

NUMINOUS TREE AND STONE: RE-ANIMATING THE MINOAN LANDSCAPE*

Introduction

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 in Late Bronze Age Aegean glyptic iconography, are suggestive of an animistic conception of the natural world.

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 may imply direct communication between human ritual actors and elements of that animate landscape, achieved through interaction with tree or stone.¹

Architectonic elements referencing the natural world within urban contexts – through iconographic representation, cultic paraphernalia, and architectural form – may advertise relational associations between urban elites and numinous elements within a sacred landscape, reflecting strategies for legitimising elite hierarchy or possibly promoting factionalism and heterarchy.²

Stones erected within urban settings, as well as stepped cult structures such as shrines and openwork platforms, which are sat upon by female figures or surmounted by trees, may have symbolised mountains, and facilitated the indexing of peak sanctuary ritual in architecturally elaborated, possibly urban, settings.

Elements of the Minoan sacred landscape will here be analysed through the lens of ‘new’ animism, arguing that the landscape was not merely an inert backdrop to ritual performance, but was rather sentient, numinous and contingent, functioning as a politicised, active agent in the enactment of power.

Methodology

At the turn of the 20th century, Arthur Evans laid the foundation for contemporary reconstructions of Minoan religion.³ Heavily influenced by the Victorian comparative ethnologists,⁴ Evans proposed that Minoan religion was characterised by a cult of sacred trees and aniconic stones. This model foregrounds Tylorian animism, positing that the natural world may be inhabited by supernatural spirits - natural phenomena such as springs, groves, stones or mountains may be perceived as being animated by spirits or forces inhering within - and that animistic religion represents an early or ‘primitive’ stage in the evolution of culture.

In contrast with this primitivist evolutionary epistemology, animism drawn from cultural anthropology posits a *relational* ontology, in which a reflexive relatedness exists between human

agents and elements within the natural environment, perceived as being sentient. This animistic ontology is newly conceived as focusing not upon the question of whether an object is alive, but upon *how* it is *related* to.⁵

Rather than thinking in terms of discrete spirits or supernatural beings that possess inert objects – implying a separation between nature and the “super-natural”, ‘new’ animism conceives of the material world as sentient in itself. In this framework, Minoan stone and tree cult may not so much involve the reverence of divine beings that are invoked into proximity, rather, such rituals may be re-interpreted as events in which humans interacted with specific elements of an empowered and *empowering* landscape.⁶

Minoan tree and stone cult will here be reconfigured within this lens of ‘new’ animism. Concentration of peak-sanctuary cult in proximity to ‘palatial’ centres during the Neopalatial period,⁷ coupled with the increased representation of baetyls iconographically and within ‘palatial’ architectural contexts, may reflect strategies of elite-legitimation through indexing elements of the sacred, animate landscape, advertising relational associations between Neopalatial elites and that landscape, inscribed within ‘palatial’ contexts and iconographic schemes.⁸

Baetyls

Extant baetyls are known in Crete from EM III Vasiliki (2200-2000BCE) through to LM IIIC Kephala Vasiliki, and from the LH III sanctuary at the Mycenaean citadel at Phylakopi on the Cycladic island of Melos.⁹ However, it is during the Neopalatial period that they are most commonly identified, at the ‘palatial’ sites of Galatas, Gournia and Malia.

Interaction with baetyls in front of an audience or in a public context may have enhanced claims to status and authority, while 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.

Vasiliki

The earliest recorded baetyl in Crete, at the site of EM III Vasiliki, is a large, roughly dressed white stone, flanked by three smaller stones, standing upon a small, paved semi-circular construction (Figure 1), a short distance to the south of the so-called House-on-the-Hill.¹⁰ Architectural features at Vasiliki are thought to represent antecedents to the ‘palatial’ architecture of the MM and subsequent periods, including a small paved western court with inset *kerno*, a treated western exterior façade, painted plaster walls and labyrinthine internal spaces, the site as a whole reflecting a level of social stratification hitherto unseen on the island.¹¹

The baetyl is prominently positioned within a curved wall upon the paved surface of construction PBα, the whole arrangement perhaps serving as an attention-focusing device for public ritual.¹²

Despite the absence of recorded evidence of cultic activity in this area, there is sufficient space in front of the construction to enable a modest gathering of people, perhaps suggesting its function as a focal point in public cult.

Galatas

The monumental Neopalatial complex at Galatas incorporates ashlar masonry and a central court defined by multi-storeyed wings,¹³ the site providing views to the nearby peak sanctuaries of Juktas to the north, Kofinas to the west, and Pediada to the east.¹⁴

Directly south of the ‘palace’, a large limestone baetyl is set into the northern edge of an elevated rectangular platform of roughly hewn stones before a paved court (Figure 2), reminiscent of the Arkhanes gold ring (Figure 3). This court may have served for the gathering of people before the stone, an aniconic cult object and focus of ritual activity.¹⁵ Ritual performers may have engaged in activities upon the raised platform behind the stone, while spectators looked on from the court below.

From as early as the Prepalatial Period, storage and preparation of foodstuffs are a primary concern at Galatas, far exceeding domestic needs,¹⁶ and suggesting the centrally controlled collection and distribution of resources.¹⁷ During the Neopalatial Period, a wealth of ceramic material indicates large numbers of people engaged in the consumption of food and drink within the ‘Court of the Baetyl’,¹⁸ while the area within and around the court, including the nearby Neopalatial Building 6, suggests intense cultic activity, indicated by a lustral basin, libation pits, serpentine offering table, a triton shell and miniature carinated cups.¹⁹

The ‘Court of the Baetyl’ and surrounding area may have functioned within a broader program of social display, communicating elite identity and status through feasting and ritual activity taking place in proximity to the stone.²⁰

Gournia

During the Neopalatial period, the town of Gournia resembles the larger urban centres at Knossos, Malia and Galatas in features, if not in size.²¹ The large mansion, monumental in scale and constructed of ashlar masonry, was likely the seat of political power in the immediate area, controlling the collection, storage and redistribution of goods.

A large undressed limestone baetyl is embedded into the pavement at the centre of a small, open courtyard flanking the southwest corner of the complex (Figure 4).²² An incomplete *kernos* is set into the pavement just over a metre to the east of the baetyl,²³ and a double axe, one of only two mason’s marks known from the site, is incised into the south wall of Room G13.²⁴ Soles argues that Room G15 may have served for performing libations which would flow through a terracotta channel passing beneath the palace walls and out into the courtyard of the baetyl (Figure 5), though this channel may merely have served for drainage.

This nexus of cultic references – the baetyl, *kernos*, mason’s mark and libation channel – is deliberately constructed within the fabric of the courtyard, itself representing an augmentation of space along the ‘much-worn’ route between the central court of the complex and both the west shrine to the north,²⁵ and the coast beyond. We may infer from this augmentation of space that any ritual involving the baetyl involved spectacle, where passers-by publically interacted with the stone. Perhaps this route served for cultic processions, the baetyl functioning within a defined ritual landscape.

Malia

The monumental Neopalatial complex of Malia (MM III – LM IB), with an extensive proportion of space devoted to workshop and storage facilities – including silos to the south and storage magazines to the west of the central court – suggests an important regional administrative centre, likely engaged in the collection, storage and redistribution of surplus.²⁶

In the northwest corner of the central court, directly before a raised *loggia*, a relatively small baetyl with prominent cupule, reminiscent of a clay sealing from Zakros (CMS II.7 No. 6), is embedded into the packed earth of the court (Figures 6-7).²⁷ Marking the centre of the court is a sunken altar, and flanking the court’s western side, rooms of various likely cultic function, including a pillar crypt and Room XVI-1 with stepped platform and *kernos*. The raised *loggia* directly west of the baetyl may have served as a platform or stage upon which prominent individuals stood, either observing activities taking place within the court and in the vicinity of the baetyl, or themselves on display to observers within the court. A direct alignment may be traced between the raised *loggia*, the baetyl and the mountainous landscape beyond the ‘palace,’ from which we may infer an association between the resident ‘palatial’ elite and the landscape, the baetyl indexing the mountain overlooking the ‘palace.’

Iconography

Iconographic representation further implies an association between Neopalatial elites and the mountainous landscape, possibly advertising to a select audience their involvement with peak sanctuary ritual and connection with mountains.²⁸

Late Minoan glyptic imagery featuring cult scenes occurring within landscape settings characterised by flowers, trees, and rocks, and free from architecture, typically feature epiphany. Rather than representing the manifestation of supernatural beings that appear from outside the ‘natural’ realm, such scenes are here interpreted as signifying interaction between human agents and the numinous landscape.²⁹ Other glyptic and fresco cult scenes depict built structures such as stepped ashlar altars, tripartite shrines, and constructed openwork platforms, which may have evoked the numinous landscape.

Animate Landscape

Glyptic cult scenes set within the landscape feature all types of epiphany including envisioned human figures, birds, insects, and floating objects, as well as enacted epiphany. In some cases the epiphanic figure is closely associated with a tree situated within rocky ground. Hovering human figures appear to emerge from the tree or materialise close by it, while enacted epiphanic figures sit beneath it. In other cases male and female figures lean over large baetylic stones and turn to face birds or insects (Figures 8-16).

These events may have occurred in various locations - a garden, meadow, cave, rural sanctuary, or possibly even a wild or infrequently visited place. Given that during the Neopalatial period, Crete's natural vegetation ranged from steppe to woodland - including wooded mountains - such events may also have occurred in sacred groves.³⁰ Because of the small size of the glyptic field, we see only a condensed or partial view of the landscape, its character implied.³¹ Just as a single tree may indicate a wooded area or grove, so, too, rocks may function as artistic shorthand for mountains, and may evoke peak sanctuaries.

Irrespective of the type of site, the activities illustrated in these scenes suggest that they occur within specifically numinous locations, or "places of power". Considering the key motif represented in the scenes - an epiphanic event within nature - we may infer that elements of the landscape were sentient, and that these images depict "landscape epiphanies", reconfigured as signifiers of the relationship between ritual actors and the landscape.

Architectonic evocation of Landscape

The rocky seat upon which human figures in enacted epiphany sit, and the rocky ground in which the trees in images of envisioned epiphany are situated, together may form a shorthand representation of tree and mountain. This combination of tree and rocky mountain may be echoed in tripartite and stepped cult structures such as the tripartite shrine, and the stepped ashlar altar and openwork platform - both of which are either sat upon by female figures or surmounted by trees.³² Most examples of stepped ashlar altars involve trees. Constructed openwork platforms alternately feature trees, trees and female figures, or female figures without trees (Figures 17-23).³³ Tripartite shrines do not appear to be sat upon by human figures but do include trees (Figure 19).³⁴

The forms of stepped ashlar shrines, constructed openwork platforms and tripartite shrines each exhibit variations on the idea of triplicity, a triangular structure that may have evoked the ascending mountain form.³⁵ That such structures were linked to rock and possibly mountains may be suggested by the image of the female figure depicted in the fresco at Xeste 3, on the northern wall of Room 3a, thought to be a goddess, who is seated on a constructed platform (Figure 24). Directly below her is a girl with a wounded foot who is sitting upon rocks; the positioning of these two scenes may suggest a symbolic correlation between the figures.³⁶

A female figure upon a constructed platform also features in the central panel of the fresco on the north wall of Room 14 from Villa A at Ayia Triada. That this figure is associated with a mountainous landscape is evident from the right hand panel in which cats stalk and agrimia leap within a rocky setting, while the left hand panel may reflect an association between baetyls and mountains, appearing to represent the enactment of baetylic ritual, possibly at or near a peak sanctuary.³⁷ (Figures 25-26)

During the Neopalatial Period, the number of peak sanctuaries reduces dramatically, decreasing from 25 active sanctuaries during the MM to as few as eight, all of which are located in proximity to palatial centres.³⁸ This suggests that peak sanctuaries and the cultic activities enacted within them, came under direct control of the palatial elites during this period.³⁹

The relief on the Peak Sanctuary Rhyton from Late Minoan Zakros (Figure 27) depicts a baetyl flanked by agrimia and surmounting a tripartite shrine within a mountainous setting.⁴⁰ The position of the baetyl between agrimia underscores the significance of the stone, arrangements of central objects flanked by animals or fantastical composite creatures symbolizing the power or status of the central figure.⁴¹ The wavy-edged baetyl may itself represent a stylized mountain.⁴²

The arrangement of a central baetyl or mountain flanked by agrimia finds architectural parallel within the LM IA-LMIIIA2 Throne Room at Knossos⁴³ (Figure 28) where a similarly wavy-edged baetyl or stylised mountain, morphologically similar to the baetyls at Gournia and Galatas, forms the throne-back, set into the wall of the room.⁴⁴ A fresco decorates the wall surrounding the throne, griffins flanking its baetylic back.⁴⁵ This wavy-edged baetyl or mountain form finds further representation in elite costume at Knossos (Figures 29-30), where decoration on faience votive dresses from the Temple Repositories appears likewise to depict a mountain.⁴⁶

The possibility that these structures and objects are emblematic or metonymic of natural forms foregrounds the importance that the natural archetype may have had, making its reference in built form meaningful. If these abstracted forms evoke landscape, then the cultic activities associated with them may be equivalent to such events occurring within the landscape itself.

Epiphanic scenes set in natural locations suggest that landscape was animate. The positioning of baetyls within conspicuous public settings in elite urban centres, coupled with an iconographic program associating baetyls, mountains and elite power, may reflect strategies for legitimising hierarchy through indexing elements of the sacred, animate landscape, advertising relational associations between Neopalatial elites and that landscape. The Minoan landscape was not merely an inert backdrop to ritual performance, but was rather sentient and numinous, functioning as a politicised, active agent in the enactment of power.

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¹ The term numinous was coined by R. OTTO to refer to a sense or intuition of the existence of power beyond human comprehension, see R. OTTO, *The Idea of the Holy* (1950) 6-7. While Otto's concept may be criticised as a theory of religious instinct, we here use the term to describe perceived sentience or agency within the natural world.

² On factionalism and heterarchy, see Y. HAMILAKIS, "Too Many Chiefs?: Factional Competition in Neopalatial Crete," in J. DRIESSEN, I. SCHOEP, and R. LAFFINEUR (eds.), *Monuments of Minos. Rethinking the Minoan Palaces, Aegaeum 23* (2002) 179-199; I. SCHOEP (2002a) "Social and Political Organization on Crete in the Proto-Palatial Period: The Case of Middle Minoan II Malia," *JMA* 15.1 (2002) 101-132 and "The State of the Minoan Palaces or the Minoan Palace-State?," in J. DRIESSEN, I. SCHOEP, and R. LAFFINEUR (eds.), *Monuments of Minos. Rethinking the Minoan Palaces, Aegaeum 23* (2002) 15-33.

³ A.J. EVANS, "Mycenaean Tree and Pillar Cult and Its Mediterranean Relations," *JHS* 21(1901) 99-204. See also P. WARREN, "Of Baetyls." *OpAth* 18.14 (1990) 193-206; S. CROOKS, *What are these Queer Stones? Baetyls: Epistemology of a Minoan Fetish. BAR-IS 2511* (2013).

⁴ V. TYLOR, *Primitive Culture. Researches into the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, art, and custom* (1871); W. ROBERTSON SMITH, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites. Fundamental Institutions. First Series* (1889); J. FRAZER, *The Golden Bough. A study in magic and religion* (1911-1915).

⁵ A.I. HALLOWELL, "Ojibwa ontology, behaviour, and worldview," in S. DIAMOND (ed.) *Culture in History: Essays in Honor of Paul Radin* (1960) 19-52; N. BIRD-DAVID, "'Animism' revisited: personhood, environment, and relational epistemology," *Current Anthropology* 40 (1999) S67-S91; G. HARVEY, *Animism: Respecting the Living World* (2005); R. WILLERSLEV, "Taking Animism Seriously, but Perhaps Not Too Seriously?," *Religion and Society: Advances in Research* 4 (2013) 41-57.

⁶ This is not the first time that Minoan religion has been interpreted in the light of New Animism, however this paper moves beyond previous studies, taking a cynical view in which an animistic ontology is co-opted by a state level society in the service of elite ideology. V.-P. HERVA, "Flower lovers, after all? Rethinking Religion and Human Environment in Minoan Crete," *World Archaeology* 38.4 (2006) 586-598; L. GOODISON, "'Nature', the Minoans and Embodied Spiritualities," in K. ROUNTREE, C. MORRIS and A.D. PEATFIELD (eds.) *Archaeology of Spiritualities* (2012).

⁷ A. PEATFIELD, "Palace and peak: The political and religious relationship between palaces and peak sanctuaries," in R. HÄGG and N. MARINATOS (eds.) *The Function of the Minoan Palaces. Proceedings of the Fourth International Symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 10-16 June, 1984. SkrAth 4^o*, 35 (1987) 89-93; A. PEATFIELD, "The Aptsipadhes Korakias Peak Sanctuary Project," *Classics Ireland* 1 (1994) 90-95; A. PEATFIELD and C. MORRIS, "Dynamic Spirituality on Minoan Peak Sanctuaries," in K. ROUNTREE, C. MORRIS, and A. PEATFIELD (eds.) *Archaeology of Spiritualities* (2012) 227-225.

⁸ The expression of the relationship between Minoan Neopalatial elites and the sacred landscape, as advertised in art and architecture, functioned as ideology as it served to legitimate the sanctity of elites by positioning them as intermediaries between the human and non-human worlds. L.A. HITCHCOCK "Naturalizing the Cultural: Architectonicized Landscape as Ideology in Minoan Crete," in R. WESTGATE, N. FISHER, and J. WHITLEY (eds.) *Building Communities: House, Settlement and Society in the Aegean and Beyond, Cardiff University, April 17-21, 2001.* (2007) 91-97. For analysis of ideology from a Marxist perspective see D. MILLER, and C. TILLEY (eds.), *Ideology, Power and Prehistory* (1984); R. McGUIRE, and R. BERNBECK, "Ideology," in T. INSOLL (ed.) *Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Ritual and Religion* (2011) 166-178.

⁹ S. CROOKS, *What are these Queer Stones? Baetyls: Epistemology of a Minoan Fetish*. BAR-IS 2511 (2013). Aniconic stones are a common feature in several cultic traditions of the ancient eastern Mediterranean world. In the Levant, cultic standing stones are known as *masseboth* – see C.F. GRAESSER, “Standing Stones in Ancient Palestine,” *BiblArch* 35 (1972) 34-63; T. METTINGER, *No Graven Image? Israelite Aniconism in its Ancient Near East Context* (1995); U. AVNER, “Sacred Stones in the Desert,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 27 (2001) 30-41; Z. ZEVIT, *The Religions of Ancient Israel. A Synthesis of Parallaxic Approaches* (2001). Phoenician expansion during the Iron Age sees an increased distribution of stone cult throughout the ancient Mediterranean world, including in Cyprus, see S. CROOKS, “Cult Stones of Ancient Cyprus,” *JPR* 23 (2012) 25-44.

¹⁰ A. ZOIS, “Ανασκαφή εις Βασιλικήν ‘Ιεραπέτρας,” *Prakt* (1978) 300-308; A. ZOIS, “Ανασκαφή εις Βασιλικήν ‘Ιεραπέτρας,” *Prakt* (1979) 323-330; A. ZOIS, “Ανασκαφή εις Βασιλικήν ‘Ιεραπέτρας,” *Prakt* (1981) 367-379; P. WARREN, *Minoan Religion as Ritual Action*. SIMA-PB 72 (1988)18; P. WARREN, “Of Baetyls.” *OpAth* 18.14 (1990) 202-203; S. CROOKS, *What are these Queer Stones? Baetyls: Epistemology of a Minoan Fetish*. BAR-IS 2511 (2013) 11-14.

¹¹ K. BRANIGAN, *The Foundations of Palatial Crete: A survey of Crete in the Early Bronze Age* (1970). 48; D. PREZIOSI and L.A. HITCHCOCK, *Aegean Art and Architecture* (1999). 48-49; J. DRIESSEN, “The Central Court of the Palace at Knossos,” in G. CADOGAN, G. HATZAKI and A. VASILAKIS (eds.) *Knossos: Palace, City, State: proceedings of the conference in Herakleion organised by the British School at Athens and the 23rd Ephoreia of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities of Herakleion, in November 2000, for the centenary of Sir Arthur Evans’s excavations at Knossos*. BSA Studies 12 (2004) 77-78.

¹² P. WARREN, “Of Baetyls.” *OpAth* 18.14 (1990) 203.

¹³ D. BLACKMAN, “Archaeology in Greece 1999-2000,” *AR* 46 (1999-2000) 129-130.

¹⁴ D. BLACKMAN, “Archaeology in Greece 1997-1998,” *AR* 44 (1997-1998) 120.

¹⁵ For example, G.C. GESELL “The Minoan palace and public cult,” in R. HÄGG and N. MARINATOS (eds.) *The Function of the Minoan Palace, Proceedings of the Eighth International Symposium at the Swedish Institute in Athens, June 10-16, 1984* (1987), esp. 123, note 2 and 127, chart 1, provides estimates for the number of people that could be accommodated in various spaces regarded as cult spaces, estimating 2 ½ feet per person standing in a crowd and 8 feet per person milling about in a space. Similar estimates are yet to be made for the central courts.

¹⁶ G. RETHEMIOTAKIS, “Evidence on Social and Economic Changes at Galatas and Pediaa in the New-Palace Period,” in J. DRIESSEN, I. SCHOEP, and R. LAFFINEUR (eds.) *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*. *Aegaeum* 23 (2002) 55-56.

¹⁷ G. RETHEMIOTAKIS, “Social Rank and Political Power. The Evidence from the Minoan Palace at Galatas,” in *Eliten In Der Bronzezeit*. Teil 1 (1999a) 25; K.S. CHRISTAKIS, *The Politics of Storage: Storage and Sociopolitical Complexity in Neopalatial Crete* (2008) 4.

¹⁸ A high volume of pottery sherds was recorded on the bedrock in the vicinity of the court, including fragments from a wide range of vessel types, including plates and trays, tripod cooking-pots, libation and bridge-spouted jugs, pithoi and pithoid jars, cups, cylindrical vessels and *kalathoi*. See D. BLACKMAN, “Archaeological Reports for 2006-2007,” *AR* 53 (2006-2007) 105.

¹⁹ D. BLACKMAN, “Archaeological Reports for 2007-2008,” *AR* 54 (2007-2008) 104.

²⁰ L.A. HITCHCOCK, R. LAFFINEUR, and J. CROWLEY (eds.), *DAIS. The Aegean Feast. Proceedings of the 12th International Aegean Conference, University of Melbourne, Centre for Classics and Archaeology, 25-29 March 2008*. *Aegaeum* 29 (2008).

²¹ H.B. HAWES, B.E. WILLIAMS, R.B. SEAGER, and E.H. HALL, *Gournia, Vasiliki, and other prehistoric sites on the Isthmus of Hierapetra, Crete: Excavations of the Wells-Houston-Cramp Expeditions, 1901, 1903, 1904* (1908); S. HOOD, “A Baetyl at Gournia?” *Ariadne* 5 (1989) 20-21; P. WARREN, “Of Baetyls.” *OpAth* 18.14 (1990) 203 and Fig. 20; J.S. SOLES, “The Gournia Palace,” *AJA* 95.1 (1991); J.C. MCENROE, *Architecture of Minoan Crete: Constructing Identity in the Aegean Bronze Age*. (2010) 90-94; S. CROOKS, *What are these Queer Stones? Baetyls: Epistemology of a Minoan Fetish*. *BAR-IS* 2511 (2013) 23-28. D. PREZIOSI, *Minoan Architectural Design* (1983) 78-83, esp. 83 notes it is about a tenth the size of the ‘palace’ at Knossos, yet contains many of the same features found in the major ‘palaces’.

²² L.A. HITCHCOCK, “Cult Corners in the Aegean and the Levant,” in A. YASSUR-LANDAU, J. EBELING, and L. MAZOW (eds.) *Household Archaeology in the Bronze and Iron Age Levant. Cultures and History of the Ancient Near East* (2011) 321-346 321-346.

²³ S. HOOD, “A Baetyl at Gournia?” *Ariadne* 5 (1989) 18. The presence of the kernos suggests that offerings of some kind were made in proximity to the baetyl.

²⁴ J.S. SOLES, “The Gournia Palace,” *AJA* 95.1 (1991) 49-50; L.A. HITCHCOCK, *Minoan Architecture: A Contextual Analysis*. *SIMA-PB* 155 (2000) 149.

²⁵ This sanctuary contained a statuette of a Minoan goddess with upraised arms (MGUA) and the fragmentary remains of several other MGUAs, as well as five snake tubes, four bird figurines and two small terracotta snakes’ heads. See G.C. GESELL, *Town, Palace, and House Cult in Minoan Crete*. *SIMA* 67 (1985) 72.

²⁶ F. CHAPOUTHIER, P. DEMARGNE, and A. DESSENNE, *Fouilles exécutées à Mallia IV: Exploration du Palais; Bordure Méridionale et recherches complémentaires (1929-1935 et 1946-1969)*. *Études crétoises* 12 (1962); O. PELON, E. ANDERSEN, and J.-P. OLIVIER, *Le Palais de Mallia V. Études crétoises* 25 (1980); H. VAN EFFENTERRE, *Le palais de Mallia et la cité minoenne: étude de synthèse*. *Incunabula Graeca* 76 (1980); L.A. HITCHCOCK, *Minoan Architecture: A Contextual Analysis*. *SIMA-PB* 155 (2000); O. PELON, “Contribution du Palais de Malia à l’Étude et à l’Interprétation des “Palais” Minoens,” in J. DRIESSEN, I. SCHOEP, and R. LAFFINEUR (eds.) *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*. *Aegaeum* 23 (2002) 111-121.

²⁷ O. PELON, “Aspects de la vie religieuse minoenne à la lumière des recherches récentes au palais de Malia (Crète),” *CRAI* 124.4 (1980) 665-669 and Figs. 6-7; O. PELON, E. ANDERSEN, and J.-P. OLIVIER, *Le Palais de Mallia V. Études crétoises* 25 (1980) 128-130 and Pls. 84-85, 123; H. VAN EFFENTERRE, *Le palais de Mallia et la cité minoenne: étude de synthèse*. *Incunabula Graeca* 76 (1980) 59, 353, 449, Figs. 80 and 484; P. WARREN, “Of Baetyls.” *OpAth* 18.14 (1990) 203 and Figs. 18-19; S. CROOKS, *What are these Queer Stones? Baetyls: Epistemology of a Minoan Fetish*. *BAR-IS* 2511 (2013) 28-32. Chapouthier, Demargne and Dessenne suggest that the stone in the central court at Malia is a Venetian cannon ball (F. CHAPOUTHIER, P. DEMARGNE, and A. DESSENNE, *Fouilles exécutées à Mallia IV: Exploration du Palais; Bordure Méridionale et recherches complémentaires (1929-1935 et 1946-1969)*. *Études crétoises* 12 (1962) 20. cf O. PELON, E. ANDERSEN, and J.-P. OLIVIER, *Le Palais de Mallia V. Études crétoises* 25 (1980) 128-130). A second suggestion proposes that the stone with its cupule may have served as a head-cushion or springboard for acrobats to launch themselves from when attempting taurokathaptic leaps during the bull games (H. VAN EFFENTERRE, “Deux pierres et deux ‘theieres’ de Mallia,” *BCH* 111 (1987) 59. A significant barrier to such interpretations must surely be the logistical difficulty posed by having a springboard that is fixed, requiring that the bull to be leapt over be likewise fixed in position (L.A. HITCHCOCK, *Minoan Architecture: A Contextual Analysis*. *SIMA-PB* 155 (2000) 117).

²⁸ On the use and display of portable luxury objects to construct and promote elite and supra-elite identity, see M.H. FELDMAN, *Diplomacy By Design* (2006).

²⁹ C.J. TULLY, “The Sacred Life of Trees: What trees say about people in the prehistoric Aegean and Near East,” in E. ANAGNOSTOU-LAOUTIDES (ed.) *Proceedings of the 33rd Australian Society for Classical Studies Conference* (2012). Available online at <http://www.ascs.org.au/news/ascs33/index.html>

³⁰ O. RACKHAM and J. MOODY, *The Making of the Cretan Landscape* (1996) 125-127.

³¹ O. KRZYSZKOWSKA, “Impressions of the Natural World: Landscape in Aegean Glyptic,” in O. KRZYSZKOWSKA (ed.) *Cretan Offerings: Studies in Honour of Peter Warren. British School at Athens Studies* 18 (2012) 169-187.

³² For Stepped Ashlar Altars see K. KRATTENMAKER, *Minoan Architectural Representation*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Bryn Mawr College (1991) 273; also T. ALUŠÍK, “Architecture in the Aghia Triada Sarcophagus – Problems and Solutions,” in *Eirene (XLI) Studia Graeca et Latina* (2005) 26-44. Constructed openwork platforms functioned as prefabricated stages that could be assembled, disassembled, and moved around for use in the performance of religious spectacles. Palyvou has reconstructed such a structure in C. PALYVOU, “Οικοδομικές μέσά από την τέχνη Εποχής του Χαλκού: Τυποποιημένες λυόμενες κατασκευές,” in T. KAZAZI, and N. PAPAETRPU (eds.) *Πρακτικά: 2^ο Διεθνές Συνέδριο Αρχαίας Ελληνικής Τεχνολογίας. Proceedings: 2nd International Conference on Ancient Greek Technology* (2006) 417–424. Tripartite Shrines are structures consisting of a central vertical section flanked by two smaller “wings” on either side, thus forming a general stepped triangular shape. The three sections contain niches, which might harbour columns or be decorated by spirals. This type of structure probably functioned as a facade, although if freestanding, like the possible example at Vathypetro, it probably was not large enough to enter. J.W. SHAW, “Evidence for the Minoan Tripartite Shrine,” *AJA* 82 (1978) 429–448; J. DRIESSEN and J. SAKELLARAKIS, “The Vathypetro-Complex. Some Observations on its Architectural History and Function,” in R. HÄGG and N. MARINATOS (eds.) *The Function of the Minoan Palaces. Proceedings of the Fourth International Symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 10-16 June, 1984. SkrAth* 4^ο, 35 (1987) 63-77.

³³ Archaeological remnants of such a platform are evident at Archanes. J. SAKELLARAKIS and E. SAKELLARAKIS, *Archanes* (1991) 32. That women and trees alternate upon the stepped ashlar altars and openwork platforms may suggest that women were somehow symbolically associated with trees and therefore in some cases ritually interchangeable. One could also suggest that Minoan elaborate, layered-style, female skirts evoked mountains, again, semiotically conveying the combination of tree and mountain.

³⁴ Three dimensional examples of tripartite shrines may be evident at the Knossos palace, and the villas at Vathypetro and Nirou Khani. J.W. SHAW, “Evidence for the Minoan Tripartite Shrine,” *AJA* 82 (1978) 446, n.1; T. ALUŠÍK, “Minoan Tripartite Shrine – the beginnings of its architectonic form and its relationship to the ancient cultures of the Near East,” in *Studio Hercynia IV*. Institute for Classical Archaeology, Charles University, in collaboration with the Czech Society of Archaeology (eds.) (2002) 111-122.

³⁵ Whilst columnar structures, all of which feature trees on top of them, may have referred to sacred groves. Examples being in CMS II 3 114 from Kalyvia, CMS V Supp. IA 178 from Chania, HM 1700 from Knossos, CMS I 119 and CMS VI 279 Mycenae, CMS V 198 from Thebes (which although the same type of structure, does not have a tree growing out of the top of it), and on the Haghia Triadha sarcophagus, Side 1.

³⁶ C. DOUMAS, *The Wall Paintings of Thera* (1992) p. 16-143, Figs. 100-108, p. 158-165, Figs. 122-128. As noted by P. REHAK. “Enthroned Figures in Aegean Art and the Function of the Mycenaean Megaron,” in P. REHAK (ed.) *The Role of the Ruler in the Prehistoric Aegean. Aegaeum* 11. (1995) 106, Fig. XXXVII c.

³⁷ P. REHAK, “The Role of Religious Painting in the Function of the Minoan Villa: the case of Ayia Triadha,” in R. HÄGG (ed.) *The Function of the Minoan Villa. Proceedings of the Eighth International Symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 6-8 June 1992. SkrAth* 4^ο 46 (1997) 172.

- ³⁸ A. PEATFIELD, "Palace and peak: The political and religious relationship between palaces and peak sanctuaries," in R. HÄGG and N. MARINATOS (eds.) *The Function of the Minoan Palaces. Proceedings of the Fourth International Symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 10-16 June, 1984. SkrAth 4^o*, 35 (1987) 89-93.; A. PEATFIELD, "The Aptsipadhes Korakias Peak Sanctuary Project," *Classics Ireland 1* (1994) 90-95.
- ³⁹ Palatial control of peak sanctuaries during the Neopalatial Period is further indicated by the presence of inscribed libation tables and built features at peak sanctuaries, such as Juktas, see B.E. DAVIS *Minoan Stone Vessels With Linear A Inscriptions. Aegaeum 36* (2014).
- ⁴⁰ N. PLATON, *Zakros: The Discovery of a Lost Palace of Ancient Crete* (1971) 166; B. RUTKOWSKI, "Minoan Cults and History: Remarks on Professor B. C. Dietrich's Paper," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 20.1 (1971) 11; B. RUTKOWSKI, *The Cult Places of the Aegean* (1986) 89 and 142; J.W. SHAW, "Evidence for the Minoan Tripartite Shrine," *AJA* 82 (1978) 429-448; S. HOOD, "A Baetyl at Gournia?" *Ariadne* 5 (1989) 18; N. MARINATOS, *Minoan Religion: ritual, image, and symbol* (1993) 119-120.
- ⁴¹ J.L. CROWLEY, *The Aegean and the East: An Investigation into the Transference of Artistic Motifs between the Aegean, Egypt, and the Near East in the Bronze Age. SIMA-PB 51* (1989) 19-22 and 64-69.
- ⁴² R.B. KOEHL, *Aegean Bronze Age Rhyta. Prehistory Monographs 19* (2006) 103. Mountain-shaped rocks within landscape in fresco scenes, such as Xeste 3 first floor eastern wall, may actually signify mountains rather than a rocky landscape. C. PALYVOU, "Wall Painting and Architecture in the Aegean Bronze Age: Connections between Illusionary Space and Built Realities," in D. PANAGIOTOPOULOS and U. GÜNKEL-MASCHEK (eds.) *Minoan Realities: Approaches to Images, Architecture and Society in the Aegean Bronze Age* (2012) 15, figure 8.
- ⁴³ G.C. GESELL, *Town, Palace, and House Cult in Minoan Crete. SIMA 67* (1985) 21-22, 88-89.
- ⁴⁴ W.-D. NIEMEIER, "On the Function of the 'Throne Room' in the Palace at Knossos," in R. HÄGG and N. MARINATOS (eds.) *The Function of the Minoan Palaces. Proceedings of the Fourth International Symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 10-16 June, 1984. SkrAth 4^o*, 35 (1987) 163-168.
- ⁴⁵ B. RUTKOWSKI, "Minoan Cults and History: Remarks on Professor B. C. Dietrich's Paper," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 20.1 (1971) 1-19; B. RUTKOWSKI, *The Cult Places of the Aegean* (1986); N. MARINATOS, *Minoan Religion: ritual, image and symbol* (1993). See B.C. DIETRICH, "Minoan Peak Cult: A Reply." *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 20.5/6 (1971) 513-523 for a heated argument against the identification of a baetyl or stylised mountain in the throne back, and against the association of the Knossos throne with the Zakros rhyton. The seat depicted in CMS I 101 may be an example of a mountainous throne; the seat is a constructed piece of furniture but has a rocky outcrop at its back, as noted by P. REHAK. "Enthroned Figures in Aegean Art and the Function of the Mycenaean Megaron," in P. REHAK (ed.) *The Role of the Ruler in the Prehistoric Aegean. Aegaeum 11* (1995) 104. The intriguing remains from the Aptsipadhes Korakias peak sanctuary may further indicate an association between baetyls and peak sanctuaries, a dense scatter of water-worn pebbles marking the sanctuary area, at the centre of which is a depression entirely free from finds, surrounded by an area rich in sherds including fragments of rhyta, leading the excavator to suggest that within this depression there may have stood a focal cult object, perhaps a baetyl, see A. PEATFIELD, "The Aptsipadhes Korakias Peak Sanctuary Project," *Classics Ireland 1* (1994) 92-93.
- ⁴⁶ A. EVANS, *The Palace of Minos. A Comparative Account of the Successive Stages of early Cretan Civilization as illustrated by the Discoveries at Knossos. Vol I.* (1921). 506, Fig 364, a, b. A. SIMANDIRAKI-GRIMSHAW and F. STEVENS, "Destroying the Snake Goddess: A re-examination of figurine fragmentation at the Temple Repositories of the Palace of Knossos," in J. DRIESSEN (ed.) *Destruction: Archaeological, Philological and Historical Perspectives.* (2013) 153-170. See their suggestion that the faience dresses represent aniconic human forms. 158. They could just as well represent a human-mountain hybrid.