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THE ROLE OF THE RULER IN THE PREHISTORIC AEGEAN

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ART AND POLITICS IN THE AEGEAN: THE MISSING RULER *

The idea of kingship is inherent in the very name we use for the civilization of Crete in the Bronze Age: Minoan. At the beginning of *The Palace of Minos*, Sir Arthur Evans explained the name he gave -- and which all the world now uses -- to the civilization that he uncovered in ancient Crete. King Minos, with his Homeric epithet "oioophron" (the destroyer) was, according to Evans, not to be taken seriously. It was "an exaggeration of chauvinism". According to Evans, "the spade of the excavator has done much to explain and confute them (the Athenians). The ogre's den turns out to be a peaceful abode of priest-kings (emphasis mine), in some respect more modern in its equipments than anything produced by classical Greece" ¹.

We must credit Evans's ability to peel away part of the myth in the light of his archaeological finds, and to recognize the factor of "Athenian chauvinism" in its historical transformation. But perhaps we must go further in the process of peeling away. I would like to take the opportunity of this session on "The Relationship of Art and Politics in the Ancient World" to review the ruler imagery in the Aegean, and to reconsider how Evans's own chauvinism entered into his interpretation of the finds from Crete. I believe that it has important implications for our understanding of how ancient Crete was governed.

Unlike his idea of "King Midas," Evans's notion of a Priest King was derived not from the Greek tradition, but from his prior studies of Egypt and the Near East, made before he began to excavate in Crete. It is striking that the ruler images produced by those civilizations, i.e., the seated king as a god from Egypt, or the king shown in association with the gods from the Near East, are absent from Aegean art. The well-attested sea-going of the Minoans and the specific examples of such ruler images that have been excavated in Crete ² provide us

* This lecture was presented as part of the Plenary Session on "Art and Politics in the Ancient World" at the Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America in December, 1985, held in Washington, D.C. I have attempted to improve the writing a little, but I have not changed any of the substance of the talk. The bibliographic citations are minimal, and for the great majority of the works of art that are discussed the reader will also want to consult the Iconographic Conspicuous prepared for this volume by John G. Younger. For more recent discussions of the issue of Aegean rulers, the reader should consult the other papers presented here.

I thank Günter Kopcke, who in a casual conversation many years ago, first alerted me to the lack of ruler iconography in the Aegean. I would also like to cite the talk by H. WATERHOUSE, "Priest Kings?", *BICS* 21 (1974) 153-155, the only work I found that dealt with the problem at the time I wrote the lecture. The following abbreviations have been used in addition to those in the *American Journal of Archaeology* 95 (1991) 1-16:

CS = V.E.G. KENNA, *Cretan Seals* (1960);
FunctMinPal = R. HÄGG and N. MARINATOS, eds., *The Function of the Minoan Palaces. Proceedings*

of the Fourth International Symposium at the Swedish Institute in Athens, 10-16 June, 1984. Skrifter utgivna av Svenska Institutet i Athen 35 (1987).

PM 11.

E.g., the statue of User from Knossos, PM 1 fig. 220, and the Neo-Babylonian seal from Platanos, CMS II no. 306.

with evidence that the Minoans were aware of these political traditions of their neighbors. Yet they never presented their own rulers in these positions.

Although Evans began his excavations of Knossos with prior ideas of Minos and Near Eastern Priest Kings in mind, he found few images to which he could attach them. And recent scholarship has cast doubt on those identifications that he did make.

The "Prince with the Feather Crown"

The major candidate for a priest king in Crete has been the Prince with the Feather Crown, executed in three-dimensional painted plaster relief in a southern room³ of the palace of Knossos (Pl. Ia). The scholar and physician, Jean Coulomb, has proved on the basis of anatomy that the torso part of the prince comes from a figure facing right, not left, and that its raised arm could not have been outstretched as it is in Evans's restoration⁴. The torso, therefore, belongs to a separate figure from that of the other fragments. Coulomb identified it as that of a boxer, and he interpreted the leg fragments as those of another boxer facing him. He left open the question of the identity of the figure with the headress. Was it a man, a woman, or a sphinx?

The beret-like headress with a plume is standard for sphinxes, and it is occasionally worn by priestesses as well. An ivory pyxis from Mycenae (Pl. Ib), which has been cited as supporting Evans's reconstruction, provides no such evidence. Now that it has been published in Poursat's *Corpus of Ivories*⁵, we can see that two men lead sphinxes on leashes, not one, and that they have no extant headresses. The better-preserved figure appears to be carrying something on his shoulder which leaves no room for a headress. Plumed headresses are worn by the sphinxes. The pyxis gives us a rare opportunity to compare the scale of the sphinxes' heads, which are much larger than those of the men.

An important factor in the identifications of the different fragments that have been combined in the reconstruction of the Prince from Knossos is the sex of the figures. In Aegean frescoes, identification of the sex depends on the skin color -- dark red for male, pure white for female. The poor preservation of the surfaces of the Prince fragments, and assumptions about the anatomy of the torso, have led to some disagreement about the sex of the figure(s). The well-known torso fragment published in *The Palace of Minos* that appears to have the surface paint preserved (Pl. Ila) is actually a replica that Evans commissioned after the excavation of the fragments. The actual torso fragment incorporated in the restoration in the Heraklion Museum is difficult to study in the poor light of the room. However, the blue and red lily necklace painted on the torso is clearly preserved and visible. Evans interpreted the red color of the lilies as the original skin color, which he believed was once covered by gold plate now worn off. It is extremely unlikely that these painted lilies were ever gilded; we have no evidence that precious metal was ever added to Aegean paintings. The blue and red paint of the necklace must have been the original colors. If so, they were surely painted on a surface of a contrasting color, i.e., not red, but white. Evans thought he observed "traces of red" on the lower part of the torso, and so have other scholars. But Mark Cameron in a careful examination found no such traces, and in his opinion, the fragments were originally white. His conclusion, stated before the appearance of Coulomb's

3 Since I gave the talk, the excellent article by W.-D. NIEMEIER, "Das Suckrelief des 'Prinzen mit der Federkrone' aus Knossos und minoische Götterdarstellungen", was published in *AM* 102 (1987) 65-98. Niemeier has investigated the evidence for the findspots of the fresco fragments, and has cited all the relevant bibliography for evaluating the fragments.

4 J. COULOMB, "Le 'Prince aux Lis' de Knossos reconsidéré", *BCH* 103 (1979) 29-40.

5 J.-C. POURSAT, *Catalogue des ivoires mycéniens du Musée National d'Athènes* (Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome fasc. 230bis: 1977) 92 no. 297, pl. XXVIII.

article, was that the fragments all derived from a single figure, a "Princess of the Bull-Ring", shown leading a bull to the arena⁶.

The well-preserved red pigment of the background which surrounds all the fragments provides, it seems to me, conclusive evidence that they were originally white. Why should all the color have disappeared from the figures, yet be preserved on the background fragments? Equally important, it is extremely unlikely that a Minoan painter would have depicted a number of dark red life-size figures against a background of the same color. The original figures must have been white and they therefore must have been female. I can attest from working on the Kea paintings that fresco fragments are frequently found with red stains on the surface, either from ochre in the soil or from the red pigment of fragments buried next to them. This may have been the case with the traces Evans observed, which are no longer visible.

It was, of course, the flat chest and muscularity of the torso that led Evans to identify the figure as male⁷. Such a physiognomy, however, is closely matched by one of the white, and therefore female, bull-leapers from the Knossos Toreador Frescoes (Pl. IIb). These muscular slender figures with no development of the breasts most likely represent pre-adolescent females. We have several representations of white, therefore female, bull-leapers in wall painting from Crete. But we have no evidence so far for female boxers. If females did not box in ancient Crete, the three-dimensional figures incorporated into the Prince reconstruction from the southern room in the palace of Knossos were more likely bull-leapers, perhaps shown in procession. Males as well as females were probably included in the original procession, since fragments of white backgrounds are preserved (one with a butterfly) as well as red backgrounds.

The "feather and lily crown" headress includes part of what appears to be a white ear, and it too is surrounded by a red-painted background. It was surely worn by a female figure. There is no evidence in Aegean art for a male wearing the headress. Sphinxes, who in the Aegean are female, wear them, and so do priestesses. Any final decision as to what was represented in this fresco requires a new restoration that pays close attention to the scale of the headress and the ear. It does appear to be unusually large in the present restoration by Gilliéron.

The Chieftain Cup

The second major candidate proposed by Evans for a Priest King is the major figure on the Chieftain Cup from Ayia Triadha (Pl. Iic). Evans interpreted him as a "young Minoan prince shown outside the gate of his residence, here indicated by the pillar of rectangular blocks behind him, giving orders to an officer of the guard". This figure too has recently been reinterpreted. The slender youthful figures have always seemed unsatisfactory as images of Minoan royal and military power as Evans saw them. Spyridon Marinatos was led to suggest that they were children, playing at being grown up.

In a convincing paper presented at the AIA meeting of 1984, and now published in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Robert Koehl has interpreted the figures on the cup as youths conducting a "rite of passage" ceremony⁸. Koehl bases his interpretation on a passage from Strabo who cites the 4th century B.C. Cretan author Philochorus. Philochorus testified to a specifically Cretan practice in which a noble Cretan youth, designated as a *philator*, or lover, selected a specific younger youth whom he abducted with the help of his friends and took to

6 In *BICS* 17 (1970) 65.

7 NIEMEIER (*supra* n. 3) 75-76, has affirmed Evans's identification of the figure as male for this reason.

8 R. KOEHL, "The Chieftain Cup and a Minoan Rite of Passage", *JHS* 106 (1986) 99-110.

the country for a two-month period of hunting and feasting. At the end of the period, the younger youth was given three gifts: military garb, an ox, and a drinking cup, and is designated as *parasitēs*, i.e., "one who stands beside", or "comrade". Koehl, like most scholars, interprets this passage as a description of initiation rites, and identifies the smaller figure as the initiate, shown receiving his military garb and the hides of sacrificed oxen from the older youth before whom he stands. The third gift is the cup itself.

This is not a normal cup shape in pottery, but a rare form, of which large numbers have been uncovered at the site of Kato Syme Viannou in southern Crete, in a context that provides evidence for Koehl's interpretation. From its location and architecture, the excavators have concluded that the site was neither a habitation nor a typical Minoan shrine, but a special cult place with temporary occupations. Two well-stratified sacrificial deposits in use from Middle Minoan III to Archaic times testify to the continuity of the use of the site. These were thick with animal bones and votive deposits found in fat-saturated earth. These included numerous chalices of the special Chieftain Cup shape, and bronze statuettes of youths. One holds out a cup of this shape, and another double statuette includes two youths, one slightly larger than the other, who stand with their arms linked. This evidence, and a series of cut-out plaques from the 7th century B.C., testify to a continuity of cult that supplies strong support for Koehl's interpretation.

Evans had suggested that the scene on the Chieftain Cup was inspired by a more monumental version that had decorated the walls of a palace. Koehl's new interpretation not only removes the subject from the palatial sphere, but demonstrates its appropriateness to the cup itself. This and the specificity of the "rite" to the site of Kato Syme make it unlikely that such a scene ever decorated a palace wall.

The Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus

Minoan architectural decorations appear to be confined to scenes of nature that exhibit the life of the goddess, or scenes of more general ritual, such as bull-leaping or processions. Whenever there is any indication of dominance, it is women who appear to be the main figures. The Knossos processions (Pl. III) appear to be organized by priestesses, and in the miniature Grandstand and Sacred Grove and Dance frescoes (Pl. IVa, b), women appear to have special positions of honor. In the cult scenes represented on gold signet rings (Pl. VIa), large female figures appear to control the actions.

The Ayia Triadha sarcophagus⁹ has been cited as an exception. Yet the dominance of women can be observed here as well, if we subject it to the following analysis (Pl. Va, b). The two long scenes appear to break naturally at the center of the second side, where the gift-bearers approach the figure usually considered the deceased. At this point, the movement of the figures abruptly changes direction in a manner uncharacteristic of Minoan art. The left hand portion of the scenes goes very well with that of the other side as a single picture. If we put the two together, we have a sacrificial scene in which two priestesses in hide skirts officiate, assisted by women wearing long robes. The only male figures are the two musicians, who, in such a unified scene, would make up the full musical complement of strings and pipes.

The Minoan artists who decorated the sarcophagus appear to have drawn on a traditional sacrificial frieze, and appended to it the offering scene. This may have been cobbled together for the unusual commission of this unique painted sarcophagus. Such an offering scene was most likely requested by the patron, apparently one of the Mycenaean "warriors" whose presence we detect in Crete at this time from their elaborate burials. A few

⁹ See the basic publication by C.R. LONG, *The Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus* (SIMA XLI: 1974).

stylistic features differentiate the offering scene from the sacrificial depiction: no figures overlap the top border, and the elements are more strung out in space and are awkward in their juxtapositions. It is in this portion of the painting that all the figures are male.

"Priests"

If we remove the Prince with the Feather Crown, and the Chieftain on the Ayia Triadha cup from the evidence, the figures wearing spirally-wound garments remain the most prominent men in Minoan art. They are seen primarily on seals. Evans identified them as priests, and he suggested that some of them may be images of the Priest King. As the prime candidates for ruler images, they deserve more attention than they have received.¹⁰

Their identification as priests seems to be correct. Sacred symbols: a dove, a dolphin, and a griffin are associated with them on seals from Knossos and Vapheio (Pl. Vb, f, c). Their garments appear to consist of a long fringed cloth, wound spirally around the body, and worn over a long robe that hangs down past the shoulders forming short sleeves. Such fringes may have been tied in knots, as they are on the larger scale and therefore more detailed "sacral knots" executed in faience, exactly as they are on contemporary garments represented on large-scale figures from the Near East. In the Aegean, fringed garments appear to be special, both for males and females. But no such spirally-wound cloth is ever worn by a woman.

In the Campstool Fresco from Knossos, the garment is worn by a number of male figures, and not just one. That it is the same garment as those worn by figures on the seals is indicated by the way the end of the fringed cloth falls over the shoulder, as it does on one of the seals. The male figures, some of whom are seated, appear to be engaged in a drinking ritual, in the presence of at least two female figures, painted in a larger scale. If the females are priestesses, the male figures must be young. But the females may be goddesses. The interpretation is uncertain, but it is clear from the Campstool Fresco (Pl. VIIa) that the garment was worn by a number of males at the same time, and not just one king. It was therefore not exclusive to a king and not enough to designate a king.

The figures who wear the spirally-wound garments on the seals carry implements which might be considered attributes of kingship. Evans thought one figure carried a bow (Pl. VIId), although the indication of it is slight. On a sealing from Mallia (Pl. VIIh), the figure carries what might be a hammer, although it has also been called a double axe. On three of the seals (Pl. VIe-g), the men carry fenestrated axes of the type called "Syrian". Spectacular versions of these from the Royal Tombs of Byblos were made of gold and decorated with granulation; they surely served as emblems of kingship. The Royal Tombs of Byblos from the Middle Bronze Age predate the appearance of the fenestrated axe in the Aegean, as do numerous examples from the Near East. The Minoans must have adopted the axe, as well as the spirally-wound garment, from the Near East. Only one actual axe has been found in the Aegean: a bronze version from the LH IIA Vapheio burial.

That prestigious vehicle, the chariot, might be another attribute of kingship. In a painting found south of the palace at Knossos, and dated to the period of Mycenaean occupation (Pl. VIIb) a man in a "priest-robe" drives a chariot. So does another man wearing the same garment on a sealstone from Vapheio (Pl. VIIc). This figure does not carry a spear, as Evans thought, but rather conveys a second man, bare-chested and apparently a warrior; it is he who holds the spear.

¹⁰ Since this lecture was delivered, N. MARINATOS has discussed the priest images in more detail in her study, *Minoan Sacrificial Ritual* (1986). However, see most recently P. REHAK, "The Aegean 'Priest' on CMS I 223", forthcoming in *Kadmos* (1994).

The coiffure of the "priests" consists of short hair, with even shorter locks cut straight across the forehead. This links them with the male heads represented on the so-called portrait seals, i.e. seals with the motif of a human head¹¹. Another link between "priest robes" and portrait seals is provided by the lentoid from Vaphio (Pl. VIc) on which the man is represented with an open mouth. He is presumably a singing priest, which is how Evans characterized the head on the portrait seal from the Little Palace at Knossos (Pl. VIIia). The same cropped front hair and open mouth are found on the amethyst gem from Shaft Grave Gamma at Mycenae (Pl. VIIIC)¹². As Betts and Younger have indicated, this is surely a Minoan work. Neither the shape of the seal, a discoid, an earlier forerunner of the lentoid, nor the device of the portrait seal survived in the art of the Greek mainland.

Betts has collected a total of 12 such portrait seals. Boardman added two more, and Younger in the "Iconographic Conspectus" section of this publication, has considerably enlarged the number. They include the well-known impressions from the Hieroglyphic Deposit at Knossos of a man and a boy (Pl. VIIId, e), which Evans identified as the "King of Knossos and his son, the Prince". Betts discovered a third male head impressed on the same nodule as that of this boy¹³. This indicates that at the time of the fire that preserved the sealings of the Hieroglyphic Deposit, at least three portrait seals were in use. If they represent rulers, there were at least three at that time.

Some evidence connects the portrait seals and the men in the "priest-robes" with a sacral function, perhaps as ritual slaughterers. In the fresco of a "priest" in a chariot from Knossos (Pl. VIIb), a bull followed immediately behind. The small scale of the bull suggests sacrifice, rather than bull-leaping. On the lentoid from the Little Palace, a bull's head was carved on the back (Pl. VIIId). On other seals from Crete, portrait heads appear along with animal parts (Pl. VIIIf). The sturdiness of the bronze fenestrated axe from the Vaphio tomb indicates that it was functional, rather than merely emblematic. It should be noted that three of the seals with figures in "priest-robes" came from the same burial at Vaphio in which the actual example of an axe was found.

It must be significant that only men and not women appear on the portrait seals. And it is primarily men who are shown as single standing figures with attributes, the way men in the "priest-robes" are shown. This suggests that these men functioned in the Minoan hierarchy or administration in a capacity that was not shared by females. Whether they could be kings raises the important question of what Minoan seal devices meant, and how they functioned in the bureaucratic system. Much excellent work has been devoted to the administrative function of seals in Crete, but the question of the precise meanings of the seal devices has not yet been resolved.

It must also be significant that these "priest" images were not generally adopted on the Greek mainland. Portrait seals are not found there after the imported Minoan amethyst discoid from Shaft Grave Gamma¹⁴. The three seals from the Vaphio burial are almost the only figures in "priest-robes" from the mainland¹⁵, and they precede the Mycenaean

¹¹ These were first collected by J. BETTS, "The Seal from Shaft Grave Gamma - A 'Mycenaean Chieftain'?", *TJAS* 6 (1981) 2-8.

¹² *CMS* I no. 5.

¹³ J.G. YOUNGER, *Bronze Age Aegean Seals in their Middle Phase (ca. 1700-1550 B.C.)* (SIMA CII: 1993) 173.

¹⁴ I am grateful to Tom Palaima and Cynthia Shelmerdine, who referred me to the cornelian lentoid "portrait seal" from the Nichoria tholos, *CMS* V 2 no. 431, after my lecture. I believe that this seal, found in a LH IIIA:2-B:1 context, along with the other seals including a talismanic amygdaloid and one of the double-bull lentoids, is a Minoan seal and another "heirloom" out of context.

¹⁵ The only other example seems to be a broken glass seal from the tholos tomb 2 at Rousi near Pylos: *CMS* V Suppl. I A no. 345.

conquest of Crete. Apparently the Mycenaean kings did not regard these figures as royal images, since they did not adopt them for their own representations.

Nor are there any seals with portraits or figures in "priest-robes" from Crete in the period of the Mycenaean takeover. The few images of men in "priest-robes" from Crete in this period -- those on the Campstool Fresco, the Chariot Fresco, a LM IIIB larnax, and a terracotta pyxis from Khania, are all painted representations¹⁶. These suggest that figures wearing these garments continued in their priestly functions under Mycenaean hegemony. But their administrative function appears to have been discontinued. I conclude that if these, the most prominent male figures in Minoan art, were the kings of Crete, there were not represented as figures of secular power, but rather as functionaries in the religious sphere.

The Master Impression

With the "priest" images removed from the picture, we are left to consider an important new candidate for a ruler on the spectacular seal impression recently found at Khania (Pl. IXa)¹⁷. It was apparently impressed by a gold ring, just over one inch in width, and seems to have been preserved in the LM IB fire that destroyed the site (though it was actually found in a slightly later, mixed context). On this sealing is represented the strongest male image found so far in Crete. The figure stands atop an elaborate architectural representation. An excellent and timely publication by excavator, Erik Hallager, provides us with superb enlarged photographs, all the archaeological information, and with relevant comparisons¹⁸. Hallager poses the major question: is this a human figure, and then surely a king, or is it a divine figure? Instead of answering it conclusively, Hallager has developed both sides of the argument, and left the decision to the reader.

Hallager has analyzed the sealing into four zones beginning at the bottom: water below, then rockwork and terrain, then architecture, which he interprets as a palace or town rather than a sacred shrine, and finally the upper zone that contains the figure. The figure is shown standing between Horns of Consecration and holding what Hallager suggests may be a spear pointed downward -- an attribute that in the Near East is given to both gods and victorious kings. The arguments for identifying the figure as a ruler, in Hallager's opinion, are the more likely secular nature of the architecture, and parallels with "lordly" figures, such as the Prince with the Feather Crown and the Chieftain on the Chieftain Cup. Hallager's arguments for a divine figure are the symbols that surround him in the sky, which are the kind usually found on rings with ritual scenes, and the gesture, which resembles those of divine figures on the "epiphany ring" in the Ashmolean Museum (Pl. VIIIg) and the Mother on the Mountain sealing from Knossos (Pl. VIIIf).

Although many will conclude that the figure is a Minoan ruler, standing powerful over his domain, I believe that it is the image of the young Minoan god, here older than in the usual epiphany scenes and unusually muscular and strong. My main reasons are the super-human scale of the figure compared with the architecture, and the arguments I have just given for removing the other "kingly" figures from the evidence.

A third reason for interpreting the figure as divine rather than as secular involves another way to read the image on the sealing. Hallager has interpreted the architecture as a single complex. He has provided a hypothetical perspective reconstruction to clarify his interpretation (Pl. X). It shows the central structure receding drastically at the top of the

¹⁶ See S. IMMERWAHR, *Aegean Painting in the Bronze Age* (1990) Kn 25, fig. 27; I. TZEDAKIS, "Minoan Kitharodes", *AAA* 3 (1970) 111; LONG (*supra* n. 9) fig. 31; *PM* IV 379-390.

¹⁷ *CMS* V Suppl. I A no. 142.

¹⁸ E. HALLAGER, *The Master Impression* (SIMA LXIX: 1985).

rocky ledge, where it and the ledge become incorporated into the town in a strange and arbitrary manner. Yet thanks to the valuable profiles of the relief projections of the sealing at different heights that he has provided (Pl. IXb), we can see that the relief projections of the central structure and of the rock are greater than those of the rest of the architecture. The rock appears to support the central structure only, indicating that they are juxtaposed in front of the town. If we interpret the space this way, we have a supernatural figure standing on a shrine atop a mountain above the sea. He is presented, symbolically, *in front of* the town that venerates him. He should then be holding his staff in front of the town, rather than resting it on top of the town. In that case, the rough triangular form below the staff may be the artist's attempt on this minute scale to undercut the relief level beneath, and not the point of an inverted spear. With this reading, the god is analogous to the Mother on the Mountain on the Knossos sealing (Pl. VIIIh). This interpretation suggests the historical associations of the Cretan Zeus with the mountains of his birth and burial, and the worship on peak sanctuaries, which Alan Peatfield has associated with palace control in the New Palace period.¹⁹

According to this survey of the imagery, Minoan art appears to be lacking in ruler iconography. "Minos", whether king or Priest King is missing from the picture. Does this mean that there was no king of Crete? Some have seen "Minos" as a Greek term, that would therefore apply to rulers of Crete after the Mycenaean take-over. I find it difficult to conceive a major civilization in the Mediterranean Bronze Age without a male ruler or rulers. Yet the lack of ruler iconography presents a serious problem for our understanding of Minoan society.

There is also a lack of kingly imagery in Mycenaean art. This may be due to the reliance of the Mycenaeans on the Minoan pictorial tradition, which provided them with no appropriate prototypes. Yet we know that the Mycenaeans had kings, not only from the Linear B texts and from the survival of terms in Homeric vocabulary, but also from the evidence of Mycenaean architecture. Tholos tombs and the megaron of the Mycenaean palaces are dominant architectural forms, strong evidence of the power of an élite -- of royalty. On Crete, the picture is different. The Minoan king is as elusive in the architecture as he is in the pictorial art. It is generally agreed, as Helga Reusch first demonstrated, that a priestess must have officiated in the Throne Room at Knossos. The "King's Megaron", as Evans termed it, is a double misnomer. It is not a real megaron as we know it from the mainland palaces and from Homer. If the smaller and more private areas connected with them in Cretan palaces were "Queen's megaron", as Evans dubbed them, the king would have had no baths or indoor toilets. A recent interpretation of this suite of rooms based on analysis of the finds at the Swedish symposium on "The Function of the Minoan Palaces", suggests that they served for ceremonies.²⁰ More than one participant at that symposium suggested that the term "palace", which resulted automatically from Evans's notion of king Minos, ought to be abandoned for the sake of objectivity. Even the Temple Tomb, as Evans named it, may be neither a temple nor a tomb. No other extant Minoan tomb was constructed with features of the best palatial and domestic architecture as this one was. Its brief publication at the end of *The Palace of Minos* is inadequate, and raises many questions. Its innermost room was locked from the inside, according to Evans, which makes no sense for a burial chamber. No graves from the Minoan period were found in it. Perhaps it served as a site for special rites associated with the cemetery at Knossos, rather than for royal burial. This building is surely a monument that deserves a careful new study.

19 A. PEATFIELD, "Palace and Peak: The Political and Religious Relationship between Palaces and Peak Sanctuaries", in *FuncMinPal* 89-93.

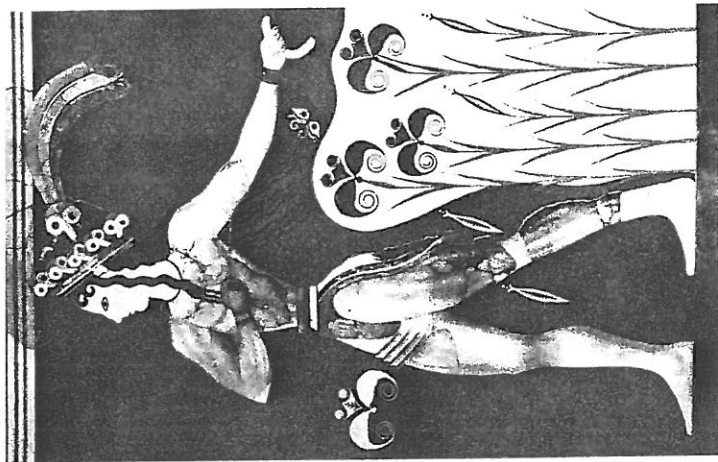
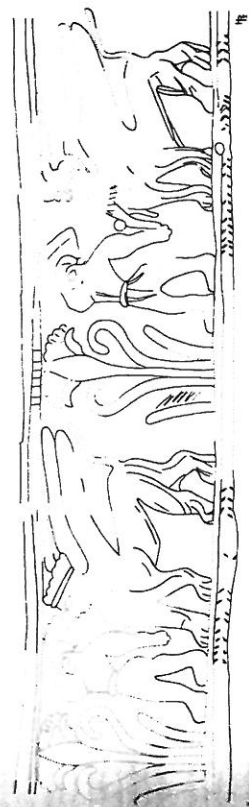
20 See A.-C. NORDFELD, "Residential Quarters and Lustral Basins", in *FuncMinPal* 187-194.

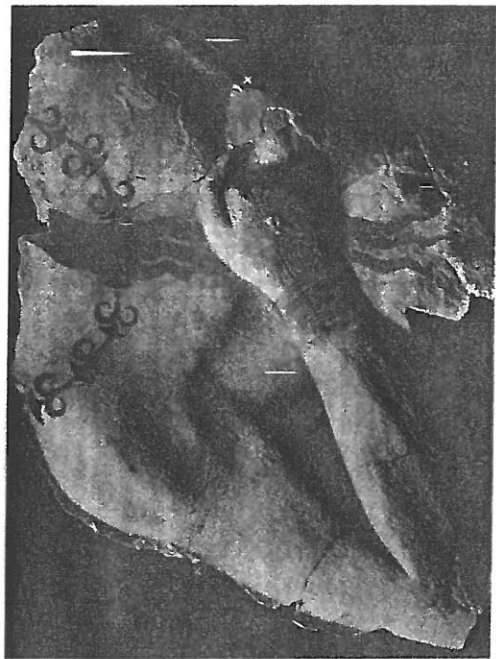
If one views ancient art as propaganda, that is as imagery deliberately contrived to further the interests of those in power, then it is difficult to conceive how Minoan art served a king. Its message is not a proclamation of the supreme status or of the divine sanction of a ruler, but rather of the status and divine sanction of the cult. In this respect, Minoan art appears to be unique in the Eastern Mediterranean of the Bronze Age. Its unique character must reflect a unique society. It seems to me it is one that we have yet to understand.

Ellen N. DAVIS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Pl. Ia "Lily Prince", Knossos: restoration with original fragments (after PM II pl. XIV: frontispiece).
 Pl. Ib Ivory pyxis with men leading griffins, Mycenae (after POURSAT [supra n. 5]).
 Pl. IIa Modern copy of torso fragment of Prince (after PM II 750 fig. 508).
 Pl. IIb Girl tauroror, Knossos (after PM III col. pl. XXI).
 Pl. IIc Chieftain Cup from Ayia Triadha, front (after S. MARINATOS and M. HIRMER, *Crete and Mycenae* [1960] pl. 100).
 Pl. III Procession fresco from Knossos, drawing (after PM II 723 fig. 450).
 Pl. IVa Grandstand Fresco from Knossos (after IMMERWAHR [supra n. 16] pl. 22).
 Pl. IVb Sacred Grove and Dance Fresco from Knossos (after IMMERWAHR [op. cit.] pl. 23).
 Pl. Va Sarcophagus from Ayia Triadha, side two (offerings to dead) (after *Crete and Mycenae* pl. XXIX A).
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 Pl. VIc Seal of "priest" with griffin, Vaphio (after CMS I no. 223).
 Pl. VIId Seal of "priest" with bow, Knossos (after PM IV 2 413 fig. 342).
 Pl. VIe Seal of "priest", Vathy Pedlados (after PM IV 2 414 fig. 343 a).
 Pl. VIIf Seal of "priest" with dolphin, Knossos (after PM IV 2 414 fig. 343 b).
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 Pl. IXb Relief outlines of the Master Impression (after Hallager [supra n. 17] fig. 16).
 Pl. X Architectural reconstruction from the Master Impression (after HALLAGER [supra n. 17] fig. 17).

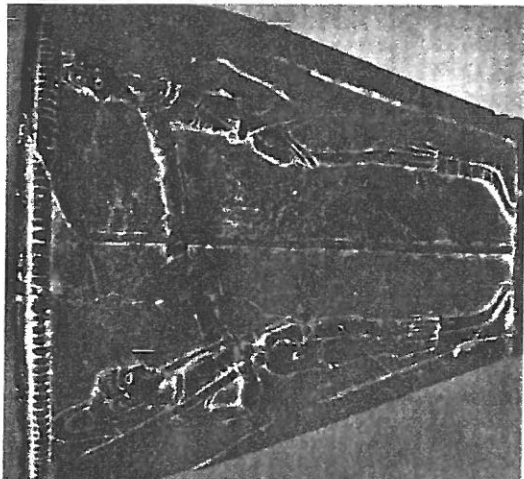




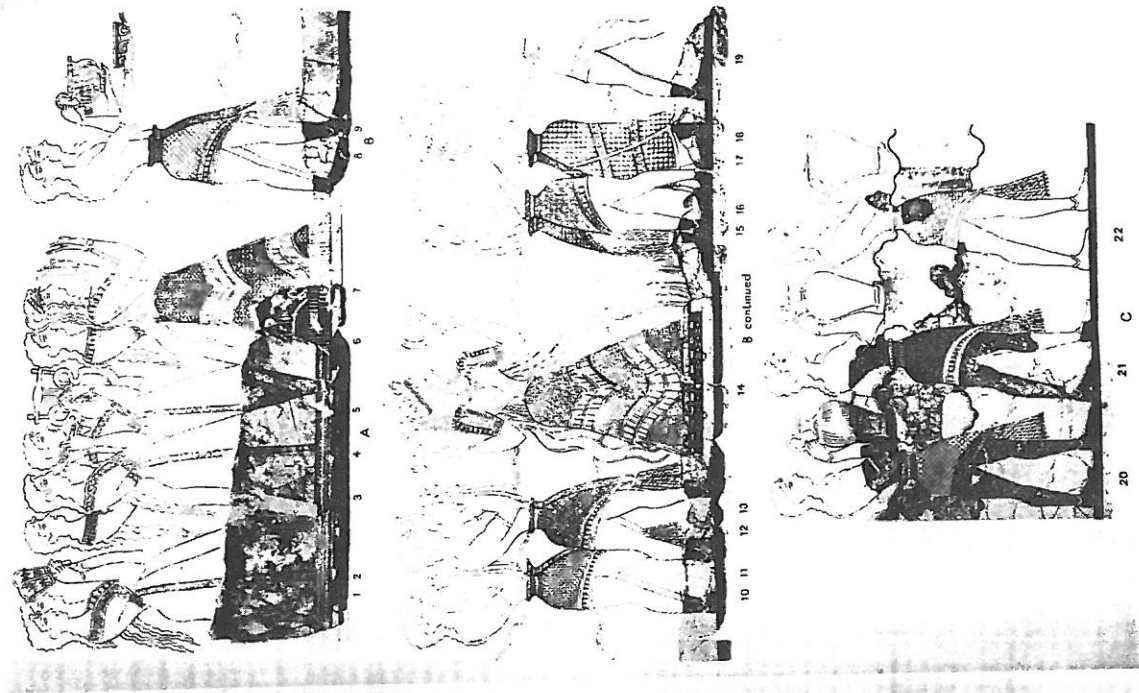
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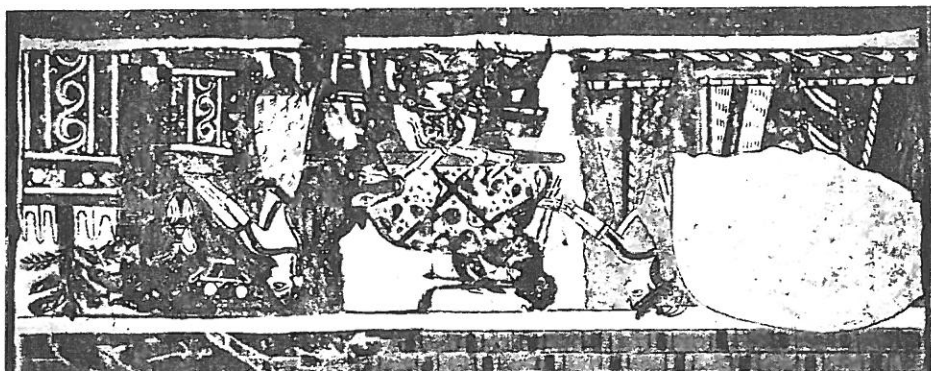
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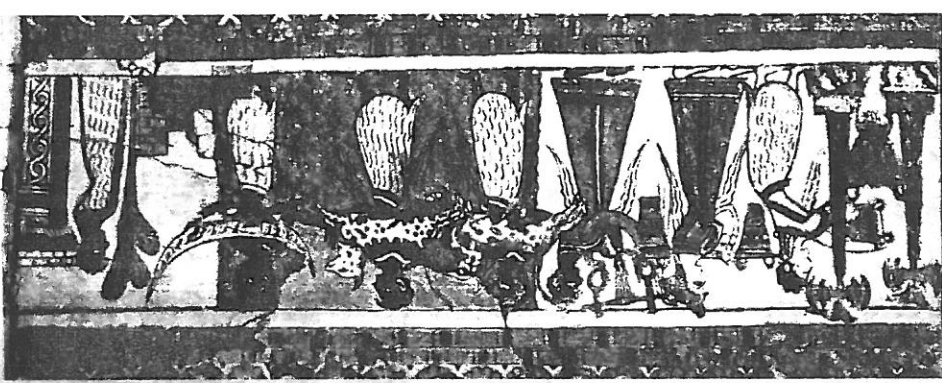
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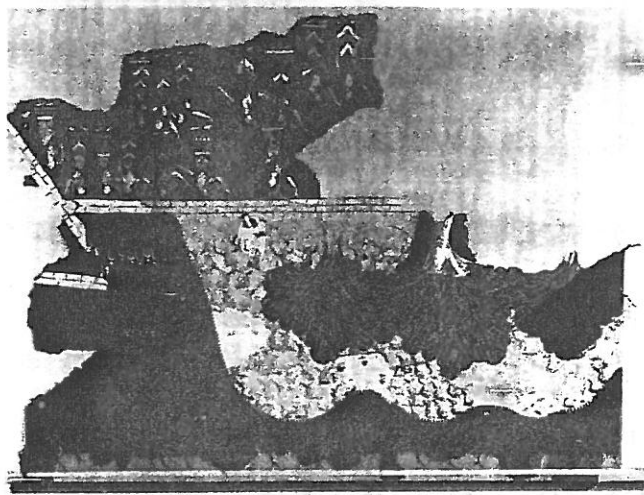
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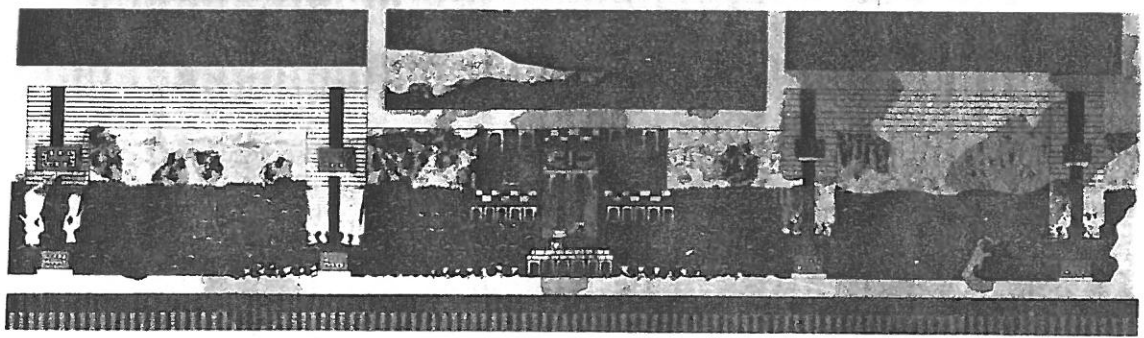
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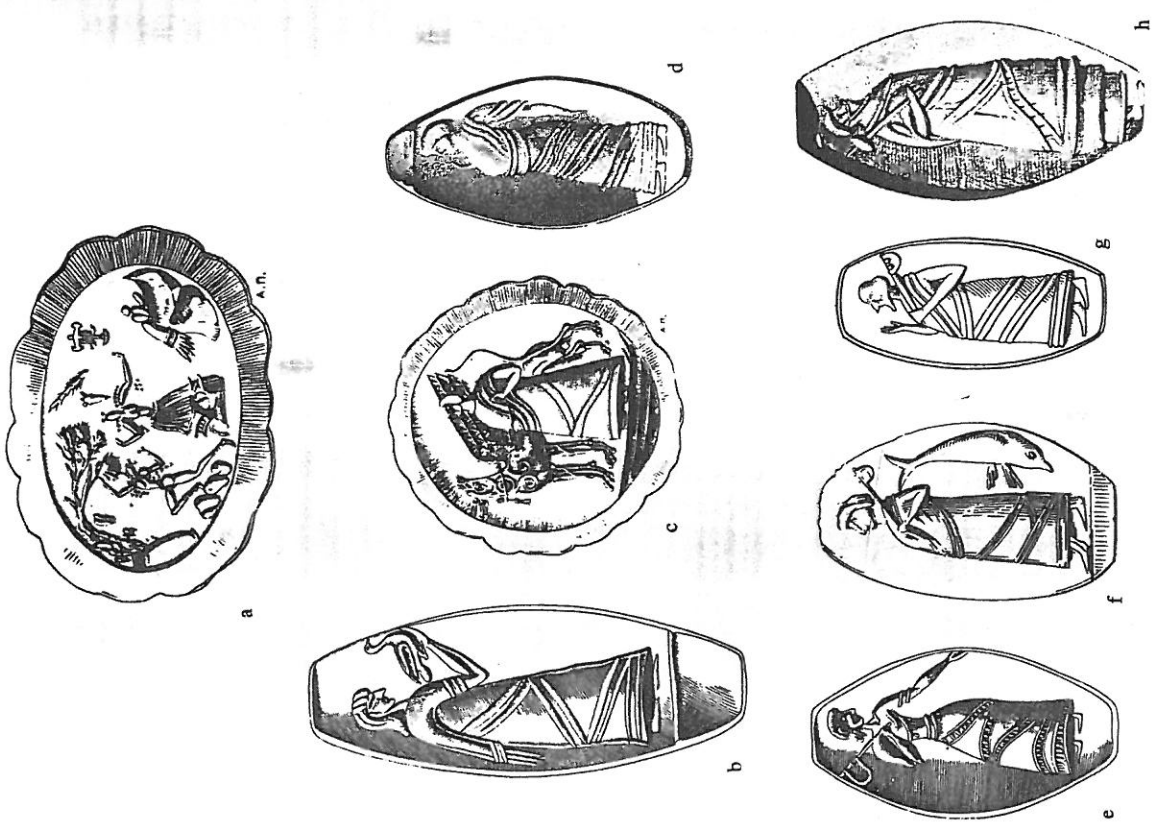
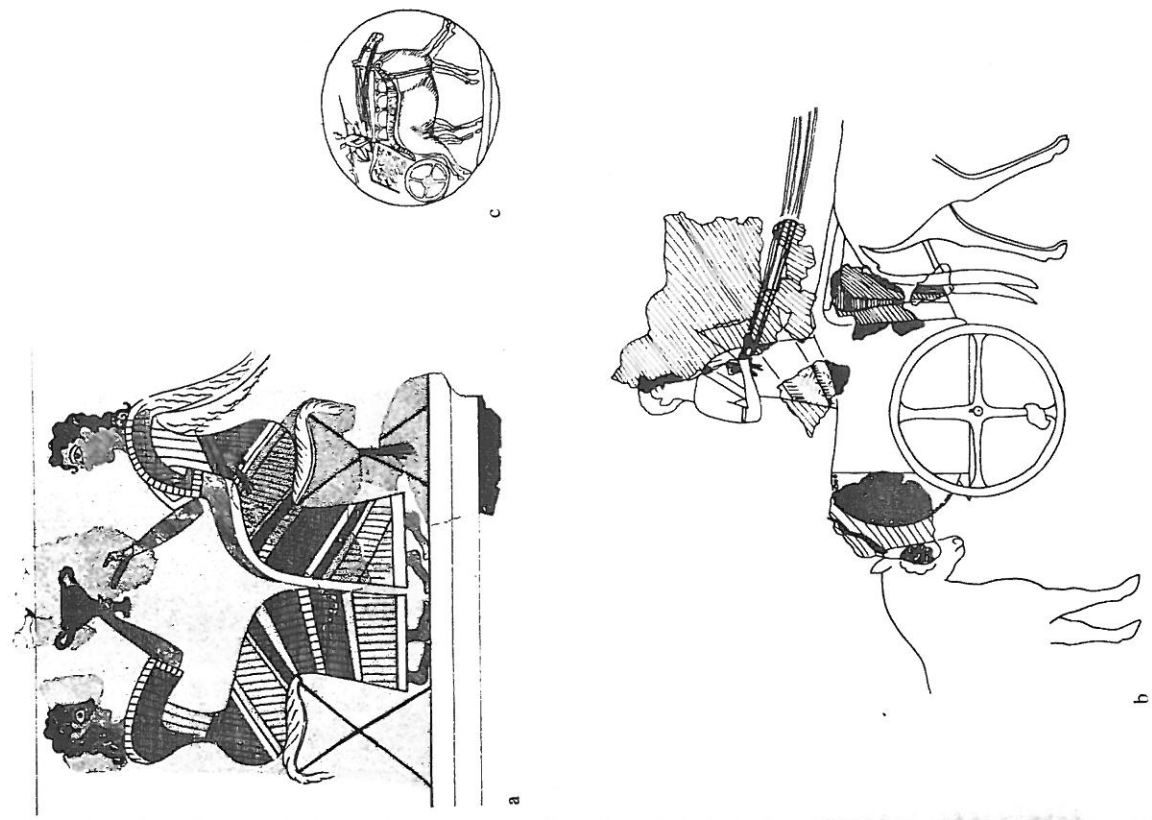


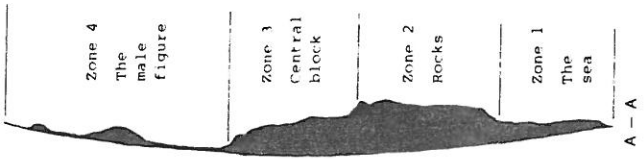
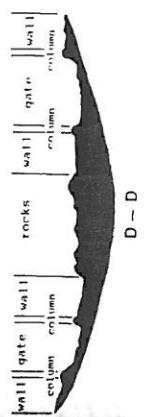
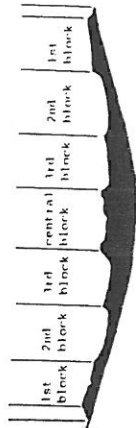
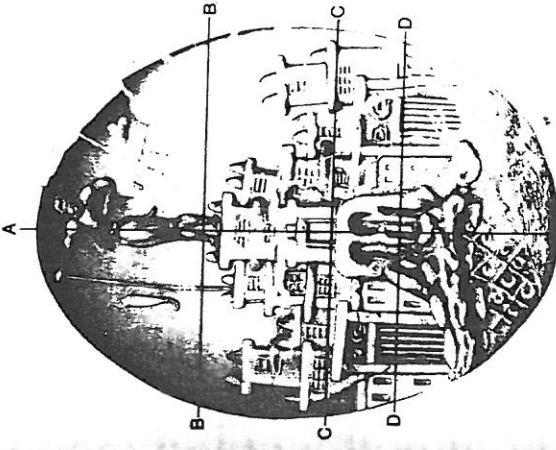
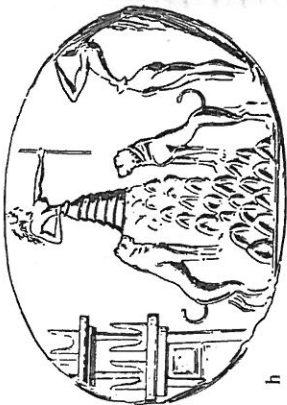
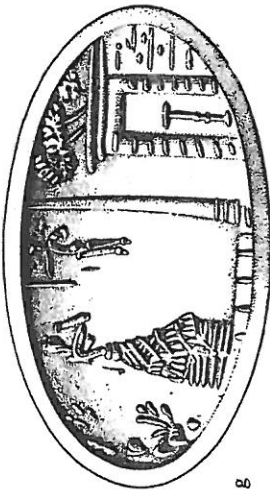
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IV





Zone 4
The
male
figure

Zone 3
Central
block

Zone 2
Rocks

Zone 1
The
sea

CONJECTURAL PERSPECTIVE
FROM REAL IMPRESSION
CHANIA 1984, GÖRAN SÖDERBERG, ARCH

