

Discussion

C. Lovisa: The temple at Hattusha is no more a temple than a Minoan palace is a palace; it is a matter of semantics what we call them. The main difference is that the structure at Hattusha is surrounded by a wall, whereas in Crete the palace is adjacent to the town. This must reflect a different usage.

B. Foster: From an Asiatic point of view I would like to comment on the palace/temple relation. We divide Asia into a northern, rainfall zone which is analogous in climate to the Mediterranean, and a southern, irrigation zone, where little rain falls. It is in the northern, rainfall zone that the palace is most conjoined with the temple, whereas in southern Mesopotamia, in the irrigation zone in Sumer, there is historically more competition between palace and temple.

Ch. Boulois: We accept indigenous evolution of the Minoan palaces, therefore we should not look for prototypes but analogies. A methodological point: the existence of Egyptian motifs in Minoan/Mycenaean iconography is no proof of identical social structure or ideology.

S. Hiller: I agree with both points.

A. Zois: In response to Ch. Boulois, not all of us accept—at the present state of our knowledge—an indigenous development of the Minoan palaces. This is the main result of the work done in recent years in EM settlements. But I would like to focus attention on some other facts: What is the significance of the location of the palaces and palace-like structures right in the middle, that is in the focal point, of all palace-possessing towns? Both "large" (Knossos, Phaistos, etc.) and "small" (Gournia, Myrtos-Pyrgos, etc.) have this feature. I have elsewhere stressed the "openness" and "freedom" of movement from town to palace and from palace to town. This shows that the situation in Crete might have been quite different from that prevailing in the Near East.

S. Hood: I believe that independent shrines existed in the towns and in the country, but I welcome the concept temple/palace for the Minoan palaces and I think Sir Arthur Evans would also have welcomed it.

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The Role of the Near East in the Rise of the Cretan Palaces

by
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Abstract

The thesis of this paper is that the signs of Near Eastern influence on EM III—MM I Crete are extensive, and that some of these signs are reflections of Near Eastern religious and political institutions adopted by the Cretans.

Given the evidence for instability in prepalatial Crete, one might hypothesize that kingship on the island began when a local leader assumed, or was given, extraordinary powers within his community. He, or one of his successors, in an effort to consolidate his power, may have transformed his position by imitating a Near Eastern king.

In MM I a number of new vase shapes imitative of Near Eastern vessels appear on Crete. Worship on peak sanctuaries begins in MM I Crete, and can be explained as a literal adaptation of Near Eastern religious ideas. Cretan and Near Eastern cult and divine iconography are similar in important details, which suggests that the two religions may have been related initially. Many of the characteristics which distinguish the first Cretan palaces from contemporary structures (e.g., monumentality, writing, an extensive administrative system of sealings, and specialized production) are inspired by the Near East. These innovations are found in palatial contexts and are only understandable as elements of a single administrative system. For this reason, it is probable that they were all introduced together into Crete from the Near East as part of the institution of kingship.

In the first half of this century many scholars attributed the rise of palatial civilization on Crete to intense foreign influence from Egypt and the Levant.¹ Recent studies on this subject, in reaction to these early claims, view the establishment of the Cretan palaces as a local development.²

This paper is a brief and deliberately speculative attempt to defend the diffusionist position that the emergence of Aegean civilization cannot be understood in isolation from the rest of the Eastern Mediterranean. My central thesis here is that the signs of Near Eastern influence on EM III—MM I (ca. 2200—1800 B.C.) Crete are extensive, and that some of them reflect Near Eastern religious and political institutions adopted by the Cretans.

One important point should be taken up before proceeding to the main subject. Many of the studies which understand the development of palatial civilization on Crete as an indigenous affair share two traits: (1) they reject diffusion as an adequate explanation of cultural change, and (2) they depend instead on a quantitative analysis of archaeological artifacts. C. Renfrew, for example, objects to the idea that the innovations leading to Minoan or Mycenaean civilization may have come from the East because the contemporary

trade between the Aegean and the Near East, as revealed in the archaeological record, was never on a sufficient scale to constitute a major element in the Aegean economy.³

There are two good reasons for rejecting this argument. First, the argument rests on the assumption that ideas only cross cultural boundaries when trade relations between the two areas are of a "colonial" nature, that is, one of the societies is a less complex (under-developed) one which regularly supplies raw materials to a more complex one which in turn implants its form of civilization on the "colony". *A priori* this notion is unconvincing and history supplies us examples which invalidate it. Under such an assumption, the Greeks could not have borrowed the Phoenician alphabet in the eighth century B.C. One need only read Hesiod's *Theogony*, which is full of Near Eastern ideas, to see how deeply wrong this assumption is. Second, the argument is deterministic, for it assumes implicitly that a certain amount and type of material goods in trade is a prerequisite for a flow of ideas. Several of these recent studies actually approach the subject of Aegean—Near Eastern relations by simply listing

In writing this paper I have deeply indebted myself to colleagues and friends who work in the Near East. Professor Leon Marfoc, Dr. Sam Wolff and Dr. Valerie Fargo at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago educated me on the Levant in the Early and Middle Bronze ages. Dr. Polymnia Mully discussed Cretan peak sanctuaries and Eastern "High Places" with me. Mr. William Peck, Prof. Sam Paley and Prof. Robert Stigitz gave advice on Egypt and the Levant. They are not responsible for the speculation raised here. This paper was first delivered at the Research Seminar at Cambridge University in 1984 and has benefited from the discussion there. Because of space restrictions, argumentation and footnotes have been kept to a minimum.

¹ A. Evans, *PM I*, 14—20, 75—93, 122—126, 286—300; S. Xanthoudides, *The vaulted tombs of Mesara*, London 1924, 128—132; J. Pendlebury, *The archaeology of Crete*, London 1939, chapters 2 and 3.

² K. Branigan, 'Crete, the Levant and Egypt in the early second millennium B.C.', *Proc. Cret. Congr.* (1973), 22—27; P. Warren, 'The first Minoan stone vases and Early Minoan chronology', *Archaeon* 19, 1965, 7—39; J. Cherry, 'Evolution, revolution, and the origins of complex society in Minoan Crete', in O. Kryzyszkowska and L. Nixon (eds.), *Minoan society*, Bristol 1983, 33—45; and *idem*, *AJA* 88, 1984, 239 f. See also the papers of K. Branigan and P. M. Warren in this volume.

³ C. Renfrew, *The emergence of civilisation*, London 1972, 474.

a class of imported artifacts and judging their significance on the basis of their numbers.

I would suggest that a more profitable way to approach Near Eastern imitations or imports in Crete is to ask the following two questions of each example: (1) is the object used in the same way as its Near Eastern counterpart? and (2) does it occur consistently as part of an assemblage which includes other foreign objects? If the answer to the first question is positive, then it is probable that the object was adopted from overseas for its original function. If the second answer is affirmative, then the assemblage may represent an adopted innovation of foreign origin. The process of cultural diffusion envisioned here has its closest analogy in the realm of artistic iconography, where a scene or motif is borrowed by one culture from another to express an idea which is usually (but not always) new. In some cases the image will be used in its original sense, in other cases, it may be used to mean something else. In either case it is only by studying the image in its context that one can interpret its significance. When such artistic borrowing between cultures takes place, it is common to find that the foreign image has been combined with local elements. To cite one example, on the front side of the Agia Triada sarcophagus from LM III Crete (where burial customs had changed appreciably under Mycenaean influence) a new scene is introduced—a deceased man is depicted before his tomb receiving gifts in an Egyptianizing manner. On the back side of the sarcophagus, however, the scene of the bull sacrifice and accompanying offering is a traditional one.

We can begin by considering developments in the Near East during the late third and early second millennium B.C. Syria had effectively become a part of Greater Mesopotamia during the Early Bronze II—III period (2900—2200 B.C.). By the middle of the third millennium the literate kingdom of Ebla was already functioning along the lines of a Mesopotamian state. At this time Byblos was a prosperous, walled city with planned streets and was in regular contact by trade with Egypt. By the third millennium the rulers of Byblos had instituted a royal cult dedicated to the goddess Baalat-Gabal who was represented in the guise of the Egyptian goddess Hathor-Isis, with a solar disc and cow's horns on her head. In fact, the nature of the cult and the numerous Egyptian finds associated with it suggest that it was the established Egyptian royal character of the goddess which was important at Byblos. In Egypt, Hathor and later Isis were maternal goddesses who protected and nourished their son the king. As Egyptian representations show, the goddesses served to guard the king and guarantee his divine origin. Thus, the adoption of Hathor-Isis by the Byblite king may have been motivated by a desire to assure their royal status.

At the end of the third millennium a major interruption, marked by the destruction of many sites, occurs in the urban development of the Levant and Anatolia. Byblos and Ugarit apparently suffer partial destruction. In Anatolia signs of recovery from these events appear ca. 2000 B.C. Literacy is introduced in the twentieth century B.C., most notably at Kültepe II, by Assyrian merchants. Small kingdoms with palace centers, such as at Beycesultan, were common at that time in Anatolia.

In Crete, contact with the Near East during the EM II

period seems to have passed mainly through Levantine ports, such as Byblos and Ugarit. In the succeeding EM III—MM IA period (ca. 2200—1900 B.C.) evidence of connections between Crete and the Near Eastern diminish, as one would expect given the political situation there. Nevertheless, even at this time, Syrian influence on Minoan metallurgy has been detected.⁵ With the resumption of stability in the Near East begins to rise. Significantly these first imports date to MM IA, presumably before the construction of the first palaces.

With this background in mind, let us turn to the question of whether the Near East played a role in the establishment of the palaces in Crete. If one focuses entirely on the poorly documented EM III—MM I period one could argue, as some have done, that since there are relatively few signs of Near Eastern influence at that time, the palaces must be an indigenous development. This argument, however, is a poor one since it is *ex silentio*. Moreover, it does not follow that if one could direct the causes for the rise of the palaces, these causes would explain the nature of the protopalatial Minoan state. In fact, we should probably distinguish between the causes of social stratification in Crete on the one hand, and the nature of the emerging palace system on the other. This is an important distinction, because recent studies on the origins of the Cretan palaces have focused exclusively on the evidence within Crete.

Nevertheless, it is undoubtedly correct that some of the initial circumstances which led to (but did not cause) the rise of the palaces were local. The instability in prepalatial Crete (as evidenced in the EM II destructions and the fortified settlements set on defensive sites⁶) may well have been an important factor in the desertion of the countryside and the growth of large centers of population on the island. MM IA Knossos certainly undergoes sudden and extensive growth.⁷ Most Aegean archaeologists have assumed that this urban growth was a direct cause for the emergence of the palatial system on Crete. They are apparently unaware that the connection between urbanism and state development is a topic which has been extensively examined by Near Eastern and New World archaeologists during the last decade, with the result that today few of those scholars would accept this assumption.⁸ In addition, J. Cherry has recently pointed out that a similar demographic growth which occurred in the Western Mediterranean did not lead to the development of state societies there.⁹ Urban growth therefore can not be invoked as a cause of palatial society.

⁵ N. Jidejian, *Byblos through the ages*, Beirut 1968, 15—25.
⁶ K. Bräggman, 'Further light on prehistoric relations between Crete and Syria', *AJA* 71, 1967, 117—121.

⁷ S. Hood and D. Smyth, *Archaeological survey of the Knossos area*, London 1981, 8: PM II, 546—564.

⁸ E. Service, *Origins of the state and civilization*, New York 1975, 280—282; H. Wright, 'Recent research on the origin of the state', *Annual review of anthropology* 6, 1977, 379—397; R. Adams, *The evolution of urban society*, Chicago 1966.

⁹ J. Cherry, 'Pattern and process in the earliest colonization of the Mediterranean islands', *PPS* 47, 1981, 41—68.

Given the circumstances in prepalatial Crete, one might hypothesize that kingship on the island began when a local leader assumed, or was given, extraordinary powers within his community. Something like this could have happened at Knossos or Mallia. The next step may have been that our hypothetical leader, or more likely, one of his successors, in an effort to consolidate his power, transformed his position by taking on some of the characteristics of Near Eastern kingship. This does not mean that all of the characteristics of Minoan kingship or of the Minoan palace (best known from LM I examples) were present at the beginning. Nevertheless, the basic changes in Cretan society which the first palaces represent seem to have taken place over a relatively short period of time.

If we look at the material culture of Crete at the end of the third millennium B.C., a number of radical changes are apparent: writing, monumental ashlar architecture, intensified trade in metals, peak sanctuaries, pithos and larnax burials, and specialized (wheelmade) pottery production all appear for the first time on the island. How was the Near East involved in these changes?

As the most pervasive category of archaeological evidence, pottery gives us the best general picture of society and its foreign contacts. In MM I, a number of new vase shapes, which include the goblet, carinated cup, conical cup, fluted kantharos, and thieromorphik rhyta, appear on Crete in imitation of Near Eastern vessels with a long prior history.¹⁰ Four points of interest emerge from this group of pottery. First, two of these shapes (goblet and carinated cup) begin in MM IA, and so probably predate the palaces. Secondly, the new carinated kantharos in Crete, as E. Davis has documented,¹¹ probably signals the opening up of a large trade in metals with Anatolia. Thirdly, the thieromorphik rhyta, fluted kantharos and the bowls with miniature interior figures are specialized cult vessels in the Near East and were adopted as such on Crete. In some cases, the parallel usage may go back into the Early Bronze Age. The spouted teapot, for instance, is common in Egyptian and Levantine graves of the Early and Middle Bronze Age.¹² In Crete this vessel occurs in Early Minoan tombs (e.g. Mochlos), and in MM IA a potter's workshop is established at Parikites near Phaistos to make teapots for the funerary trade in the Mesara.¹³ Fourthly, the introduction of the conical cup in MM IA Crete may be especially significant because the conical cup in the Near East has been identified as a presentation vessel and ration container within the temple and state economic system.¹⁴

Peak sanctuaries first appear in Crete in the MM IA period.¹⁵ Some of these shrines are provided with an enclosed, stepped altar and attendant rooms; others do not seem to be. Abundant quantities of ash and animal bones indicate that animals were sacrificed and probably eaten by the worshippers on the sites. The range of votives found at these shrines is fairly consistent; the votives, however, are not well-dated. Only the animal figurines can be linked with certainty to the earliest phase of worship, since their stratigraphy is now assured at Mt. Joukias. For the discussion here it will be assumed that the commonest types of votives found at the peak sanctuaries begin as early as MM I. Figurines of bulls,

goats, sheep, and miniature cups and pithers were probably meant as offerings. Clay figurines of men and women are presumably ex-votos. Kernoï are usually understood as receptacles for agricultural offerings, like the later Greek first fruits. Horns of consecration appear on shrine models and have been found on peak tops. Representations of pregnant women, or women in childbirth, and coupling animals suggest that the cult was concerned with fertility. Figurines of weasels (which control rodents) and beetles (which aerate the soil) may have been considered as beneficial to agriculture.¹⁶ Alternatively, the beetles may have been regarded as creatures with solar connections, as in Egyptian religion.¹⁷ Other figurines of diseased individuals, legs and torsos indicate an interest in healing. Finally, clay boats, fish, a snake, birds, dogs, balls, and jewelry (including a pendant depicting a snake, scorpion and insect) are not so easily interpreted. These votives, if we understand them correctly, point to a cult of surprisingly diverse concerns.

Worship of gods on mountains in the Near East differed from that in Crete. Shrines located on man-made or natural mountains existed in Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and the Levant.¹⁸ In Anatolia the earliest mountain-top shrines are dated to the Late Bronze Age. An early Hittite text speaks of: "When the king goes to the mountain to raise the great sun, he performs various charms and incantations."¹⁹ According to other Hittite texts, the king ascended the mountain to meet the assembled gods on the peak. This procession of gods and the king (Tuthaliya IV) is depicted on the thirteenth century B.C. sculpted reliefs at the mountain shrine of Yazilikaya.

Mountain gods are particularly prominent in the religion of the Levant.²⁰ Thanks to the Ebla texts we now know that the principal gods of the Canaanite pantheon are as early as

¹⁰ R. Amiran, 'The Middle Bronze I and the Early Minoan 3', *KrCron* 23, 1971, 52—57.

¹¹ E. Davis, 'The silver kantharos from Gournia', *TUAS* 4, 1979, 34—45 and the discussion in her Ph.D. dissertation, *The Vaphio cups and Aegean gold and silver ware*, New York 1977, 66—102.

¹² R. Amiran, *Ancient pottery of the Holy Land*, New Brunswick 1970, 79—89.

¹³ Cf. N. Bonacasa, 'Una stazione medio-minoica fra Haghia Triada e Festos', *ASAtene* 45—46, 1967—68, 7—54.

¹⁴ Cf. B. Wright, 'Bevelled rim bowls and their implications for change and economic organization in the late fourth millennium B.C.', *JNES* 37, 1978, 289—313 with references. V. Hankey is presently preparing a study of the earliest Cretan conical cups made on the island, a technique she believes was derived from Egypt.

¹⁵ My account is based on J. Myres, 'The sanctuary site of Petsofa', *BSD* 9, 1902—03, 356—387 and A. Karasou, 'The peak sanctuaries of Mt. Joukias', in *SCABA*, 137—153, and on the objects from these sites on display in the Herakleion Museum.

¹⁶ I am indebted to Dr. Charles Southwick, Professor of Biology, University of Colorado, for this information.

¹⁷ Cf. E. W. Budge, *The gods of the Egyptians* I, New York 1969, 294 f.

¹⁸ Cf. most recently A. Biran (ed.), *Temples and high places in biblical times*, New York 1981.

¹⁹ K. Bittel, 'Hittite temples and high places in Anatolia and North Syria', in Biran (supra n. 18), 63—73.

²⁰ Cf. W. Albright, *Yahweh and the gods of Canaan*, Garden City 1969, 110—152; F. Cross, *Canaanite myth and Hebrew epic*, Boston 1973, 13—43, 112—144.

the Early Bronze Age.²¹ The Canaanites believed that their gods lived on the tops of mountains. In the Late Bronze Age tablets from Ugarit, Baal the Storm god is spoken of as going up to the Northern Mountain (Mt. Kasius, north of Ugarit) after his victory over the dragon, to attend the assembly of the gods.²² After the affirmation of Baal's kingship, the gods celebrate with a great feast. As in Mesopotamian religion, the annual ascension and coronation of the chief god was especially important because it marked the inception of the New Year and its all important rains:

"Moreover Baal will send abundance of his rain, Abundance of moisture with snow,

And he will send forth his voice in the clouds, His flashing to the earth in lightning" (Job 37, 3–6).²³ During the actual Canaanite festival, the king carried out the rites at a raised altar within the temple precinct, after which the community celebrated with a feast in the courtyard outside.²⁴ At Hazor a temple complex was found which included a large open court with a central platform littered with animal bones and ash.²⁵ One of Baal's other concerns (probably through syncretism with Asherah) was the control of sea storms. As a consequence, he was worshipped at ports and on coastal mountains. In the Roman period votive feet were still being dedicated to him on Mt. Carmel.

Three other Canaanite deities are pertinent: Asherah, Anat, and Astarte. Asherah was the Mother of the gods and of all creatures, and the Mistress of the sea. She was called the Treader on the Sea Dragon, and Lady of the Serpent. In some Near Eastern cosmogonies, the world was thought of as having been born from the sea and so "the mother, who gave birth to heaven and earth" was a sea goddess.²⁶ In her syncretized form, Asherah was represented standing on a lion, holding serpents or lotus blossoms.²⁷ In earlier Mesopotamian and later Greek religion Asherah's attribute, the snake, belonged to a line of healing divinities. The Sumerian Ishara, for instance, who protected her worshippers from death, had the serpent and scorpion (as on the Joutas pendant) as her attributes.²⁸

Anat, the consort of Baal, was the Queen of Heaven and so the divine midwife, as well as a warrior. She was sometimes depicted in art holding a spear or battle ax. Finally Astarte was concerned with human and animal fertility. In the Old Testament she is synonymous with the offspring of the flocks (Deut. 7, 13–28, 4). These three female deities were frequently syncretized in eastern cult, so that distinguishing among them can be difficult.²⁹

When we look at the cult objects from the Minoan peak sanctuaries, we can recognize some of the concerns of these principal Near Eastern gods. This is not surprising, since the basic needs which religion serves seldom vary. But similar divine attributes can not so easily be explained; they imply some connection between Minoan and Near Eastern divinities. This does not mean that we should infer the presence of specific Canaanite gods on Crete. The ancient habit of syncretism removes any guarantee that any Near Eastern deity would be absorbed into Minoan culture unchanged. Still, some Minoan cult figures do resemble Near Eastern deities rather closely. The Minoan "Snake goddess" is similar to representations of Asherah. Votive models of fish and

Eastern religious ideas, that is, the Cretans, with their more mountainous topography, celebrated their festival(s) on the mountaintops themselves. In the East, the cult of the mountain gods was supervised by the king. In Crete, the peak sanctuaries begin in MM IA, as early as or earlier than the palaces, so that in the beginning this cult may not have any strong political connection. The distribution of MM I sanctuaries in Crete is widespread, although they appear to be especially numerous in the eastern end of the island,³⁴ a pattern which may indicate their Near Eastern origin. By the New Palace period this pattern changes somewhat, for some peak sanctuaries have become more important, most notably Mt. Joutas, and others seem to have ceased operation. These changes suggest that the cult(s) underwent some centralization, and it is probably no coincidence that certain Neopalatial peak sanctuaries appear to be closely connected with palace centers. A number of architectural features and *paraphernalia* of the palaces point to a cult shared between the peak shrines and the palaces. Consequently, one receives the impression that the cult of the peak sanctuaries was in some way appropriated by the palaces. In Near Eastern kingdoms, the king commonly justified his rule by claiming to be a descendant from the gods. In the Amarna letters,³⁵ for example, the Near Eastern king is identified as the son of the sun god, and the same was true for Egypt. There, the hieroglyph which is identical with the Aegean "horns of consecration" represented the twin mountains at the edge of the world, which were the abode of the sun, and hence that of the king.³⁶ Because of its significance, this symbol may have been considered in Crete as an appropriate attribute for the peak sanctuaries, the palaces and other shrines. If this is true, one might also infer that Minoan kingship had divine pretensions.

The most direct evidence for the nature of Minoan kingship, however, is the palace complex itself. While some of its architectural features (e.g. lightwell, exterior court, storage magazines) can be derived from Early Bronze Age Crete, the characteristics which distinguish the structure as a palace—its monumentality, the presence of writing, a complex administrative system of sealings, and specialized production (viz. pottery)—are new to Crete. Since these features are known earlier in the Near East, one assumes that they were adopted from there by the Cretans. The actual architectural form of the palace is almost certainly a combination of local and foreign elements. Its general organization around a central court, however, does resemble that of Near Eastern palaces.

Aside from its plan, the most distinctive feature of the palace is its deliberate monumentality. The earliest preserved examples of monumental architecture on Crete are the ashlar orthostate facades of the palace at Phaistos and the funerary complex at Chrysolakkos. In form, Chrysolakkos resembles an Early Minoan ossuary which has been faced with a remarkable ashlar orthostate facade³⁷ and portico. Similar reused blocks in the palace at Mallia suggest that the first palace there may also have had an ashlar orthostate facade. The architecture of Chrysolakkos stands in contrast to contemporary pithos burials at Mallia, and signals the newly introduced social stratification of the Mallia community.

snakes are found on peak sanctuaries, and seashells, especially the triton, are common in Minoan shrines and in tombs. Marine style vases are also particularly numerous in religious contexts on Crete. Anat's characteristics, as the Queen of Heaven and as a warrior, recall the "Mother of the Mountains" figure known on Minoan seals.³⁸ This mountainop goddess is also depicted as the Mistress of the Animals in the Near East as well as in Crete. On some Minoan representations, the goddess wears a stylized set of horns over her head in the manner of Hathor and Baalat-Gebe.³⁹ Alexiou has shown that the popular Minoan figure of a goddess with upraised arms first appears in MM I–II Crete, and is in origin an eastern type.⁴⁰ These similarities suggest that the Minoan pantheon may have been indebted to the religion of the Near East.

The differences between Minoan and Near Eastern cult should also be kept in mind. With one possible exception, there does not seem to be any evidence in the Levant for Bronze Age peak sanctuaries. The exception is the hilltop shrine at Nahariya, dated to the nineteenth century B.C.⁴¹ This sanctuary is located about 800 m. from a Middle Bronze settlement in northern Israel, and on the basis of horned female figurines from the site it is identified as a shrine to Anat, or possibly all three goddesses, Asherah-Anat-Astarte. A shrine building and a stepped altar were found on top of the hill. On and around the altar there was much ash, animal bones, cooking pots, miniature vessels, lamps, kernol-like vases, jewelry, animal figurines, and molds for votive weapons (including an ax) and for human figurines. Here the resemblance to Minoan peak sanctuaries is quite close. But Nahariya is an unexplained exception in the Levant. The normal place for public worship of mountain deities in the Near East was the urban temple.

The introduction of worship on peak sanctuaries in Crete may be explained, however, as a literal adaptation of Near

²¹ E.g. chapter 9 in G. Petinato, *The archives of Ebla*, Garden City 1981, 243–262.

²² I. Engnell, *Studies in divine kingship in the ancient Near East*, Oxford 1967, 114–117, 127–132; Cross (supra n. 20), 112–119.

²³ Translation, J. Gray, *The Canaanites*, London 1964, 131 and 127–132, H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the gods*, Chicago 1948, 313–333.

²⁴ E.g. the EB III temple, stepped altar and court at Megiddo (G. Loud, *Megiddo II*, Chicago 1948, fig. 394).

²⁵ Cf. M. Ottosson, *Temples and cult places in Palestine* (Boreas 12), Uppsala 1980, 27–29.

²⁶ M. Astour, *Hellenosmitica*, Leiden 1965, 124–126.

²⁷ J. Pritchard (ed.), *The ancient Near East*, Princeton 1969, 12, fig. 830.

²⁸ Astour (supra n. 26) 240–241; E. Van Buren, "The scorpion in Mesopotamian art and religion," *AJO* 12, 1937–39, 1–28.

²⁹ J. Pritchard, *Palestinian figures in relation to certain goddesses known through literature*, Philadelphia 1943, 32–42, 78.

³⁰ M. Nilsson, *MMR*², 353.

³¹ *MMR*², 360–365.

³² S. Alexiou, "Η νηοεική θεά μετ' ὑπομένειον ἑρπύων," *KtChron* 12, 1958, 226–243.

³³ I. Ben-Dor, "A Middle Bronze-Age temple at Nahariya," *QDAP* 14, 1950, 1–41; M. Dothan, "The excavations at Nahariya," *IEJ* 6, 1956, 14–25; *idem*, "Sanctuaries along the coast of Canaan in the Middle Bronze period: Nahariya," in Biran (supra n. 18), 74–81.

Ashlar orthostate construction appears to have been developed first in Syria.³⁴ Certainly the technique of ashlar masonry seems to be unknown in Early Bronze Age Crete. While ashlar blocks are present in the Early Bronze IV palace at Ebla,³⁵ the earliest ashlar orthostate construction occurs at the same site in the Middle Bronze I southwest city gate.³⁶ There are a number of other examples of this construction in the Middle Bronze Age Levant. At Ebla the orthostate blocks were set on a protruding plinth course, and they had mortise holes drilled on their upper surfaces for a timber superstructure. This is exactly the technique used at Chrysolakkos and Mallia, and so it seems likely that the technique as well as the idea of monumental architecture in Crete can be sought in Syria. This, of course, runs against the conventional view that the Cretan palaces must be an indigenous development, because many of their architectural elements are known in Early Bronze Age Crete, and their form cannot be paralleled exactly in the Near East.³⁷ But this argument is a false one, which can be demonstrated by using an architectural analogy from another historical period. The Gothic cathedral has been viewed in the past as a natural development from earlier architecture because practically all of its major architectural elements could be found in eleventh and early twelfth century French churches. But, since we possess the writings of Abbot Suger, who designed the first Gothic structure, we know that he was trying to express a new concept of divinity, and that he used the existing elements of church architecture in an innovative manner to design the first Gothic cathedral. The first Minoan palaces are probably to be understood in approximately the same light: many of their architectural features are traditional, at least one important feature is not, but the idea for their construction is new and from the Near East.

While the stimulus for the introduction of writing in Crete is probably foreign, the actual development and form of the scripts as they appear in the first palaces is Cretan. The origins of the so-called "hieroglyphic" script are mixed, for some hieroglyphic signs have Early Minoan parallels, while others are new. Only a few are Egyptian.³⁸ Linear A, however, is completely local in its form, for perhaps one third of its signs are derived from the hieroglyphic script, while the remaining signs are original. The Near Eastern contribution to Cretan writing is only indirect, except perhaps in the shape

³⁴ Cf. A. Pearfield, "The topography of Minoan peak sanctuaries," *BSA* 78, 1983, 273–279, esp. map on p. 274.

³⁵ Engnell (supra n. 22), 115 f.

³⁶ *MMR*², 187, illustrated in *JHS* 21, 1901, 162, fig. 42. I am indebted to W. Peck for this information.

³⁷ J. Shaw, "The Chrysolakkos facades," *ProcCretCongr* (1973), 310–331.

³⁸ G. Hult, *Bronze Age ashlar masonry in the Eastern Mediterranean* (SIMA 66), Göteborg 1983, 44–49, 66 f.

³⁹ P. Matthiae, *Ebla, an empire rediscovered*, London 1980, 37–39.

⁴⁰ Matthiae (supra n. 39), 120–122, fig. 24.

⁴¹ Graham, *PoC*, 229–247.

⁴² O. von Simpson, *The Gothic cathedral*, New York 1956, 61–141.

⁴³ Cf. Evans, *PM* I, 280 f.; K. Branigan, "The earliest Minoan scripts—the prepalatial background," *Kadmos* 8, 1969, 1–22.

of the clay tablets. In fact, Linear A seems to have been invented as a cursive syllabic script needed for writing purposes at the time when the palaces were established. Cretan and Egyptian writing apparently developed similarly in that both were created locally at a time of internal reorganization and foreign stimulus.⁴⁴

A concomitant of written administrative records is a system of safeguarding and recording the material being stored. Evidence of such a system on Crete is preserved earliest at Phaistos in the some 2800 clay sealings found in the debris of the west wing of the first palace.⁴⁵ These sealings were on clay lumps used to secure vases, wooden boxes, and perhaps doors. As E. Fiandra has demonstrated, the Phaistian sealings reflect a system which is found throughout the ancient Near East.⁴⁶ At Phaistos, the Near Eastern conception of some of these sealings can actually be proven because a group of fifteen look like copies of sealings known at Karahuyuk in southern Anatolia.⁴⁷ The Phaistos examples may have been local copies of sealings on the bullae of sacks or documents which arrived from Anatolia.

The fast (socketed) potter's wheel makes its first appearance in MM IB Crete. The earliest (MM I-II) certain example comes from room LXII in the first palace at Phaistos, where the accompanying pottery was mass-produced for use in the palace in startlingly large numbers.⁴⁸ The important point is that the introduction of the fast potter's wheel can not be understood as the result of local trial and error. Rather it is an item borrowed from the Near East to meet the demands of specialization and quantity required by the palace system.

The first palaces on Crete were established at a time of unusually close contact between the island and the Near East.

Discussion

G. Walberg: Many of the pottery types which you considered as having Oriental derivation can be shown to have had indigenous development. This is true of the teapot, the carinated cups and the vases with crinkled rims.

V. Watrous: Let's take each of your examples in turn. First, it is true that the teapot makes its first appearance in EM Crete, and it is almost certainly an eastern import at that time, as its resemblance to Egyptian examples (*PM* 1, 75-83) suggests. Second, to suggest that the Neolithic carinated cup (in the absence of EM examples) was the prototype for the MM I version is surely to stretch the point. Third, I would only insist on the Anatolian origin of the MM kantharos with the crinkled rim, a point which E. Davis has effectively demonstrated (*JUAS* 4, 1979, 34-35). My main thesis though is that the many innovative features, which appear for the first time in the material culture of MM I Crete, are not random accidents but are the material goods which accompanied the introduction of Near Eastern ideas into Crete.

Since the features which distinguish the palaces are only to be found earlier in the Near East, they are probably foreign introductions, or in the case of Linear A, externally inspired. It is important to note that these innovations do not appear in random contexts in Crete, but are first known in the palaces, where they are only understandable as constituent parts of a single administrative system. Thus, one assumes that the Cretans borrowed them all together from the Near East as part of the *institution* of kingship. Still, this is not to say that the older Near Eastern civilization in any sense "caused" the development of the palaces on Crete. But if we wish to understand the nature of palatial civilization in Crete, we must acknowledge that many of the fundamental ideas adopted in its development were Near Eastern.

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⁴⁴ I. J. Gelb, *A study of writing*, Chicago 1962, 214-215.

⁴⁵ D. Levi, 'L'archivio di cretule a Festòs', *ASAtene* 35-36, 1957-58, 7-192.

⁴⁶ E. Fiandra, 'A che cosa servivano le cretule di Festòs', in *Proc2CretCongr* 1 (1968), 383-397; *idem*, 'Ancora a proposito delle cretule di Festòs', *BdA* 60, 1975, 1-25.

⁴⁷ D. Levi, 'Sulle origine minoiche', *PdP* 24:127, 1969, 241-264.

⁴⁸ D. Levi, *Festòs e la civiltà minoica*, Rome 1976, 109, fig. 147. Dr. D. Evelyn, who is preparing a study of Minoan potters' wheels, helped explain their development to me.

A. Peatfield: Regarding peak sanctuaries in Crete and their relation with the Orient, I will have to disagree with you. The idea of the sacred mountain and hill-top shrine is too widespread (China, Japan, America, even in Christianity there are churches on tops of hills) to require a diffusionist explanation. Even cult practices are common, for example the preoccupation with water, and fertility associated with water.

H. Biltzer: From the point of view of an ethnographer the following observations can be made. You can have a developed level of technology and reach a point where nothing new is happening until a stimulus or an idea, a form of cultural abrasion, comes from outside. P. Warren's analysis of internal evolution leading to the palaces is extremely interesting but the blossoming of Crete in all of its aspects has to be explained by a cultural stimulus or idea which was introduced from elsewhere.