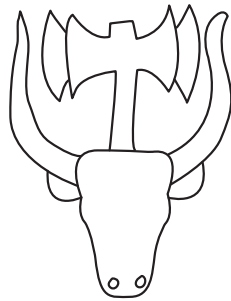


Minoan Religion

New Material and Interpretations





Man carrying religious standard with omega object on top of it. Restoration of fragment from Xeste 4, Akrotiri, Thera (reconstruction N. Marinatos and M. Toufeklis, after Boulotis 2005).

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Minoan Religion

New Material and Interpretations

Edited by

Nanno Marinatos and Fritz Blakolmer



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Front cover: view north from Mt. Juktas, overlooking the area of the Temenos, with Herakleion and the island of Dia in the distance (courtesy Google Earth); gold Divine Couple Ring from Poros (© and courtesy Herakleion Archaeological Museum, Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Organization of Cultural Resources Development [HOCReD]); Late Minoan II Palace Style pithoid amphora from Juktas (drawing A. Astrinaki).

Back cover: in-situ bronze double axes in the foundation deposit of the sanctuary of Juktas (photo A. Karetsou; courtesy Juktas Excavation Archive); gold foil cutout in the shape of a bull's head and double axe from Shaft Grave IV, Mycenae, NAM 353 and 354, ht. 4.2–4.6, w. 3.5 cm (photo I. Miari).

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in memoriam*

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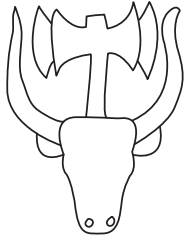
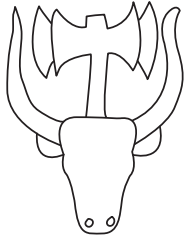


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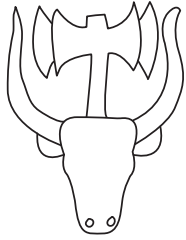
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Preface

In 1980, the late Robin Hägg, then director of the Swedish Institute in Athens and later professor at the University of Gothenburg, organized a conference together with Nanno Marinatos that addressed the topic of Sanctuaries and Cults in the Aegean Bronze Age (Hägg and Marinatos, eds., 1981). This event took place exactly 30 years after the second edition of Martin Nilsson's important work, *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and Its Survival in Greek Religion* (1950), and aimed at filling the gap in the archaeological research since the 1950s. Important issues that were discussed then focused on the difference between Minoan and Mycenaean religion as well as the difference between popular religion and official cult. In the following decade, additional conferences were organized by Robin Hägg and Nanno Marinatos in the same spirit and also were held at the Swedish Institute in Athens. They persisted in exploring the cultural identity of Minoan vs. Mycenaean but

also stressed the social and historical parameters of the Bronze Age societies of the Aegean; among the most important of these conferences were Minoan Thalassocracy and The Function of the Minoan Palaces.

It is in the spirit of these 1980s conferences that the present volume is conceived, attempting first to update the evidence for Minoan religion (especially because there is stunning new material emerging in Minoan Crete as well as the Peloponnese and neighboring Aegean regions) and second to utilize diverse approaches to the analysis. One difference between the 1981 *Sanctuaries and Cults* volume and the present volume is that we have decided to confine the topic to Minoan religion alone and not to include Mycenaean Greece, in which field the Linear B tablets have given very important information about rituals and deities.

This volume has one additional link to the Swedish Institute conferences of the 1980s. It is no

coincidence that some of the authors of the present volume had taken part in the Swedish Institute symposia, some having participated more than once: Philip Betancourt, Alexandra Karetsou, Wolf-Dietrich Niemeier, and Peter Warren. The present volume honors Robin Hägg's memory, over 40 years after the publication of *Sanctuaries and Cults in the Aegean Bronze Age* (Hägg and Marinatos, eds., 1981).

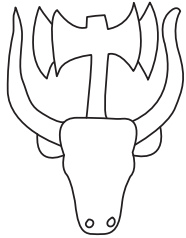
But a great deal has happened in the meantime: the international Aegean conferences (published in the *Aegaeum* series of volumes) organized by Robert Laffineur (University of Liège) in collaboration with other experts have kept the field up to date. Robert Laffineur chose diverse and innovative thematic units that gave the published volumes a flavor of anthropology and made the subjects attractive to specialists in other fields. The proceedings were published in a timely fashion and received generous and efficient distribution, helping to make the Aegean Bronze Age popular and thus attracting many young scholars to the field. It is noteworthy that, during the past two decades, no less than three of these conferences were devoted to religion, with titles such as *POTNIA*, *DAIS*, and *METAPHYSIS* (Laffineur and Hägg, eds., 2001; Hitchcock, Laffineur, and Crowley, eds., 2008; Alram-Stern et al., eds., 2016). Additionally, two further published edited volumes reflect the significance of Minoan religion in current research: the volume in honor of Geraldine C. Gesell (D'Agata and Van de Moortel, eds., 2009) and the acts of a conference on popular religion and ritual (Vavouranakis, Kopanias, and Kanellopoulos, eds., 2018).

Apart from being a tribute to the initiative of Robin Hägg, it may be worth asking what the present volume contributes to debates about Minoan religion. The present editors chose to focus on updates in the field, namely primary archaeological evidence (on this, see contributions by Philip Betancourt [this vol., Ch. 6], Alexandra Karetsou [Ch. 3], Lefteris Platon [Ch. 4], Santo Privitera [Ch. 7], Jeffrey Soles [Ch. 5], Peter Warren [Ch. 2]), new or

restudied selected objects (Wolf-Dietrich Niemeier [Ch. 8], Lena Papazoglou-Manioudaki [Ch. 9], Giorgos Rethemiotakis [Ch. 10]), and analytical subjects (Lucy Goodison [Ch. 11], Matthew Haysom [Ch. 12], Nanno Marinatos [Ch. 13], Fritz Blakolmer [Ch. 14]). This volume focuses less on anthropological theory and New Archaeology, although two papers with theoretical approaches are indeed included (Lucy Goodison [Ch. 11], Matthew Haysom [Ch. 12]), because the editors decided not to exclude any methodology. As far as textual sources from Minoan Crete are concerned, Linear A has been generally ignored since it is not yet deciphered. We made one exception and included Vassilis Petrakis' appendix on the meaning of the single axe in connection with Lena Papazoglou-Manioudaki's article of the examination of this particular motif on a bracelet or armband from Shaft Grave IV at Mycenae (see this vol., Ch. 9). Regarding chronology, the contributions to this volume cover mainly the Neopalatial period but not only that time. And because the palaces dominated the physical and social landscape, it is natural that most of the contributions in this volume have examined the "elite"—that is, "palatial"—Minoan religion (see esp. Wolf-Dietrich Niemeier, this vol., Ch. 8), although aspects of rural and "popular" ritual expressions have not been ignored (see Lefteris Platon, this vol., Ch. 4).

To summarize, this volume encompasses the broad thematic spectrum of archaeological ritual contexts; shrine architecture and natural cult places; votive offerings and other sacral objects; symbols, figurines, and iconography in all its versatile forms; the reconstruction of rituals and practices of worship as well as reflections of spirituality; the nature of the deities venerated at distinct sites; the debate of monotheism and polytheism as well as parallels in the history of religion; the interrelation of religion and political power; and, last but not least, the versatile history of research, which is of highest significance for defining our actual position(s) in scholarship.

Fritz Blakolmer, Vienna
Nanno Marinatos, Saronis
May 2021

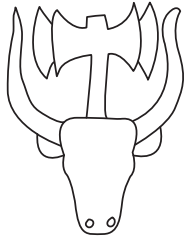


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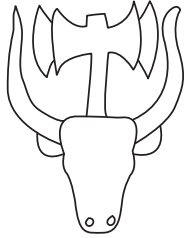


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List of Abbreviations

Ag	silver	ht.	height
Au	gold	INSTAP	Institute for Aegean Prehistory
ASC	altered states of consciousness	SCEC	Study Center for East Crete
ca.	circa	km	kilometer(s)
cm	centimeter(s)	Kn no.	Knossos catalog number
CMS	<i>Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel</i>	L.	length
Cu	copper	LH	Late Helladic
dia.	diameter	LM	Late Minoan
EM	Early Minoan	m	meter(s)
esp.	especially	m ²	square meter(s)
g	gram(s)	m asl	meters above sea level
ha	hectare(s)	MM	Middle Minoan
HM	Herakleion Archaeological Museum number	Mt.	Mount
		NAM	National Archaeological Museum

n.d.	no date	pl(s).	plate(s)
no(s).	number(s)	pres.	preserved
pers. comm.	personal communication	w.	width
pers. obs.	personal observation		