

CRISIS CULTS ON MINOAN CRETE?*

At the 1998 Polemos Conference in Liège, P.P. Betancourt defended the idea of discontinuity in Minoan religion.¹ Partly in the same vein, I want to consider the possibility of a punctuated religious development or, perhaps more precisely, a change in religious paradigm and ritual symbolism under the influence of stress situations.

“Cosmos, in the sense of all-embracing, all-pervading order, was taken for granted” in ancient society: “everything in heaven and earth, in nature and in society, had been established and set in order by the gods and was still watched over by the gods.”² Religion actually served to unite cultural, social and personality systems into a significant unity, involving a common myth, ritual behaviour and something that is regarded as “the holy.”³ In every more complex society, however, there exists a popular and a more official level at which religion is practised but both levels, through the performance and repetition of certain rituals, are expected to ensure the link between gods and human beings, the natural order. Occasionally, however, this order is challenged by chaos, which can appear in different disguises: not only is the tension between personal expectations and institutionalised sacerdotal practices often producing new religious movements⁴ but natural disaster, eclipses, war, famine, disease, monstrous creatures and other ‘Helter Skelter’ situations regularly provoke religious responses by social groups. When society in general undergoes stress, official cult will often react by means of an intensification of normal ritual behaviour. If increased ritualisation fails to reinstate normality, the blame is often apportioned elsewhere through scapegoating and victimisation. At the popular level, reactions may differ considerably and it is at this level especially that crisis cults spring up. Eventually, however, increased ritualisation and popular crisis cult may join hands. In using the term crisis cult, I follow La Barre in cutting across all other appellations for such religious reactions to adversity. In a general way, the term covers a variety of religious movements such as revitalisation-, salvation-, cargo- and liberation cults, but also antichrist-, doomsday-, prophecy- and millenarian movements, as well as apocalypticism, Armageddonists, messianism, the Age of Aquarius, New Age etc., i.e. ‘all religious movements that expect imminent, total, ultimate, this worldly collective salvation’.⁵ Once we realise that successful crisis cults often develop into institutionalised cults afterwards, it becomes relatively easy to

* I thank the Belgian FNRS for a travel grant making my participation to the conference possible. Several of the ideas sprung forth from discussions with the other *kouroi* of Palaikastro, J.A. MacGillivray, L.H. Sackett and T.F. Cunningham, and with C.F. Macdonald. I thank the French School at Athens for the permission to publish the fresco from the Sanctuary of the Horns at Malia and the British School at Athens for the Palaikastro Kouros. General abbreviations: *Troubled Island*: J. DRIESSEN and C.F. MACDONALD, *The Troubled Island. Minoan Crete before and after the Santorini Eruption*, *Aegaeum* 17 (1997); *TAW*: *Thera and the Aegean World*.

1 P.P. BETANCOURT, “Discontinuity in the Minoan-Mycenaean Religions: Smooth Development or Disruptions and War?,” in *POLEMOS* 219-225.

2 N. COHN, *Cosmos, Chaos and the World to Come. The Ancient Roots of Apocalyptic Faith* (1993) 3.

3 B. HARGROVE, *The Sociology of Religion. Classical and Contemporary Approaches* (1979) 12.

4 V. LANTERNARI, *Les mouvements religieux de liberté et de salut des peuples opprimés* (1962) 321.

5 G.W. TROMPF, “Introduction,” in G.W. TROMPF (ed.), *Cargo Cults and Millenarian Movements* (1990) 1. The bibliography on such movements is endless. I have also used LANTERNARI (*supra* n. 4); T. ROBBINS, *Cults, Converts and Charisma. The Sociology of New Religious Movements* (1988); J.A. BECKFORD, *New Religious Movements and Rapid Social Change* (1986); G. COCHRANE, *Big Men and Cargo Cults* (1970); COHN (*supra* n. 2); R.K. EMMERSON, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages. A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature* (1981); T. STONE, “The Chaos of Collapse: Disintegration and Reintegration of Inter-Regional Systems,” *Antiquity* 73 (1999) 110-118; W. LA BARRE, “Materials for a History of Studies of Crisis Cults: A Bibliographic Essay,” *CurrAnthr* 12 (1971) 3-44.

identify this practice and, to be fair, most of the religious movements around nowadays started off, in some way or another, as crisis cults.⁶ For many authors indeed, the study of crisis cults is more or less identical with the study of emergent religious movements,⁷ whether or not they were historically successful. Some well-known, less successful examples are the Asasins, the cult of Joan of Arc, the nativistic cult of Savonarola, the revolt of the Mahdi and we have had, unfortunately, some very recent illustrations with nazistic Götterdämmerung ideology, Jones Town, the Branch Davidians of Waco, and the Spring 2000 mass suicides in Uganda.⁸ But even in 12th Dynasty Egypt, a messianistic prophet called Ipuwer promised disaster and salvation and the monotheistic cult introduced by Achnaton can also be considered as some kind of crisis cult, if we take into account the dominant part played by plague and international troubles during his reign.⁹

Crisis cults then are ritual reactions by social groups that try to cope with a problem which routine secular or sacred practices cannot master. Such cults often involve a new or modified sacred attitude towards a present set of beliefs. Interestingly, crisis cults often spring up in contexts of acculturation, when different ethnic or social groups come into increased contact, or in cases of natural disaster, although, to be fair, there is no single theory of causality since there is abundant anthropological evidence for crisis cults to have sprung up for political reasons (such as separatism, anti-colonialism, foreign domination), economic factors (havenots), military aspects, commercial incentives, charismatic personalities (messianism) or the so-called 'Barbarossa' motif, "the idea that the hero only sleeps and in catastrophe will awaken to change chaos into utopian order."¹⁰ The main feature common to all these motives is *relative deprivation*, the realisation that a particular situation is unbearable and needs adjustment or rectification by means of a new ritual. Indeed, Sierksma has argued that "when any moderately highly organized organism... 'loses control' through loss of equilibrium due to internal or external causes, it automatically shows projective behavior."¹¹

Societal stress situations hence produce psychological effects that affect projective symbolic behaviour, which we may try to identify by means of cognitive archaeological approaches. In practice, however, it is no easy matter to identify the archaeological correlates of such crisis cults apart from a few eloquent cases. A crisis cult related to volcanic activity, for example, was recently excavated in the settlement at Cholula in Mexico: immediately before the 50 AD eruption of Popocatepetl volcano, clay effigies of volcanoes, with chimneys holding clay containers with ash, were made, later buried by the ash ejected by the very volcano that the effigies were meant to placate.¹² Where Minoan Crete is concerned, it seems reasonable to identify some kind of widespread crisis cult in the deposition of lumps of pumice in a series of offerings dating to LM I. Apart from the discovery of a deposit of conical cups containing pumice in front of the collapsed entrance of the Arkalokhori Cave,¹³ pumice was also found in a foundation deposit under a threshold at Nirou Chani, in cups at the top of the stairs leading up to the court of the *palataki* at Petras, together with clay horns of consecration in House B at Palaikastro, and at two different spots in the Zakro palace: in a well, where pumice was associated with olives and grapes, and in the Northeast Lustral Basin where it was found together with a triton shell.¹⁴ I also wonder about the deposit of 200 inverted conical cups

6 LANTERNARI (*supra* n. 4) 13: "chacune des grandes religions modernes surgit, à l'origine, comme un mouvement prophétique de renouvellement: cela vaut également pour le Judaïsme, le Christianisme, l'Islamisme, le Bouddhisme, le Taoïsme, etc.: c'est-à-dire pour les religions que l'on appelle "fondées." On pourrait dire alors...que chacune des grandes religions modernes est surgie de situations analogues de crise culturelle et sociale."

7 See the comment by R.J.Z. WERBLOWSKY on LA BARRE (*supra* n. 5) 35.

8 See LA BARRE (*supra* n. 5) for dozens of examples.

9 See especially C. ALDRED, *Akhenaten. King of Egypt* (1988) 283.

10 LA BARRE (*supra* n. 5) 18.

11 Comments by F. SIERKSMA in LA BARRE (*supra* n. 5) 33.

12 P. PLUNKET and G. URUÑUELA, "The archaeology of a Plinian eruption of the Popocatepetl volcano," in W.J. MCGUIRE, D.R. GRIFFITHS and P.L. HANCOCK (eds), *The archaeology of geological catastrophes* (2000) 196-205.

13 L. PLATON, "La destruction volcanique du centre palatial de Zakros," *TAW* I, 399.

14 *Troubled Island*, 97 (references).

found in one (B) of Hogarth's Houses at Knossos, also dated to LM I,¹⁵ although this may reflect an intensification of a normal ritual. For Middle Minoan IIIB, the sacrifice of one or more oxen following an earthquake in one of the houses south of the palace at Knossos¹⁶ and the sacrifice of a human at the outbreak of an earlier earthquake in the Anemospilia building in Middle Minoan IIB/IIIA can also reasonably well be interpreted along similar lines. I leave aside the children's bones from a LM IB context interpreted as cultic in the western part of Knossos but, for the critics of the ritual cannibalism hypothesis – a not entirely unusual reaction in terms of severe stress as the Anasazi illustrate¹⁷ – I would like to mention the discovery of 'stray' human bones, especially skulls, in LM I destruction deposits. Examples occur in the palace of Zakro, Mansion I at Petras, the villa at Epáno Zakros, the, as yet, main building B.2 at Mochlos¹⁸ and at Kastri on Kythera.¹⁹ It would also be interesting to find out what the proper context was for the remains of about 20 individuals found in a LM IA context in the so-called Temple Tomb at Knossos.²⁰ It is usually assumed that they were earthquake victims but the nature of the building needs clarification. If it represents a 'Minoan Funerary Temple', as suggested by its Egyptian parallels, its elaborate architecture, its tripartite façade and by the large stone horns of consecration assumingly found here, then we can start dramatising about the way the people reached their end: funerary remains, or simply being at the wrong place at the wrong time when the earthquake struck, or sacrificed to placate the Earth Shaker as at Anemospilia.

These examples are, I hope, sufficient to illustrate that Crete is behaving more or less as expected in times of unusual events such as the Santorini eruption or a major earthquake. These ritual reactions were apparently as uncommon as the events they were responses to and none seems to have developed into an institutionalised practice afterwards.

Leaving aside the marine style as a reaction to tsunami damage after the Santorini eruption and other changes mentioned in the *Troubled Island*, I want to concentrate on one possible successful crisis cult, a religious movement unusual at the time of its conception, which afterwards developed into an institutionalised practice. The crisis cult in question is that of anthropomorphic cult statues venerated within free-standing architectural units ("shrines" or "temples"). I believe that the cult in question represents an entirely new ritual system and not simply a modified religious continuity,²¹ even if part of the symbolism appears as traditional. To be effective, indeed, and to be more easily acceptable by larger groups, most religious movements appropriate and redefine a number of long-established elements, often introducing a syncretism of new and old elements.

Whereas in Egypt and Mesopotamia, respectively the Pharaoh and the En or Lugal guaranteed the link between mortals and gods, explaining their role in iconography and the appearance from an early moment onwards of the royal image,²² the link between the two worlds where Minoan cosmology is concerned, seems rather to have been constituted by the *rituals* themselves, i.e. the acts were more important than the actors or mediators and it is

15 *Troubled Island*, 165.

16 *PM* II.1 (1928) 302 (henceforth *PM*).

17 *Troubled Island*, 102.

18 See J.S. SOLES, "The Collapse of Minoan Civilization: The Evidence of the Broken Ashlar," in *POLEMOS* 57-58: only the cranium was found with a hole in it indicating that the person was killed from a blow to the head.

19 *Troubled Island*, 109; S.M. WALL, J.H. MUSGRAVE and P.M. WARREN, "Human Bones from a Late Minoan IB house at Knossos," *BSA* 81 (1986) 333-388, 387.

20 *PM* IV.2, 962-1018; *Troubled Island*, 166-167.

21 As Warren seems to suggest in the discussion after BETANCOURT's paper (*supra* n. 1); see also A. PEATFIELD, "After the 'Big Bang' – What? or Minoan Symbols and Shrines beyond Palatial Collapse," in *Placing the Gods*, 20: "The very continuity of Minoan religion does suggest the ability to redefine its symbols."

22 See e.g. D. SCHMANDT-BESSERAT, "Images of Enship," in M. FRANGIPANE, H. HAUPTMANN, M. LIVERANI, P. MATTHIAE and M. MELLINK (eds), *Between the Rivers and over the Mountains. Archaeologica anatolica et mesopotamica Alba Palmieri dedicata* (1993) 201-219 and D. O'CONNOR and D.P. SILVERMAN (eds), *Ancient Egyptian Kingship* (1995).

these actions that seem to constitute the political ideology.²³ Since the conference took place in Göteborg, it is only fair to give praise to Peter Warren's seminal 1986 study on *Minoan Religion as Ritual Action*. Dance, baetylic, robe, flower and sacrifice rituals were performed "to invoke the presence of the divinity and to gain communion with her in the sacred place or liminal zone."²⁴ Warren did, in my opinion, not sufficiently stress the ecstatic and shamanistic experiences involved in these ritual actions which have recently been given a proper scientific background.²⁵ Despite Dickinson's criticism, I think the evidence is also highly in favour of a Great Goddess,²⁶ who may have had a male consort of secondary importance. Sacred places or liminal zones in contemporary Bronze Age societies are temples and occasionally High Places and several authors assume similar spatial contexts for the performance of Minoan ritual. Since official Minoan religion too seems to have been a community religion,²⁷ it seems reasonable to state that the palaces or perhaps better the court-centred complexes constituted the prime environment for official ritual at least till the Late Minoan I period when Peak Sanctuaries and some Sacred Enclosures were apparently also included or appropriated into the official religious programme. We may assume, I think, that when the social ideology materialised into the establishment of spatial contexts that we commonly call "palaces," religious ideology also did and we can continue discussing whether the first preceded the second or vice-versa. By implication, the *repetition in the layout* of these 'court-centred structures' should agree with a *specific set of ritual prescriptions*. Our best examples outside the canonical palaces are probably the court with altar at Nirou Chani and the Symi sacred enclosure. Official Minoan ritual action then is court-related and open-air religion. I accept, however, that some preparatory practices (manufacture of drugs?) or some kind of more private initiation took place within the walls of the palaces, where also the treasuries for the cult equipment were located. Close to the west façade of the first palace at Phaistos and Quartier Mu at Malia, for instance, is a small room with a fixed clay hearth and ritual paraphernalia. Its intimate association to the west court suggests that it had an ancillary function. Likewise, the quite large Middle Minoan Lustral Basins in the palace of Knossos and in Quartier Mu undoubtedly had a cult function but their audience must have been much more limited. Outside the palatial environment, however, the situation may have been considerably different. From the beginning of the First Palace Period, one or more parallel popular and possibly even more shamanistic ritual circuits existed or, rather, continued to exist, since there is some substantial Early Minoan evidence for some of these practices. These cults, besides the domestic ones that occur throughout the island, seem more regionally based: mountain top cults appear especially popular in Central Crete and in the very east of the island, cave cults flourish in Central Crete, and in the Messara and the Mirabello area in particular funerary or ancestral cults focussed on tholoi and house tombs. This parallel circuit agrees to some degree with the official cult where the community aspect, the operation of beliefs and its material attributes are concerned but it is difficult to find two identical examples. As far as I can tell, there are only three oddities where the Middle Minoan period is concerned: the so-called 'Temple' at Anemospilia and two possible independent cult buildings at Malia.

23 J. WEINGARTEN, "War Scenes and Ruler Iconography in a Golden Age: Some Lessons on Missing Minoan Themes from the United Provinces (17th c. A.D.)," in *POLEMOS* 347-355, opens unexpected possibilities of interpretation on Minoan political and social systems but fails to explain the absence of a clear-cut religious iconography of power in Minoan Crete.

24 P. WARREN, *Minoan Religion as Ritual Action* (1986) 34.

25 See I. LEWIS, *Ecstatic Religion. A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession* (1989). It is good to know that A. Peatfield, C. Morris and L. Goodison are pursuing this angle of approach.

26 O.T.P.K. DICKINSON, "Comments on a Popular Model of Minoan Religion," *OJA* 13 (1994) 173-184. Because of the differences between Minoan Crete and the rest of the Eastern Mediterranean, I cannot subscribe to his arguments for a polytheistic religion.

27 Stressed by PEATFIELD (*supra* n. 21) 22.

At Malia, the Middle Minoan town counts two seemingly independent cult buildings, one now situated beneath the Stratigraphical Museum, excavated by J.-C. Poursat,²⁸ and the quite exceptional, but barely published, Sanctuary of the Horns²⁹ situated more to the south-west but still very much within the Minoan town and served by one of the town roads.³⁰ These two buildings are as yet unique and one explanation for their presence is related to the fact that thus far no satisfactory Peak Sanctuary in the Malia region has been identified and that they may have served a similar purpose.³¹ The Shrine beneath the Stratigraphical Museum (Pl. CIa) is situated to the south of an east-west road probably leading to the West Court of the Palace and accessible from the south from a paved open area, giving it an urban character. Poursat also provides good arguments to regard it as an independent construction.³² The same is perhaps likely for the Sanctuary of the Horns (Pl. CIb), a building which surprised because of its emptiness. Close to one of its stepped entrances is an ashlar construction surmounted by stuccoed single horns of consecration, paralleled by a plastered bench likewise provided with such horns. From the wall of a room in this building comes a fresco depicting a red-on-bluish white bucranium (Pl. CIc). Likewise bordered by a street leading in the direction of Quartier Epsilon, the building may have formed part of a larger unit. It probably dates to the Middle Minoan period since it is overbuilt by later constructions. Our best parallel for this kind of sanctuary is provided by Early Bronze Age II Beycesultan.³³ Whereas there is at least one miniature jug from the Sanctuary of the Horns, the Museum Shrine yielded abundant ritual equipment, including two animal figurines and clay horns of consecration. Their architectural elaboration and ritual finds suggest that they formed an integrated part of the religious life of Middle Minoan Malliots. Their situation on major urban arteries may then imply that they served as intermediary stations on a ceremonial or processional way towards the palace, i.e. ancillary buildings for the palace where the major rituals focussing on the central and west courts took place rather than community shrines or independent urban structures that deserve the label “temple.”³⁴ The Anemospilia building,³⁵ although located on the road up to the Iuktas peak sanctuary, seems to some degree to have acted independently, situated as it is about 400 m lower. Because of its plan and finds, it is often portrayed as a “temple.” I want to leave its unusual finds aside for the moment and concentrate on the architecture. The plan is usually interpreted as belonging to a freestanding building with a tripartite northern entrance leading to an east-west corridor from where again three doorways lead to three parallel longitudinal rooms. It is mentioned, however, that “three more rooms may have existed to the north, but ground erosion has left us with only paltry remains of their foundation walls.”³⁶ The

28 J.-C. POURSAT, “Un sanctuaire du Minoen Moyen II à Malia,” *BCH* 90 (1966) 514-551.

29 A. DESSENNE, “Mallia. Recherches dans les quartiers d’habitation. B. Le sanctuaire,” *BCH* 81 (1956) 695-700.

30 S. MÜLLER, “Routes minoennes en relation avec le site de Malia,” *BCH* 115 (1991) 556.

31 I. SCHÖP, “Ritual, Politics and Script on Minoan Crete,” *Aegean Archaeology* 1 (1995) 7-25. Others believe that the hill of Profitis Elias or the Maza peak sanctuary served Malia: the first is close but yielded only a single scarab figurine and seems rather to represent a Middle Minoan fort, guarding the plain, the second is too far to be useful, situated as it is near the village of Kalo Chorio Pediados. Its intervisibility (cf. PEATFIELD, *supra* n. 21, Ill. 2.1) shows it to belong to the Central Cretan peak sanctuaries nucleus.

32 POURSAT (*supra* n. 28) 529-530.

33 S. LLOYD and J. MELLAART, *Beycesultan*, I (1962) 44, fig. 16, 52, fig. 20.

34 See S. HOOD, “Minoan Town Shrines?” in Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean. Studies presented to F. Schachermeyr (1977) 158-172 and the additional comments in G. GESELL, *Town, Palace, and House Cult in Minoan Crete* (1985) 93 and *Minoan Religion*, 112. Hood’s ‘Town Shrines’ included examples at Gournia, Ayia Triadha, Koumasa, Pseira, Palaikastro Block P, Rousses Chondrou and Kannia-Mitropolis, but the example at Ayia Triadha has now been redated to LM IIIA2-B and Georgoulaki has questioned the interpretation of Koumasa. For more details on urban shrines, see chapter 6 in J.A. MACGILLIVRAY, J. DRIESSEN and L.H. SACKETT, *The Palaikastro Kouros* (2000) 87-95.

35 See especially the detailed account with further references in J. and E. SAKELLARAKIS, *Archanes. Minoan Crete in a New Light* (1997) I, 269-311.

36 SAKELLARAKIS (*supra* n. 35) 272-273. It is also sometimes forgotten that there is good evidence for the existence of an upper floor (*op. cit.*, 294); I would also like to hear more about possible phases in the building: the excavators (p. 272) state that there was ‘only one building phase with no renovations or repairs’ but their drawing 68 seems to suggest the presence of two blocked doors.

excavators do not return to the issue but the presence of a possible identical north wing turns the structure into a storage area (Pl. CId), similar, for example, to the storage wing in the Neopalatial palace at Phaistos. The existence of a series of parallel rooms is also suggested by the location of doorjamb bases, opening from the corridor to the north, rather than the other way around. The fine published drawings, photographs and descriptions make it also clear that there must have existed an upper storey and that the building contained at least 20 pithoi with concentrations in the central corridor, the east and the central room. In essence, therefore, the Anemospilia building appears like a free-standing building in which the *ground floor* rooms were largely devoted to storage, perhaps similar to the largely unpublished Middle Minoan *Magazins Dessenne* at Malia³⁷ or the Late Minoan I building at Kannia-Mitropolis. The ritual paraphernalia (vases, spear point) may also have been stored here and used perhaps on occasion of the ceremonial processions of people hiking up the mountain, fed or feasted within the *peribolos* at Anemospilia with the supplies stored in the building. The presence of large stone sacred horns leaves no doubt about the official capacity of the building. This new interpretation of the building does not mean that I disagree with the existence of a human sacrifice, only that this took place in slightly more secular surroundings than proposed by the excavators and that the practice was unusual. Incidentally, the presence of a wooden cult statue or *xoanon* is assumed on the basis of two terracotta feet, found in the central room whereas the human sacrifice took place in the west room. I will come back to the question of the terracotta feet below.

I see rather few essential changes from the Middle to the Late Minoan I period as far as official ritual practices are concerned. Certain features, however, such as the manipulation of a few peak and cave sanctuaries by nearby palatial centres and the rise in the importance of certain ritual symbols, all suggest a gradual complication and sophistication of ritual practices. Several authors have indeed commented upon their intensified use for political purposes in the Neopalatial period. That the centres had a more serious grip on ritual life on the countryside in LM I seems an attractive hypothesis then. That this trend is then also countered by a redefinition of Lustral Basins practices and a serious increase in domestic cult practices is to be expected. Ritual paraphernalia all agree with those in use in more official contexts. There are, however, two features in the mature LM I period that attract attention: one is the importance of anthropomorphic imagery in many different media,³⁸ the other the presence of a few semi-official cult areas, that are often independent structures. The best example is the Northwest unit of Building 5 at Palaikastro (Pl. CIe), the original context for the chryselephantine statue (Pl. CIIa). The gesture of the Kouros, with fists clinched and both hands raised to the chest,³⁹ is well-known from earlier, contemporary and later terracotta figurines, especially but not only at Palaikastro.⁴⁰ The figure with this pose is usually interpreted as an adorant, a votif. The Palaikastro context, however, seems to suggest that it was a cult statue: part of the building in which it was found was especially set aside for cult reasons and furnished with ashlar walls showing mason's marks; the unit was only accessible from a square via a staircase and two wide, axially placed doorways; a covered pit and a smoothed serpentine boulder, perhaps a baetyl, are situated in the room where the legs of the statue were found; the statue was the only ritual focussing device in the unit. In our book on this statue, Sandy MacGillivray, Hugh Sackett and myself argue that the *Palaikastro Kouros* was intentionally smashed on the eve of the destruction.⁴¹ One of the possible reasons for this violent destruction is that the statue was an aberration, a heresy, a blasphemy. If the Kouros

37 Now reinterpreted as normal town-houses by R. TREUIL, "Les 'Maisons Dessenne' à Malia," in *MELETEMATA* 841-845.

38 As stressed by J.A. MacGillivray in MACGILLIVRAY, DRIESSEN and SACKETT (*supra* n. 34).

39 Geste 11 in M. WEDDE, "Talking Hands: A Study of Minoan and Mycenaean Ritual Gesture," in *MELETEMATA* 911-919.

40 Surprisingly perhaps, no bronze figurine with precisely this gesture is included in C. VERLINDEN, *Les statuettes anthropomorphes crétoises en bronze et en plomb, du IIIe millénaire au VIIIe siècle av. J.-C.* (1984).

41 MACGILLIVRAY, DRIESSEN and SACKETT (*supra* n. 34) 94, 166, 169.

was indeed a cult statue, then we may wonder whether some secondary ritual player, some hero-god, had not been promoted to chief divinity⁴² in Building 5, something similar perhaps as happened on a larger scale to the Aten in Egypt. The boy-god or divine consort, later to be equated with Zeus Diktaios, the *Megisthos Kouros*, is of course well-known from the inscription found at the site. If so iconoclasm by reactionary Minoans becomes perhaps an attractive hypothesis. The *Palaikastro Kouros* is just one of the many anthropomorphic images that appear in the mature LM I period, a trend in official cult on Crete probably starting with the mature LM IA faience snake-handling women from the Temple Repositories in the Palace of Knossos. The origin of this practice is perhaps to be found in the Middle Minoan III Cyclades if this is how the large number (55) of terracotta statues in the Kea “Temple” should be interpreted. Incidentally, in a room (G3) nearby the Kea Temple also five terracotta feet were found. Besides the Palaikastro Building 5 example, a good case can be made for the Gournia shrine, the Pseira shrine and shrines in the palaces of Malia and Phaistos.⁴³ Recent soundings in the Pseira shrine also date it to a post-Santorini phase⁴⁴ and here, as at Palaikastro, traffic was channelled to the southwest side of the building and access happened via steps and an offset entrance. Fragments of moulded plaster, belonging to at least one female figure, identified as a goddess by the excavator, are said to have fallen from the upper floor into a portico opposite a small paved court.⁴⁵ My reasons for dating the original construction of the Gournia shrine to LM IB is that the building was constructed on top of earlier Neopalatial walls but still organised as to fit in an existing street plan, in contrast to what happened afterwards, in LM III.⁴⁶ The palaces of Malia and at Phaistos — buildings for which Macdonald and I have argued that they were barely operational in LM IB — incorporated ritual areas.⁴⁷ In both cases, several rooms were blocked off from the rest of the complex and given new entrances from outside, communicating with the south court at Malia and the west court at Phaistos.⁴⁸ Within these rooms there are clear signs of ritual activity: at least five figurines and ritual equipment in room 10 at Phaistos, and terracotta feet, tripod tables and a sandstone altar with mason’s marks (a star and a cross) in room XVIII:1 at Malia. Both shrines were no longer accessible from within the structures, at least at ground floor level, again providing parallels for the situation in Building 5 at Palaikastro. Other examples of terracotta feet come from the Palaces at Phaistos and Zakro and from houses at Sklavokampos, Chania, Mochlos-Limanari and Gournia,⁴⁹ all LM IB contexts but the function of the terracotta feet is not always clear. Small terracotta feet and other limbs are a common offering in peak sanctuaries but the scale and attention given to those found in urban contexts ask for another interpretation. Are they, as some have suggested, part of *xoana*, wooden anthropomorphic statues, originally forming cult statues? Or are they trying to be just that, first attempts, as *pars pro toto*, to represent deities within urban environments? And was the Palaikastro Kouros already a more daring and heretic

42 I owe this observation to Tim Cunningham. At the conference, Alan Peatfield also whispered whether it could not have been a local ruler who decided to have his image presented the old way as part of a legitimisation attempt.

43 The east wing in the country house at Kannia-Mitropolis obviously had a cult function, but again there is debate about its date, LM IB and/or LM III (*Troubled Island*, 206-207). There are arguments, however, for associating the east part with the poor construction in front of the east facade, which has been tentatively identified as a tripartite shrine, similar to the example at Vathypetro (*Troubled Island*, 176-178, 206 (references)). If correct, both shrines, Kannia-Mitropolis and Vathypetro, may be added to the list of community cult places. There is a possibility that House B2, recently excavated on the island at Mochlos, also served as the ritual center of the island during the LM IB period (*Troubled Island*, 243). Surprisingly, this building, like Palaikastro Building 5, seems to have been rebuilt with an ashlar façade after the Santorini eruption.

44 See now P.P. BETANCOURT and C. DAVARAS (eds), *Pseira II. Building AC (the ‘Shrine’) and other Buildings in Area A* (1998) 126-130.

45 M.C. SHAW in BETANCOURT and DAVARAS (*supra* n. 44) 55-77.

46 *Troubled Island*, 213.

47 *Troubled Island*, 58.

48 See also J. DRIESSEN, “Observations on the Modification of the Access Systems of Minoan Palaces,” *Aegean Archaeology* 2 (1997) 67-85.

49 *Troubled Island*, 61; SAKELLARAKIS (*supra* n. 35) 531 citing other examples.

attempt to do so, representing a deity in a more concrete, anthropomorphic shape within a tangible, well-defined environment rather than in nature as such? And was this development then caused by the problems related to the aftermath of the Santorini eruption?

May I suggest then that we have here, in fact, the predecessors of the Late Minoan III bench-sanctuaries of which almost twenty examples are known.⁵⁰ After the LM IB destruction, the tradition of anthropomorphic images within separate architectural units continues in LM II with an example in the Unexplored Mansion at Knossos⁵¹ and perhaps the LM II Oblique Building at Malia.⁵² Usually the cult figure in the LM III shrines is female with raised arms but other sexes and poses are also attested, together with other paraphernalia (especially snake-tubes). Since the LM III palace at Knossos preserves a fine example in the Shrine of the Double Axes (Pl. CIIB), I assume that it is correct to identify this as the official cult of the island at that time. By the way, although the largest figure in this last deposit is a 22 cm high goddess with uplifted arms, the central figure is male, depicted in the pose of the *Palaikastro Kouros*. If indeed these bench-sanctuaries reflect the official cult of the LM III period, it may be suggested that this represents an institutionalised practice of a LM IB crisis cult. The Knossian Linear B Tablets provide plenty of information on the *Potnia*, in her different disguises, and even conferences are called after her. *Diktaion Zeus*, however, is the main Knossian divinity and if we read the inscribed material related to DI.KA.TA found in the earlier peak and other sanctuaries correctly, something – perhaps a mountaintop – related to Dikte was special enough to be worthy of ritual stone vases of the highest quality. Did Zeus come down from his mountaintop in the guise of a young god to save the Minoans in troubled times, starting his conquest of the island and his gradual but final subjugation of the Mother Goddess?

Jan DRIESSEN

50 PEATFIELD (*supra* n. 21) 19-36.

51 M.R. POPHAM *et al.*, *The Unexplored Mansion at Knossos* (1984) 21.

52 O. PELON, "Le palais post-palatial à Malia," in *Crète mycénienne* 340-355, and fig. 14 for the clay horns of consecration from this area.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Pl. CIa	Malia. Shrine beneath the Stratigraphical Museum.
Pl. CIb	Malia. Sanctuary of the Horns.
Pl. CIc	Malia. Sanctuary of the Horns. Bucranium fresco.
Pl. CId	Archanes-Anemospilia: Conjectural reconstruction of building.
Pl. CIe	Palaikastro-Building 5: Northwest Unit.
Pl. CIIa	Palaikastro: Chryselephantine Kouros.
Pl. CIIb	Knossos: Shrine of the Double Axes.