



WAS THE “MINOAN GENIUS” A GOD? AN ESSAY ON NEAR EASTERN DEITIES AND DEMONS IN AEGEAN BRONZE AGE ICONOGRAPHY*

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ABSTRACT

Although the hybrid creature known as the Minoan Genius was clearly derived from the Egyptian Ashaberu / Taweret, according to the iconographical evidence in the Aegean, its functions and meaning differ considerably. Nonetheless, in images showing the Minoan Genius as accompanied by a lion, flanked by lions, dogs or men, or performing actions on a podium-like structure, this fantastic being is clearly defined as a deity. Although a hybrid creature with the position of a deity is highly unusual in Minoan and Mycenaean iconography, we cannot do otherwise than attribute to the Minoan Genius the semi-divine character of a minor deity which is unique in the Aegean Bronze Age. Additionally, seal motifs of the Minoan Genius allow us to pose the question whether Neopalatial Crete was really a coequal member of a ‘Near Eastern koiné’ or whether it was positioned, instead, at the periphery of this ‘ideological realm’.

As Nanno Marinatos demonstrated in her numerous studies, looking back to the origins of the history of research can be extremely useful for a better understanding of the *status quo* of our interpretations in Aegean Protohistory. As early as 1894, some years before Arthur Evans started his excavations at Knossos, in the same volume where his first article on Aegean Bronze Age scripts appeared, an article was published by Arthur Bernard Cook on the iconographical figure which, nowadays, we generally call the “Minoan Genius”.¹ There, Cook interpreted images of this hybrid creature as evidence of a cult of the lion, the horse, the ass, the swine and other animals and deduced from them the existence of animal worship in Minoan Crete and Mycenaean Greece. Nowadays, this assumption can no longer be maintained any more, as the abundant evidence of male and female deities in iconographical and textual sources of the Aegean Bronze Age makes clear. Not even Linear B tablets from Boiotian Thebes mentioning quantities of agricultural products destined for such animals as dogs, mules, geese and snakes could impair our view that in the religions of the Bronze Age Aegean – in contrast to those of other Eastern Mediterranean civilizations – gods and goddesses were imagined exclusively in anthropomorphic form.² However, only the hybrid creature of the Minoan Genius, as remarked already by Cook, continues to cause some problems in this respect. In a recent article, the present author has discussed the varying iconographical forms and the development of the Minoan Genius.³ In this contribution some aspects of the meaning of this

most spectacular and challenging creature of Aegean iconography will be explored.

ICONOGRAPHICAL CONTEXTS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE MINOAN GENIUS

The hybrid creature named “Minoan Genius” by Aegean archaeologists can be counted among the most frequently represented of the fantastic beings in Aegean iconography and has been investigated most thoroughly, yet many of its aspects remain enigmatic.⁴ Although there is indeed a probability that this figure reached Crete via images from the Syro-Levantine area,⁵ its origin lies in the Egyptian hippopotamus deity of the 13th Dynasty called *Ashaberu* which was later absorbed by *Taweret*. This Egyptian composite deity was mainly responsible for the protection of women and children, childbirth and the underworld, but it also possessed further roles of a minor deity.⁶ In Minoan iconography it appears for the first time in seal images from MM IIB (around 1750 B.C.E.) in ‘Minoanized’ form: in the ‘belly variant’ (Figure 1), it is depicted with a swollen belly, pendulous breasts and a hippopotamus-like head (none of these features survive the Middle Minoan period) and holding a single-handled jug of Minoan type.⁷ By LM I (1680-1500 B.C.E.), the Minoan Genius gradually changed his form and received a truly conceptualized pictorial image in what could be named the ‘standard variant’. The figure became more human-like, while head, arms and legs appear

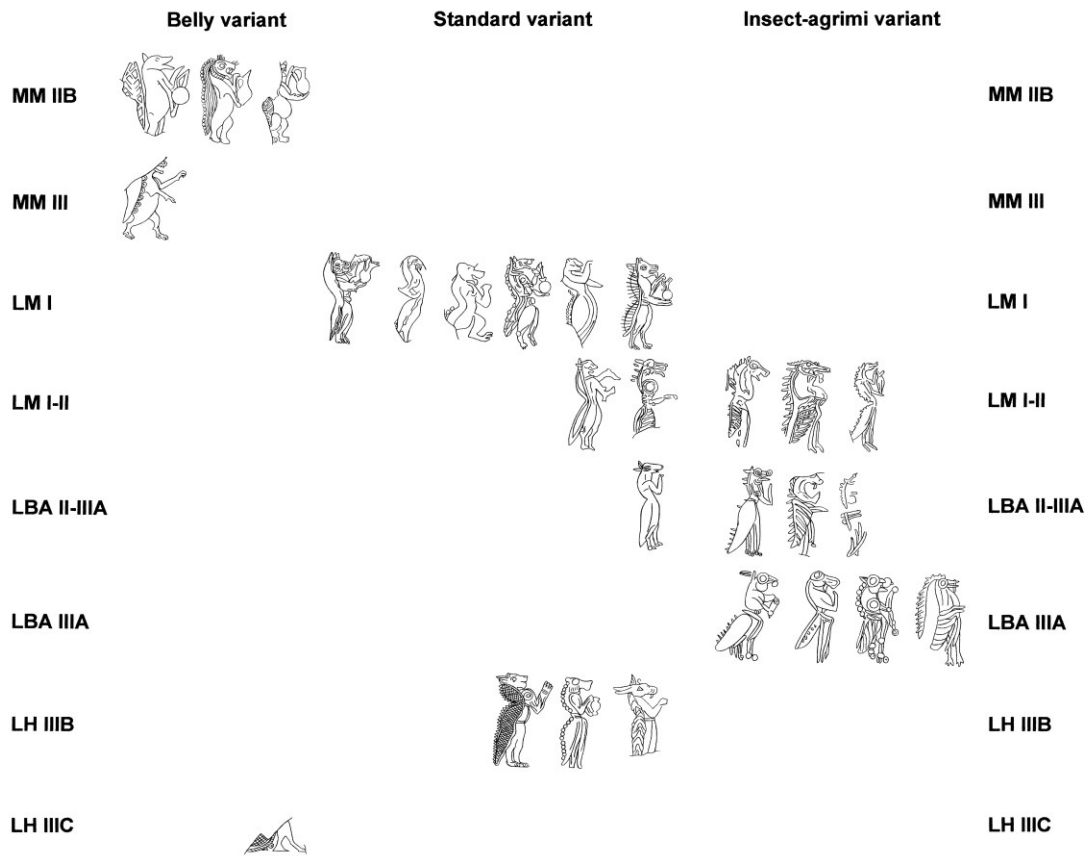


Figure 1: Typological development of the Minoan Genius (drawing by the author)



Figure 2: Stone-triton from Malia, detail (after Claude Baurain and Pascal Darcque, „Un triton en pierre à Malia,“ *Bulletin de Correspondence Hellénique* 107 (1983): 17, fig. 14; courtesy of the ÉfA/ I. Athanassiadi)

more leonine than before. The Genius loses his female breasts and the sex of the creature changed to an obviously male one. The by now deliberately broader activities of this figure allow us to attribute to him a human-like character atypical of hybrid creatures in Aegean imagery.⁸ Now, this creature was firmly integrated in and assimilated to the Minoan iconography.

Since LM I, the Minoan Genius with his strongly ‘Minoanized’ phenotype (Figure 1), his Minoan attributes and his altered character enjoyed a remarkably widespread and long-lived popularity in Aegean art and was associated with numerous iconographical themes⁹ which had very little in common with the Egyptian and Syro-Levantine models.¹⁰ The only functional aspect possibly shared by both the Egyptian hippopotamus deities and the Minoan Genius is the association with liquid and fertility.¹¹ The most popular motif of the Genius remains that of holding a jug with both paws. In this context the Genius occurs, for example, in front of a palm-tree, an altar or another Genius (Figure 2),¹² most frequently, though, in isolated or in antithetical form.¹³ Although the jug held by the Genius suggests a popular function of the figure in watering, fertilization or libation rituals, and even if the pouring of liquid is clearly attested by the scene on the stone triton from Malia (Figure 2), it could be assumed that the jug does not always point to a distinct action of the Genius, but mostly functions as a pure attribute.¹⁴ Despite his human-like activities, the position of the arms as well as the legs of the Minoan Genius is

mostly static, even when he is not holding his jug.¹⁵ Thus, holding a jug with both paws, the original gesture of the Minoan Genius, became a stereotypical, de-contextualized, ‘petrified’ iconic formula firmly connected with the creature itself, irrespective of his distinct activities. As a consequence, the motif of the Minoan Genius has been ‘imported’, transformed and fixed, yet instead of becoming a lively figure, in most cases it remained a static, template-like, abstract emblem of formulaic character.



Figure 3: Signet-ring from Tiryns (after CMS I, no. 179; courtesy of CMS Heidelberg)



Figure 4: Seal-stone in Oxford (after CMS VI, no. 304; courtesy of CMS Heidelberg)

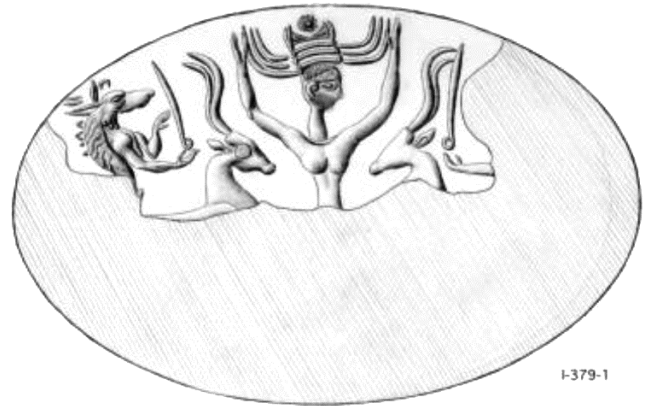


Figure 5: Seal image from Pylos (after CMS I, no. 379; courtesy of CMS Heidelberg)



Figure 6: Seal-stone from Vouдени, Patras (after CMS V Suppl. IB, no. 153; courtesy of CMS Heidelberg)

Since the Minoan Genius could be multiplied and appears even in a group of four identical specimens, such as on the signet-ring from the ‘Tiryns Treasure’ (Figure 3),¹⁶ he constitutes a species of hybrid creature comparable with griffins and ‘Minoan dragons’. The character of his activities, though, is situated much closer to the human sphere and the roles he plays are more exclusive ones. The Genius occurs in ritual and offering scenes, he leads a bull (Figure 4) or a lion (Figure 7),¹⁷ he kills a bull¹⁸ (Figure 12) and he carries a goat, a stag (Figure 14), a bull or lions.¹⁹ As an aggressor, the Genius is not an active predator, comparable to wild beasts such as griffin or lion, but he supports and substitutes a human hunter (Figures 12–13). A further function is that of a protecting being as demonstrated by images where he is depicted



Figure 7: Seal-stone in Oxford (CMS VI, no. 306; courtesy of CMS Heidelberg)



Figure 9: Seal image from Mycenae (after CMS I, no. 161; courtesy of CMS Heidelberg)



Figure 8: Seal-stone from Mycenae (after CMS I, no. 172; courtesy of CMS Heidelberg)



Figure 10: Seal-stone in London (CMS VII, no. 95; courtesy of CMS Heidelberg)

as flanking, protecting or being subdued by an anthropomorphic male and also female deity (Figure 5).²⁰ On the Tiryns ring (Figure 3) four Minoan Genii with their jugs are depicted as immediate servants of a deity or/and ruler. Furthermore, a seal-stone from Voudeni, Patras, shows the unique depiction of a Minoan Genius carrying on his shoulders a dead man (Figure 6),²¹ possibly constituting the only representation known so far of a dead human outside a warlike, hunting or bull-leaping context in Aegean iconography. The most plausible interpretation of this motif is that of a Genius in the function of a divine servant and a metaphysical medium.²² Thus, the Minoan Genius, occurring also

in highly unusual scenes, encompasses a remarkably wide thematic spectrum and, without any doubt, appears to be the most human amongst the hybrid creatures in Aegean iconography.²³

THE MINOAN GENIUS AS A DEITY

Additional iconographical contexts exist which point to the divine nature of the Minoan Genius. While seal images showing a Genius as leading a bull (Figure 4) or carrying a stag (Figure 14) might be interpreted as being part of a (virtual) offering ritual, this can hardly apply to the motif of the Minoan Genius accompanied

by a lion (Figure 7),²⁴ an animal reinforcing his supernatural character comparable to that of deities.²⁵ The divine nature of the Genius is even more obvious when he is flanked by animals such as lions²⁶ (Figure 8) and dogs²⁷ (Figure 9) and thus being presented in the position of a ‘Master of animals’.²⁸ Although this motif has been ascribed to a later development,²⁹ it occurs as early as LM I-II.³⁰ With this iconographical scheme, the Minoan Genius is clearly defined as “an object of veneration in its own right” (P. Rehak³¹), a conclusion which is further reinforced by the occurrence of a Genius-man flanked by dogs in the same scheme of a ‘Master of animals’.³² Even more remarkable is the image of the Minoan Genius flanked by two men (Figure 10).³³ Human figures with identical gestures flanking a central figure in the heraldic scheme are highly unusual in Aegean art and surely must be interpreted as flanking a sacred symbol, a divine medium or a deity.³⁴ This motif of adoration by anthropomorphic figures as well as the transport of a dead man by the Genius (Figure 6) demonstrate an extraordinary interaction between a hybrid creature and humans unparalleled in Aegean iconography. Furthermore, the sacred character of the Minoan Genius is supported by the scene represented on the stone-triton from Malia³⁵ (Figure 2) showing a pair of unequal Genii on a podium-like structure which raises them up to a supernatural sphere.³⁶ According to the hierarchy as attested by the veneration scenes in the mural-paintings of Xeste 3 in Thera and the newly recovered ivory relief lid from Mochlos, the larger Genius on the stone rhyton has to be attributed a divine character.³⁷ Although we have to be careful in projecting the sacral character of figures ‘imported’ from the Near East onto their Aegean counterparts, it is obvious that, at least in these images, we are confronted with the iconography of a deity. It has to be emphasized that a hybrid creature in the position of a deity is absolutely unique in Aegean iconography.

HOW TO DEFINE THE DIVINE CHARACTER OF THE MINOAN GENIUS?

The Minoan Genius is probably the most sophisticated creature occurring in Aegean iconography insofar as hybridity not only characterizes his artistic form but also his iconological profile: a fantastic being fulfilling rituals, transporting sacrificial(?) animals and humans, hunting and dominating wild beasts, supporting humans as well as deities and, occasionally, himself being in the position of a deity. This multitude of functions can hardly be explained by a diachronic change in the meaning of the Genius, for these functions seem to have existed simultaneously at least from LM I onwards. Initial, evolutionistic interpretations of the divine character of the Minoan Genius as “*daemons of forest, mountain, and stream ... spirits of the wild*” (Ch. Tsountas and J. I. Manatt³⁸), comparable to the Satyrs of classical Greece, or “*acting as vegetation spirits*” (A. Evans³⁹) certainly fall short of our actual understanding. It must also be emphasized that the Genius can by no means be interpreted as belonging to some popular belief, as

supposed by Nilsson and Evans:⁴⁰ on the contrary, the images allow us to define him as being an integral part of the official Minoan religion.⁴¹ Assessments such as that by M. P. Nilsson come closer to the iconographical evidence: “*They are not gods themselves, but the stuff of which gods are made ... superior to animals and to man*”,⁴² as well as that by M. A. V. Gill: “*its main function has developed from that of the human priesthood, but by nature it belongs with the gods*”, thus being “*a semi-divine intermediary between god and man*”.⁴³ Or, according to F. van Straten, the genius is “*an intermediary being, subordinate to the great gods*,” but “*at the same time participating of the nature of divinity*”, and therefore “*a sort of second rate Potnios Theron*”⁴⁴ – “*plus puissant que les hommes, moins inaccessible que les dieux ... un intermédiaire entre les deux sphères humaine et divine*” (Ch. Sambin⁴⁵), and thus representing in images such as that on the stone triton from Malia (Figure 2) “*at least demi-deities*” (J. Phillips⁴⁶).

It is no wonder that attempts have been made to look for terms within the Linear B corpus that may refer to the figure of the Minoan Genius: S. Marinatos proposed an identification of the Genii holding a libation jug with *di-pi-si-jo-i* (which he took to denote ‘the thirsty ones’; dat.) in the Pylian Fr series,⁴⁷ while F. van Straten associated them with the *a-pi-qo-ro-i* (amphiq^oloi, servants, attendants; dat.) in texts from Pylos,⁴⁸ but the latter should rather be understood as human servants who, at times, seem to be involved in ritual activities.⁴⁹ The donkey-headed Minoan Genii on a fresco fragment from Mycenae led D. Rousiotti to suggest an association with the mules (*e-mi-jo-no-i*; dat.) receiving rations on the Thebes tablets,⁵⁰ whereas A. Bernabé recognized in the Genii of this fresco fragment the *to-pa-po-ro-i* (translated by him as ‘rope-bearers’; dat.) who also appear in the Theban texts.⁵¹ None of these proposals possesses a higher probability; in short, the textual evidence is unable to give us any further clues for understanding the sacredness of the Minoan Genius.

One thing is obvious concerning the character of the Minoan Genius: his appearance excludes him from being of familiar human nature, and this simple statement might be of crucial importance for the understanding of this fantastic creature. As we have seen above, the Minoan Genius is also atypical of an Aegean deity in many respects. Concerning his attribution to some ‘mythological’ sphere, we have to confess our basic incapability of defining such a sphere in the Aegean Bronze Age.⁵² Not only does the Aegean iconography hardly deliver clear evidence for the existence of mythological narratives and heroes or heroines in the Near Eastern or later classical Greek sense, we are also broadly unable to distinguish deities attributable to different ranks or graded levels of divineness. Additionally, since the Minoan Genius is not an individual creature but constitutes a species of hybrid beings, he hardly can be seen as an individual deity. However, the iconographical contexts and the patterns of hierarchy set him apart from other hybrid or exotic creatures such as griffin, ‘Minoan dragon’ or lion and allow us to ascribe a preeminent character to

him. Although F. van Straten has spoken of “*an undifferentiated collectivity*” of Minoan Genii,⁵³ the image on the stone triton from Malia (Figure 2) demonstrates that the Genii, in contrast to other fantastic, intermediary creatures, could parallel the social hierarchy of the ritual realm of humans and possibly also that of deities. The Minoan Genius may even substitute humans and/or deities in some preeminent functions such as flanking a deity (Figure 5) or transporting (offering?) a man (Figure 6).⁵⁴ Thus, not the familiarity with, but the otherness of this creature in its appearance as well as its iconological content seem to have been of major significance. As a consequence, the wide range of functions covered by the Genius in iconography is remarkable, but this does not necessarily point to an inconsistent meaning for this figure.

It is important to note that the Minoan Genius constitutes a conceptualized figure already since his first appearance in late Protopalatial Crete. The conclusive consideration by J. Weingarten that the Genius may have been “*part of a conceptual expansion of liquid-pouring rites as represented by new cult assemblages*”⁵⁵ could explain the stereotypical, formula-like character of this figure. Its re-conceptualization in the Neopalatial period is even more obvious when the Genius is depicted in a multitude of functions and positions, but not in contradicting ones. In any case, there must have existed a distinct need for such an abstract, multifunctional and somewhat ‘neutral’ creature of semi-divine nature, a kind of minor deity, in the Aegean mindset and religious conception.⁵⁶ This makes the Minoan Genius unique in Aegean iconography and, furthermore, could be one of the few characteristics which he actually

NEOPALATIAL CRETE AS PART OF A ‘NEAR EASTERN KOINÉ’?

In order to reconsider the concept of a ‘Near Eastern *koiné*’ in the light of these observations, we will start by briefly reviewing some additional seal images of the Minoan Genius. Sealings from LM II-III A Knossos (Figure 11) show the Genius in his traditional ‘Minoanized’ form, in the ‘insect-agrimi variant’ of this period (Figure 1), as standing behind a Lion-man who is handling two isolated legs of a quadruped.⁵⁷ A. Evans already conclusively interpreted this seal image as a Minoan version of the Egyptian motif of *Taweret* supporting Horus in his struggle against Seth who is symbolized by detached bull limbs and stood in connection with an astral constellation.⁵⁸ In cases such as this, N. Marinatos might be correct in her assessment: “*Near Eastern texts and representations offer an invaluable guide for the “reading” of Minoan images and religion.*”⁵⁹ This, however, is less evident in the image on LM I seal-impressions from Kato Zakros depicting the Minoan Genius as killing a raging bull with a lance (Figure 12).⁶⁰ Although M. A. V. Gill, in her interpretation of this seal image, has taken into consideration a depiction of the same conflict between Horus (here symbolized by the Minoan Genius) and Seth in the form of a bull,⁶¹ the Zakros image appears too far removed from any Egyptian models. Thus, as confessed by Gill herself, it hardly

allows us to recognize a clear reflection of this Egyptian mythological narrative. Furthermore, it is remarkable that the compositional scheme of the Minoan Genius as a protector standing behind a figure fighting against a wild beast, as on the Knossos sealings (Figure 11), occurs also on a Minoan cylinder seal from Kakovatos (Figure 13).⁶² However, do the presence and the position of the Minoan Genius in this image really suffice to recognize any Near Eastern inspiration?



Figure 11: Seal image from Knossos (after CMS II 8, no. 200; courtesy of CMS Heidelberg)

A closer iconographical relation with Egyptian conceptions was also identified on a seal-stone in Berlin showing a Minoan Genius carrying a dead stag on his shoulders (Figure 14).⁶³ The two stars flanking the lower part of the Genius were suspected as belonging to *Taweret*’s stellar aspect in Egyptian astronomical images and, thus, this seal motif, again, was assumed to reflect the struggle between Horus and Seth.⁶⁴ Since the animal carried by the Genius on this seal is a stag instead of a bull, the question arises: does the combination of a Minoan Genius with star motifs suffice to associate this figure with the cosmological aspect of the Egyptian *Taweret*? Has the Aegean engraver of this seal really understood the Egyptian astronomical context of the foreign prototype of the Minoan Genius? Although there exists a further Minoan seal-stone showing two Genii with a jug flanking a plant crowned by a rosette,⁶⁵ in Aegean seal images star-like motifs occur in combination with many different creatures such as lion, dog, bull (also in front of a tree) and bucranium, stag, fish and dolphin, owl, bee, a Bird-woman, a Bull-man, an Agrimi-man, a winged Lion-agrimi, the ‘Minoan dragon’, the sphinx, the griffin, a scene of griffin and lion and a female figure. Star motifs also occur beside an altar, as well as in form of an obvious celestial motif in scenes of ritual, epiphany and the like. Even if, in several cases, the star may function as a purely filling motif, we observe a remarkable

frequency in combination with hybrid creatures; nevertheless, any clear-cut, well defined meaning of the star or rosette motifs going beyond a general ‘metaphysical’ or ritual significance, possibly possessing an ‘orientalizing’ connotation, can hardly be recognized.⁶⁶ It might also have been the case that series of rosettes and running spiral motifs in mural painting as well as in sculpted stone relief could have possessed a distinct meaning in the Bronze Age Aegean.⁶⁷



Figure 12: Seal image from Kato Zakros (after CMS II 7, no. 31; courtesy of CMS Heidelberg)



Figure 13: Cylinder seal from Kakovatos (after CMS XI, no. 208; courtesy of CMS Heidelberg)



Figure 14: Seal-stone in Berlin (after CMS XI, no. 38; courtesy of CMS Heidelberg)

Recently, an interpretation of the floating motifs in Minoan seal images as celestial constellations has also been proposed, and their dependence on the Near Eastern ones has been suggested.⁶⁸ Although such a trans-cultural transfer and ascribed meanings are not at all unlikely, we may be sceptical as to whether all these interpretations really do have a bearing on the meaning of the respective Minoan images. Although it appears doubtful that this explanatory model “*is able to explain all traits and peculiarities of the floating objects*”, as has been claimed,⁶⁹ it constitutes at least a possibility. However, it is the at times striking exchangeability of motifs such as star, rosette and circle with other motifs and symbols in Aegean seal images which is perplexing, leading us to think of their arbitrary, inconsistent and not well understood application by the artists. In the case of the Minoan Genius, for example, it has to be doubted whether his occurrence in the ‘Egyptianizing’ seal image with bull limbs from Knossos (Figure 11) has anything to do with the actual Minoan motif of the Genius leading a bull (Figure 4).⁷⁰ And why were star motifs added to a Genius carrying a stag (Figure 14), whereas stars are completely absent in images showing the Genius transporting a bull,⁷¹ which would conform much better to the Egyptian context of Horus and Seth, if this association had in fact been intended? Additionally, we should not ignore the many Aegean examples where Evans’ “*astral connection*”,⁷² a symbolic meaning of stars, rosettes and similar added motifs comparable to that in the Near East, hardly applies: Aegean images bearing a hermeneutical meaning in the Near Eastern sense seem to constitute by far the exception rather than the rule. It is perhaps no wonder that derivations of Aegean images from Near Eastern prototypes, such as in the case of the Knossos sealings with Minoan Genius, Lion-man and bull limbs (Figure 11), remain unique, although this may change in the

future. Moreover, in the light of the highly visible ‘Minoanization’ by the seal-engravers in the depiction of the figures, the iconographical style and, to a certain extent, also the compositional arrangement of the pictorial elements, is it really reasonable to expect a clear-cut meaning and symbolism of these images identical to those in the Near East?

Looking for comparanda, similarities and contextual consistency are the primary methodological tools we have at our disposal in this discussion. Given our considerable problems in understanding Minoan images such as these, though, we have to confess that it is hazardous to define iconographical inconsistencies. Even if hardly any clear criteria can be established for defining trans-cultural interaction on the sector of iconography, we should bear in mind the possible distinction between the adoption of a foreign image and the adoption of its foreign meaning. Thus, although it is difficult to assign to these and further examples an adequate place in our understanding of Minoan iconography, it appears doubtful that such parallels with Egyptian motifs – although at first sight attractive – were more than individually copied or transformed images borrowed from a Near Eastern prototype, with or without correctly understanding its meaning.

Nevertheless, it is remarkable that primarily motifs of divine figures and hybrid creatures point to the fundamental significance of the Minoan adoption and adaptation of Near Eastern images in order to create a new iconography by the Neopalatial period. Especially with regard to mythological composite creatures in Aegean iconography, we gain the impression that they categorically constitute figures stimulated by the Near East; at least, there can hardly be detected any hybrid creature shaped *ab origine* by Minoans themselves and possessing a longer tradition in Aegean iconography.⁷³ As the case of the Minoan Genius demonstrates, we are not confronted with phenomena such as the adoption of Near Eastern deities and their fusion with pre-existing divine beings in Aegean iconography. When seen from the perspective of the history of religion, though, it is obvious that, in MM IIB, Minoans had a particular need to borrow a hybrid figure of the kind of *Ashaberu / Taweret* and to connect it with a ritual jug. By LM I, the functions of the Minoan Genius were considerably enlarged and, again, a theological requirement to integrate a multifunctional, somewhat neutral, fantastic figure of semi-divine nature must have existed. Is it any coincidence that the most exotic, foreign-looking creature in Aegean iconography borrowed from abroad, i.e. the Minoan Genius, possessed a unique position in Aegean imagery and belief? We should not forget that, instead of the Egyptian *Ashaberu / Taweret* itself, it was the newly adapted Minoan Genius which became an integral part of Aegean religions. Thus, although it might sound paradoxical, this prominent member of Minoan ritual iconography, originally borrowed from abroad, may well demonstrate the fundamental dissimilarity of the divine sphere in the Aegean from the religious systems in the regions of the Near East. If the Minoan systems of belief were closely related to Near Eastern religions, two further issues would be perplexing: first, that in Aegean narrative scenes

no further example can be detected of a foreign, semi-divine creature possessing a comparably large spectrum of functions as the Minoan Genius.⁷⁴ And second, that ‘imported’ creatures such as griffin and sphinx as well as the Minoan Genius remained stereotypical iconic formulae when compared with the agile, naturalistic animals and humans in Minoan iconography, even when they are integrated as actors in multi-figured scenes. In order to delve deeper into the character of the Minoan Genius and his position in Aegean religion, a fresh look from a Near Eastern perspective may well deliver further fruitful stimuli.

Without any doubt, the scholarly conception of a symbolic visual language common to Egypt, the Syro-Levantine area, Anatolia and Minoan Crete constitutes a highly stimulating and fruitful model enabling a better understanding of intellectual interaction in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Bronze Age. Nevertheless, the thought-provoking figure of the Minoan Genius, with his strongly ‘Minoanized’ forms and meanings of a minor deity, may well rather be the outcome of a deliberate instrumentalization of ‘foreignness’, thus demonstrating that the character of motifs and symbols borrowed from the Near East remained ‘somehow foreign’ to people in the Aegean. As I have tried to outline elsewhere, the Minoan adoption (and adaptation) of Near Eastern iconographical motifs and symbols in late Protopalatial and especially in Neopalatial Crete should be understood as occurring under the auspices of a religio-political strategy by the palatial authorities of Knossos, a strategy which ultimately led to the largely independent, remarkably self-contained character of Aegean religious iconography.⁷⁵ I have the distinct impression that one essential aspect of this discussion is drastically underestimated by us: namely, the fact that, until the beginning of the Neopalatial period, Minoans did not require any religious iconography or images of their deities. This caused confusion not only among Aegean archaeologists but, in all probability, also among Minoans themselves. This means that people and societies of the Aegean Bronze Age did not necessarily require a more or less standardised, clear-cut iconography of individual deities as was the case in all Near Eastern as well as later civilizations. Neutrality and hyper-individuality are essential traits of the Minoan definition of divine as well as human figures. Aniconicity, anonymity and the absence of public sacral inscriptions set in stone are astonishing peculiarities of Aegean Bronze Age religions and demonstrate the fundamental discrepancy between the Aegean and any other culture of the Eastern Mediterranean world.

Thus, in spite of the rich evidence of trans-cultural interaction such as the Tell el-Dab‘a frescoes, as well as a plethora of other archaeological finds and interpretations of iconography and symbolic language to which Nanno Marinatos has contributed so much, the Bronze Age Aegean seems to have been positioned rather at the periphery of this ‘ideological realm’ instead of being a coequal member and active participant in an ‘Eastern Mediterranean *koiné*’. Although it might sound frustrating, it appears that neither an ‘*ex oriente lux*’ nor the association with the ‘Griechisches Wunder’ by classicists is really

able to elucidate some of the idiosyncratic phenomena and mechanisms of Minoan Crete.

ABBREVIATION

CMS Friedrich Matz and Ingo Pini (eds.), *Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel (CMS)* (Berlin, 1965–2009)..

NOTES

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¹ Arthur Bernard Cook, “Animal worship in the Mycenaean age,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 14 (1894): 81–169.

² See esp. Dimitra Rousioti, “Did the Mycenaean believe in theriomorphic divinities?,” in Robert Laffineur and Robin Hägg (eds.), *POTNLA. Deities and Religion in the Aegean Bronze Age. Proceedings of the 8th International Aegean Conference, Göteborg, Göteborg University, 12-15 April 2000, Aegaeum* 22 (Liège and Austin: Université de Liège and University of Austin, 2001), 305–314; Jörg Weilhartner, “Die Tierbezeichnungen auf den neuen Linear B-Texten aus Theben,” in Eva Alram-Stern and Georg Nightingale (eds.), *Keimelion. The Formation of Elites and Elitist Lifestyles from Mycenaean Palatial Times to the Homeric Period. Akten des internationalen Kongresses vom 3. bis 5. Februar 2005 in Salzburg, Denkschriften Wien 350, Veröffentlichungen der Mykenischen Kommission 27* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2007), 339–351.

³ Fritz Blakolmer, “The ‘Minoan Genius’ and his iconographical prototype Taweret. On the character of Near Eastern religious motifs in Neopalatial Crete,” in Jana Mynárová, Pavel Onderka and Peter Pavúk (eds.), *The Crossroads II, or There and Back Again. Conference at Prague, 15th – 17th September 2014*, forthcoming.

⁴ Arthur Evans, *The Palace of Minos at Knossos IV* (London: Macmillan, 1935), 431–444, 452–467; Margaret A. V. Gill, “The Minoan genius,” *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung* 79 (1964): 1–21; Margaret A. V. Gill, “Apropos the Minoan ‘Genius,’” *American Journal of Archaeology* 74 (1970): 404–406; Judith Weingarten, *The Transformation of Egyptian Taweret into the Minoan Genius: A study in cultural transmission in the Middle Bronze Age, Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology* 88 (Partille: Paul Aströms Förlag, 1991); Judith Weingarten, “The transformation of Egyptian Taweret into the Minoan Genius,” in Alexandra Karatsou and Maria Andreadaki-Vlaziaki (eds.), *Κρήτη – Αίγυπτος: Πολιτισμικοί δεσμοί τριών χιλιετιών* (Athens: Ypourgeio Politismou, 2000), 114–119; Chantal

Sambin, “Génie minoen et génie égyptien,” *Bulletin de Correspondence Hellénique* 113 (1989): 77–96; Paul Rehak, “The ‘Genius’ in Late Bronze Age glyptic: the later evolution of an Aegean cult figure,” in Ingo Pini and Jean-Claude Poursat (eds.), *Sceaux minoens et mycéniens. IVe symposium international, 10–12 septembre 1992, Clermont-Ferrand, CMS Beiheft 5* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1995), 215–231; Stella Chryssoulaki, “A new approach to Minoan iconography – an introduction: the case of the Minoan genii,” in Philip P. Betancourt et al. (eds.), *MELETEMATATA. Studies in Aegean Archaeology Presented to Malcolm H. Wiener as he enters his 65th Year, Aegaeum* 20, I (Liège and Austin: Université de Liège and University of Austin, 1999), 111–117; Jacqueline Phillips, *Aegyptiaca on the Island of Crete in their Chronological Context: A Critical Review I* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2008), 156–167.

⁵ Gill 1964 (supra n. 4), 6; Sambin 1989 (supra n. 4), 85–88, 93; Machteld J. Mellink, “Anatolian libation pourers and the Minoan Genius,” in Ann E. Farkas, Prudence O. Harper and Evelyn B. Harrison (eds.), *Monsters and Demons in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds. Papers Presented in Honor of Edith Porada* (Mayence: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1987), 65–72; Mario Benzi, “Minoan Genius on a LH III pictorial sherd from Phylakopi, Melos? Some remarks on religious and ceremonial scenes on Mycenaean pictorial pottery,” *Pasiphae* 3 (2009): 10.

⁶ Sambin 1989 (supra n. 4), esp. 79–85; Weingarten 1991 (supra n. 4), esp. 6–10; Phillips 2008, I (supra n. 4), 156–161.

⁷ Weingarten 1991 (supra n. 4); Judith Weingarten, “The arrival of Egyptian Taweret and Bes[et] on Minoan Crete: Contact and choice,” in Luca Bombardieri et al. (eds.), *SOMA 2012. Identity and Connectivity. Proceedings of the 16th Symposium on Mediterranean Archaeology, Florence, Italy, 1–3 March 2012, BAR International Series 2581, I* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2013), 371–372.

⁸ Among the sporadic exceptions range a griffin with a stag in front of an altar (CMS IX, no. 20 D) and monkeys: Nanno Marinatos, “An offering of saffron to the Minoan Goddess of Nature. The role of the monkey and the importance of saffron,” in Tullia Linders and Gullög C. Nordquist (eds.), *Gifts to the gods. Proceedings of the Uppsala Symposium 1985, Boreas* 15 (Uppsala:

- Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1987), 123–132; Paul Rehak, “The Monkey Frieze from Xeste 3, Room 4: Reconstruction and interpretation,” in Philip P. Betancourt et al. (eds.), *Meletemata. Studies in Aegean Archaeology Presented to Malcolm H. Wiener as he enters his 65th Year, Aegaeum 20, III* (Liège and Austin: Université de Liège and University of Austin, 1999), 705–708. See further Emily Vermeule and Vassos Karageorghis, *Mycenaean Pictorial Vase Painting* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1982) 154–155, XII.17.
- ⁹ Gill 1964 (supra n. 4), 1–21; F. T. van Straten, “The Minoan „genius” in Mycenaean Greece,” *Bulletin antieke beschaving* 44 (1969): esp. 111–119; Rehak 1995 (supra n. 4); Phillips 2008, I (supra n. 4), esp. 163.
- ¹⁰ Martin P. Nilsson, *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and its Survival in Greek Religion*, 2nd ed. (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1950), 381; Gill 1964 (supra n. 4), 4; van Straten 1969 (supra n. 9), 120; Sambin 1989 (supra n. 4), esp. 91–94; Phillips 2008, I (supra n. 4), 167. See further Nanno Marinatos, *Minoan Religion. Ritual, Image, and Symbol* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press 1993), 197; Diamantis Panagiotopoulos, „Der ferne Nachbar. Der Einfluß Ägyptens auf das minoische Kreta und das mykenische Griechenland,” *Städte Jahrbuch N.F.* 19 (2004): 41; Peter Warren, „A model of iconographical transfer. The case of Crete and Egypt,” in Isabelle Bradfer-Burdet, Béatrice Detournay and Robert Laffineur (eds.), *KPHΣ TEXNITHΣ. L’artisan crétois. Recueil d’articles en l’honneur de Jean-Claude Poursat, publié à l’occasion des 40 ans de la découverte du Quartier Mu, Aegaeum 26* (Liège and Austin: Université de Liège and University of Austin, 2005), 225–226.
- ¹¹ Phillips 2008, I (supra n. 4), 167.
- ¹² Claude Baurain and Pascal Darcque, „Un triton en pierre à Malia,” *Bulletin de Correspondence Hellénique* 107 (1983): 3–58; Claude Baurain, „Pour une autre interprétation des génies minoens,” in Pascal Darcque and Jean-Claude Poursat (eds.), *L’iconographie minoenne. Actes de la table ronde d’Athènes (21–22 avril 1983), BCH Suppl. 11* (Paris and Athens: De Boccard, 1985), 95–97, Fig. 1.
- ¹³ Rehak 1995 (supra n. 4), 217–219.
- ¹⁴ See also Gill 1964 (supra n. 4), 7, 10; Lucy Goodison, *Death, Woman and the Sun. Symbolism of Regeneration in Early Aegean Religion, BICS Suppl. 53* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1989), 111.
- ¹⁵ Gill 1964 (supra n. 4), 7.
- ¹⁶ CMS I, no. 179.
- ¹⁷ CMS VI, nos. 304–306.
- ¹⁸ CMS II 7, no. 31.
- ¹⁹ CMS II 3, no. 105; II 6, no. 98; V, no. 209; V Suppl. 1B, no. 167; VI, no. 307; IX, no. 129; XI, nos. 37–39.
- ²⁰ CMS I, no. 379 (= I. Pini, *Die Tonplomben aus dem Nestorpalast von Pylos* (Mayence: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1997), 7–8, no. 12, Pl. 4); II 3, no. 282; II 8, no. 197; XI, nos. 36, 290.
- ²¹ CMS V Suppl. 1B, no. 153. See Fritz Blakolmer, “Rituals in Aegean Bronze Age iconography: a survey through seal images,” in Ioannis Mylonopoulos (ed.), *Materiality and Visibility of Rituals in the Ancient World*, forthcoming.
- ²² See further Rehak 1995 (supra n. 4), 220–221; Chryssoulaki 1999 (supra n. 4), 116 (“the soul-escort”); Blakolmer forthcoming (supra n. 21).
- ²³ Cf. esp. Gill 1964 (supra n. 4), 1–21; Nanno Marinatos, *Minoan Sacrificial Ritual. Cult Practice and Symbolism* (Stockholm: Paul Aströms Förlag, 1986), 44–46; Rehak 1995 (supra n. 4); Chryssoulaki 1999 (supra n. 4), 114–117.
- ²⁴ CMS VI, no. 306.
- ²⁵ See Gill 1964 (supra n. 4), 11. Cf. CMS I, no. 133; II 7, no. 27; II 8, no. 237; V Suppl. 1B, no. 77; XII, no. 207.
- ²⁶ CMS I, no. 172.
- ²⁷ CMS I, no. 161 (= Walter Müller, Jean-Pierre Olivier and Ingo Pini, „Die Tonplomben aus Mykene,” *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1998): 25–27, no. 12, Fig. 4). For an anthropomorphic deity flanked by dogs in the ‘Master of animals’ scheme, cf., e.g., CMS II 3, no. 193; II 8, nos. 248, 253.
- ²⁸ For the motif of the ‘Master of animals’, see Jacqueline Chittenden, „The Master of Animals,” *Hesperia* 16 (1947): 89–114; Nilsson 1968 (supra n. 10), 400–401, 405–406; Marinatos 1993 (supra n. 10), 167–171; Walter Müller, „Zu Stil und Zeitstellung des Bildthemas ‘Herr der Löwen’,“ in Ingo Pini (ed.), *Minoisch-mykenische Glyptik. Stil, Ikonographie, Funktion. V. Internationales Siegel-Symposium, Marburg, 23.–25. September 1999, CMS Beiheft 6* (Berlin, Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2000), 182–194; Alison E. Barclay, The Potnia Theron: adaptation of a Near Eastern image, in Robert Laffineur and Robin Hägg (eds.), *POTNLA. Deities and Religion in the Aegean Bronze Age, Proceedings of the 8th International Aegean Conference, Göteborg, Göteborg University, 12–15 April 2000, Aegaeum 22* (Liège and Austin: Université de Liège and University of Austin, 2001), 373–386; Janice L. Crowley, “The Aegean Master of Animals. The evidence of the seals, signets, and sealings,” in Derek B. Counts and Bettina Arnold (eds.), *The Master of Animals in Old World Iconography* (Budapest: Archaeolingua, 2010), 75–91.
- ²⁹ Phillips 2008, I (supra n. 4), 167.
- ³⁰ See CMS II 8, no. 197. For the date, see *ibid.* 145.
- ³¹ Rehak 1995 (supra n. 4), 228. See also Evans 1935 (supra n. 4), 444, Fig. 369; p. 461–462; Gill 1964 (supra n. 4), 11.
- ³² CMS VII, no. 126.
- ³³ CMS VII, no. 95.
- ³⁴ Alternative interpretations do not appear convincing; Evans 1935 (supra n. 4), 466 with Fig. 391: „youthful ministers being described as subduing it, probably by the help of incantations”; Crowley 2010 (supra n. 28), 84 with Fig. 29: “the animal attendant is centered and the Master figure is doubled”. For the motif of two men(?) (with different gestures) flanking a lion, see CMS I, no.

- 374; Pini 1997 (supra n. 20), 9–10, no. 16, Pl. 6.
- ³⁵ Supra n. 12.
- ³⁶ Cf. already Marinatos 1993 (supra n. 10), 199.
- ³⁷ For the Xeste 3 paintings, see esp. Andreas Vlachopoulos, “The wall paintings from the Xeste 3 building at Akrotiri. Towards an interpretation of its iconographic programme,” in Neil Brodie et al. (eds.), *Horizon. A Colloquium on the Prehistory of the Cyclades, McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge, 25-28 March 2004* (Cambridge: Stavros Niarchos Foundation, 2008), 451–465. For the ivory relief lid from Mochlos, see Jeffrey S. Soles, “Priestess, hero, goddess: new evidence for Minoan religion,” in Eva Alram-Stern et al. (eds.), *METAPHYSIS. Ritual, Myth and Symbolism in the Aegean Bronze Age. Proceedings of the 15th Aegean Conference, Vienna, Institute for Oriental and European Archaeology (OREA), Department Aegean and Anatolia, Austrian Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Classical Archaeology, University of Vienna, 22-25 April 2014, Aegaeum*, forthcoming.
- ³⁸ Christos Tsountas and James I. Manatt, *The Mycenaean Age* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1897), 301.
- ³⁹ Evans 1935 (supra n. 4), 444.
- ⁴⁰ Evans 1935 (supra n. 4), 433; Nilsson 1968 (supra n. 10), 381.
- ⁴¹ See Marinatos 1986 (supra n. 23), 46.
- ⁴² Nilsson 1968 (supra n. 10), 381.
- ⁴³ Gill 1964 (supra n. 4), 5 and 7.
- ⁴⁴ van Straten 1969 (supra n. 9), 116–117.
- ⁴⁵ Sambin 1989 (supra n. 4), 92. See also Baurain 1985 (supra n. 12), 114.
- ⁴⁶ Phillips 2008, I (supra n. 4), 166.
- ⁴⁷ Spyridon Marinatos, “Polydipsion Argos,” in Leonard R. Palmer and John Chadwick (eds.), *Proceedings of the Cambridge Colloquium on Mycenaean Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 265–274. See also Sarah P. Morris, “Prehistoric iconography and historical sources,” in Robert Laffineur and Janice L. Crowley (eds.), *EIKΩN. Aegean Bronze Age Iconography: Shaping a Methodology. Proceedings of the 4th International Aegean Conference, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Australia, 6–9 April 1992, Aegaeum 8* (Liège: Université de Liège, 1992), 209; Robert Laffineur, “Seeing is believing: reflections on divine imagery in the Aegean Bronze Age,” in Robert Laffineur and Robin Hägg (eds.), *POTNLA. Deities and Religion in the Aegean Bronze Age, Proceedings of the 8th International Aegean Conference, Göteborg, Göteborg University, 12–15 April 2000, Aegaeum 22* (Liège and Austin: Université de Liège and University of Austin, 2001), 388.
- ⁴⁸ van Straten 1969 (supra n. 9), esp. 119–121.
- ⁴⁹ Jörg Weilhartner, *Mykenische Opfergaben nach Aussage der Linear B-Texte, Mykenische Studien 18* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2005), 129 with n. 296, 204 with n. 539.
- ⁵⁰ Rousiotti 2001 (supra n. 2), 310. See also Weilhartner 2007 (supra n. 2), 346.
- ⁵¹ Alberto Bernabé, “TH AV 101 and Mycenaean *to-pa-po-ro(-i)*,” in Pierre Carlier et al. (eds.), *Études mycéniennes 2010. Actes du XIII^e colloque international sur les textes égéens, Sèvres, Paris, Nanterre 20-23 septembre 2010* (Pisa and Rome: Fabrizio Serra editore, 2012), 172–175 with Fig. 1.
- ⁵² See Fritz Blakolmer, “Hierarchy and symbolism of animals and mythical creatures in the Aegean Bronze Age: a statistical and contextual approach,” in Eva Alram-Stern et al. (eds.), *METAPHYSIS. Ritual, Myth and Symbolism in the Aegean Bronze Age. Proceedings of the 15th Aegean Conference, Vienna, Institute for Oriental and European Archaeology (OREA), Department Aegean and Anatolia, Austrian Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Classical Archaeology, University of Vienna, 22-25 April 2014, Aegaeum*, forthcoming.
- ⁵³ van Straten 1969 (supra n. 9), 119.
- ⁵⁴ See Blakolmer forthcoming (supra n. 21).
- ⁵⁵ Weingarten 1991 (supra n. 4), 13; Weingarten 2013 (supra n. 7), 374.
- ⁵⁶ Cf. Gill 1964 (supra n. 4), 5: “some need that native gods are unable to fulfill”.
- ⁵⁷ CMS II 8, no. 200.
- ⁵⁸ Arthur J. Evans, “The Mycenaean tree and pillar cult and its Mediterranean relations,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 21 (1901): 169 with n. 2; Evans 1935 (supra n. 4), 440–441, 153, Fig. 365; Gill 1964 (supra n. 4), 10, 12; Sambin 1989 (supra n. 4), 94–95; Alexander MacGillivray, “The Great Kouros in Cretan art,” in Joseph Alexander MacGillivray, Jan M. Driessen and L. Hugh Sackett (eds.), *The Palaikastro Kouros. A Minoan Chryselephantine Statuette and its Aegean Bronze Age Context, British School at Athens Studies 6* (Athens: The British School at Athens, 2000), 127; Nanno Marinatos, “The indebtedness of Minoan religion to Egyptian solar religion: Was Sir Arthur Evans right?,” *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 1 (2009): 24–25; Phillips 2008, II (supra n. 4), 103, no. 174.
- ⁵⁹ Nanno Marinatos, “Minoan religion,” in Michele R. Salzman and Marvin A. Sweeney (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Religion in the Ancient World I: From the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 253.
- ⁶⁰ CMS II 7, no. 31.
- ⁶¹ Gill 1964 (supra n. 4), 10.
- ⁶² CMS XI, no. 208.
- ⁶³ CMS XI, no. 38.
- ⁶⁴ Evans 1935 (supra n. 4), 436, 441–442, Fig. 364; Marinatos 2009 (supra n. 58), 25, Figs. 7 B–C.
- ⁶⁵ CMS VI, no. 310.
- ⁶⁶ For star motifs in the Aegean, see the discussions by Nilsson 1968 (supra n. 10), 412–425; Goodison 1989 (supra n. 14), passim; Nanno Marinatos, *Minoan Kingship and the Solar Goddess. A Near Eastern Koine*

- (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 60–62, 117–120, 131–134.
- ⁶⁷ See esp. Stefan Hiller, “The spiral as a symbol of sovereignty and power,” in Anastasia Dakouri-Hild and Susan Sherratt (eds.), *Autochthon. Papers Presented to O. T. P. K. Dickinson on the Occasion of his Retirement, Institute of Classical Studies, University of London, 9 November 2005, BAR Int. Ser. 1432* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2005), 259–270.
- ⁶⁸ MacGillivray 2000 (supra n. 58), esp. 127–130; MacGillivray, “The Minoan Double Axe Goddess and her astral realm,” in Nicholas Ch. Stampolidis, Athanasia Kanta and Angeliki Giannikouri (eds.), *Athanasia. The Earthly, the Celestial and the Underworld in the Mediterranean from the Late Bronze and the Early Iron Age, International Archaeological Conference, Rhodes 28-31 May, 2009* (Irakleio: University of Crete, 2012), 115–126; Evangelos Kyriakidis, “Unidentified floating objects on Minoan seals,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 109 (2005): 137–154, esp. 150–153. See already Evans 1935 (supra n. 4), 435–439.
- ⁶⁹ Kyriakidis 2005 (supra n. 68), 152.
- ⁷⁰ CMS VI, nos. 304–305.
- ⁷¹ CMS IX, no. 129; XI, no. 39.
- ⁷² Evans 1935 (supra n. 4), 440–441, 153.
- ⁷³ Cf. Blakolmer forthcoming (supra n. 52).
- ⁷⁴ An exception could be a stone-seal showing a griffin acting in an offering ritual, as mentioned above: CMS IX, no. 20 D. See Marinatos 1986 (supra n. 23), 45 with Fig. 29; Nanno Marinatos, “The imagery of sacrifice: Minoan and Greek,” in Robin Hägg, Nanno Marinatos and Gullög C. Nordquist (eds.), *Early Greek Cult Practice. Proceedings of the Fifth International Symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 26–29 June, 1986* (Stockholm, Paul Aströms Förlag, 1988), 18–19, Fig. 15.
- ⁷⁵ Fritz Blakolmer, „Wie Bilder lügen. Die Frühägäer und ihre Götter,“ in Claus Reinholdt and Wolfgang Wohlmayr (eds.), *Akten des 13. Österreichischen Archäologentages, Klassische und Frühägäische Archäologie, Paris-Lodron-Universität Salzburg, vom 25. bis 27. Februar 2010* (Vienna: Phoibos Verlag, 2012), esp. 23–26; Fritz Blakolmer, „Iconography versus reality: Goddesses and gods in Minoan Crete,“ in *Acts of the 11th International Cretological Congress, Rethymno, 21-27 October 2011*, forthcoming; Fritz Blakolmer and Veronika Dubcová, „Orientalische Götterkronen und das Problem ‚fremder Götter‘ in der Ikonographie des minoischen Kreta,“ in Gebhard J. Selz and Klaus Wagensohner (eds.), *Mesopotamische Kunstgeschichte(n). Festschrift für Erika Bleibtreu*, forthcoming; Blakolmer forthcoming (supra n. 3).