will therefore present the parallel lives of sacred stones in both the Aegean and the Levant, with an emphasis on the different methodologies used for their interpretation. While a direct interregional analogy between the functions of these stones cannot be supported at this stage, the mere existence of open-air cult places in which such stone stood may offer insights into both Minoan and Syro-Canaanite societies.

YOUNGER, J. G. 2009. “Tree Tugging and Omphalos Hugging on Minoan Gold Rings.” In: D’AGATA, A. L. and VAN de MOORTEL, A. (eds.). *Archaeologies of Cult: Essays on Ritual and Cult in Crete in Honor of Geraldine C. Gesell* (*Hesperia* Supplements, Vol. 42). Princeton: 43–49.

John G. YOUNGER

Identifying Myth in Minoan Art

In looking for narrative in Minoan art, I have used a method whereby I notice an iconographic feature that is unusual and that repeats often enough to make me realize there must be a more complex reason for its existence than just circumstance.

This method has yielded few results. I expect that the Minoans (who may have invented the dactylic hexameter; Ruijgh in Duhoux & Davies 2011) had a rich mythology. But the lack of a similarly rich series of artistic references to it must mean that official art trumped narrative – I would go so far as to say that official Knossian art smothered personal, regional, and even religious narrative.

There are, however, small ‘whiffs’ of implied stories. I give three.

1. A fresco from Akrotiri, Xeste 3, room 4, the main room, depicts two blue monkeys fighting with swords (center) while two monkeys (at left) play lyres. Technically, this is an ‘animal satire’, much like the Bremen Town Musicians recorded by the Brothers Grimm. But blue monkeys pick crocus (the Knossos Saffron Gatherers), as do girls in another fresco from Xeste 3, and attend the goddess in the same fresco as does a griffin, and a monkey gestures at a shrine (fresco from Beta/Delta, Akrotiri) as do women on rings. And women do wield swords (*CMS* II, 3, 16; Mycenae, House with the Fresco). Such connections imply a wider narrative cycle. I think of the mock Homeric epics of ‘pygmies vs. cranes’ and ‘frogs vs. mice’.

2. *CMS* I 17, a gold ring from the Tiryns Treasure, carries an elaborate scene: men in a boat at a town (buildings above): in one building stand a man and woman (at right), and between are a man and woman. *CMS* VI 280, a gold ring said to be from ‘near Candia’, carries a simpler scene: at left, a man and woman in front of a boat with a small female figure and tree above. The man may be grasping the woman by her wrist or hand. Or I may be influenced by the virtually identical scene on a Late Geometric *louterion* (BM 1899.2-19.1). Does this last example depict Paris abducting Helen or a Phoenician abducting Io (Hdt 1.1)? Certainly the Tiryns ring has some connections with the Naval Procession fresco and the ‘Candia’ ring has some connections with the Hogarth and Isopata rings (small floating humans) and with the Mochlos ring (tree transported on a boat). These are connections enough, therefore, to imply another, wider narrative cycle.

3. Finally, two gold rings, one that has survived intact, *CMS* V 173 from the Athens Agora, tomb VIII (LH IIIA1-2 context), and one that impressed a sealing from Chania, (*CMS* V Supplement 1A, 133, LM IB context), depict a man striding energetically, holding in one hand some kind of staff, and, in the other, a double leash attached to two females. A lentoid, *CMS* I 159, from a Mycenae chamber tomb, shows a large central woman flanked by two small females also on leashes, their hands apparently bound behind them (perhaps, too, the Athens Agora ring). The same scenes, without leashes, appears twice more: a lentoid from ‘Mochos’ (*CMS* II 3, 218) and a ring impression from Ayia Triada (*CMS* II 6, 1). The latter includes a shrine with tree at right. While the specifics of any narrative here are far from clear, it would seem to involve two, perhaps unwilling, females (girls?) being leashed by a man and brought to a shrine by a woman. I am reminded of a story, ‘the Koronaia’, told by the Classical poet Korinna of Boeotia.

Michaela ZAVADIL

Souvenirs from afar: Star Disk Pendants and Moulded Spacer Beads Reconsidered

Pendants made of blue glass showing an eight-pointed respectively six-pointed star were found in some Early Mycenaean tholos tombs. From settlements only one specimen is known so far; it comes from a LH IIIB context in Mycenae. Similarities with star disk pendants found in Mesopotamia, showing eight-pointed stars, suggest a Near Eastern origin for the similar looking pieces from Greece. On the other hand two pendants, which may stem from one and the same mould, feature six-pointed stars. For them vitreous prototypes from Mesopotamia are lacking. B. Eder (2009) has pointed to their relationship with golden pendants, which are widely documented in the Near East in the 2nd millennium BC. She suggested that the vitreous pendants showing six-pointed stars imitate these golden jewels. However, this hypothesis does not take into account the differences in size between the pendants made of gold (diam. ca. 2.5–3.5 cm) respectively glass (diam. 4.5 cm).

Regardless, it remains unsettled whether the religious meaning, which relates the Near Eastern pendants to the cult of Ishtar, was of importance to the people of the Greek mainland. R. Starr (1939, 92f.) proposed that the star disk pendants found in Temple A in Nuzi served together with different glass beads as wall decoration. Such a use cannot be assigned to the pendants found in Greece.

However, the occurrence of star disk pendants in Greece is not an isolated phenomenon: from Mesopotamia moulded spacer beads made of blue glass came to Early Mycenaean Greece, too, where they are known only from tombs. Analysing the contexts in which pendants and spacer beads were found not only in Greece, but also in the Near East, will contribute to a better understanding of this group of jewels.

EDER, B., “Zur historischen Geographie Triphyliens in mykenischer Zeit”, in: F. BLAKOLMER – C. REINHOLDT – J. WEILHARTNER – G. NIGHTINGALE (eds.), *Österreichische Forschungen zur Ägäischen Bronzezeit 2009. Akten der Tagung vom 6. bis 7. März 2009 am Fachbereich Altertumswissenschaften der Universität Salzburg*, Wien 2011, 105–117.

STARR, R. F. S., *Nuzi. Report on the excavations at Yorgan Tepa near Kirkuk, Iraq, conducted by Harvard University in conjunction with the American Schools of Oriental Research and the University Museum of Philadelphia 1927–1931*, Cambridge Mass. 1937–1939.