ACCULTURATION AND SOCIAL MOBILITY IN THE MINOAN WORLD

Introduction

A constant theme in archaeology today is the search for social models to explain societal reproduction or change by using archaeological data. The latter are no longer understood in a subjective way as developing according to inbuilt but unrecognized laws, which are primarily found in the translation of the intuitive feelings of traditional archaeology into the analytical concepts of new archaeology. Now the focus is on the systematic understanding of patterns observed. The recognition of such aspects as formalization, standardization and uniformity must and can be put into a broader cultural and social framework.

The motivations which lay behind a specific cultural activity or material manifestation can reasonably be inferred from a careful consideration of contextual information. The homogeneity of pottery, for instance, may be set against a number of sources of relevant cultural information which allow it to be interpreted in terms of its social significance or its contribution to societal reproduction or transformation. This information may refer to other types of objects, the presence or lack of imported items or of social differentiation in burials, to material features in settlement or burial grounds, or even to such things as evidence for flourishing or decline.

"Taken together, these illustrate how material taxonomies, such as pottery, may be used as part of a severe curtailment upon the forms of representation which reinforce a homogenization of social forms"[1].

This takes us to considering the social context of material culture, and the fluidity of the relationship between the artefact and the beholder. Knowledge and symbolism contained in the object, conveyed by it and perceived from it, does not operate in a vacuum independent of the wider social and ideological sphere. Material culture consists of artefacts and patterns resulting from processes of human categorization which organize and mediate the social construction of reality, the social order. Both artefacts and order constitute institutions and principles postulated through presumed patterns, which may embody contradictions and anomalies. These allow us to examine ideology, through what is represented in sets of archaeological material. Material representation forms part of the social strategy of 'naturalization', in which the socially contingent appears natural and preordained. The frequency, apparent triviality and practicality or simple functionality of material culture lend themselves to naturalization. Arbitrary cultural distinctions may be superimposed on apparently natural (functional) associations, without becoming a discussive focus of attention, thus contributing to the stabilization of ranking and the reproduction of social hierarchy.

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1   D. MILLER, *Artefacts as categories*, Cambridge (1985), p. 200; ID., "Ideology and the Harappan civilization", *Journal of Anthropol. Archaeol.* 4 (1985), p. 34-71.

Material Culture and Social Mobility - A Theoretical Model

In the present paper emphasis is placed on social mobility - in relation to material culture - rather than on social reproduction and stability. A consideration of the mobility of social hierarchy and wealth display will entail a focus on the social world as mediated by structures dialectically related to strategies of individual and/or group interest; and consequently on the relationship between motives, means and ends in the strategies of social mobility. These motives involve the expressive aspect of human behaviour, which often dominates the practical concerns of human life [2] and includes such things as kinship, and individual or collective competition and pursuit of reputation. Those motives operate as forms of social forces of production, which find expression through such means as social emulation.

As all other forms of social emulation, emulation of material culture may potentially lead to social change. While 'symbolic violence' - in which rights to signs are derivative from social position and cultural monopoly is enforced restricting the circulation of cultural items - always leads to cultural stagnation, democratization of cultural goods (with possibly unlimited, physical or emulatory, access to signs) is in itself a powerful factor of change. In discussing the nature of such change, one has to make reference to the social world as not only being a determinate patterning of actions and event sequences, but also as constituting a conceptual scheme of signs and codes (including material ones) for the ordering and reordering of human existence. The degree of dynamics of any socio-cultural system is, among other things, a function of the relationship between a cultural sign system and the structure of social relations it serves [3]. This involves not a mere, arbitrary diffusion of signs, but a symbolic process, a direct interplay between artefact (signifier) and subject (signified). A group of similar artefacts, therefore, observed to spread over a given area may be the result of that process rather than the outcome of an assumed movement of people over this same area.

Minoan Koine and the Problem of Interpretation: A Retrospect

The above theoretical model may be tested against the evidence that gives substance to the postulation of an Aegean Minoan *Koine* in the first half of the second millennium, and particularly during the period of the second palaces (c.1700-1450 B.C.). This *Koine* - defined as the neo-palatial expansion both within Crete and abroad, and especially the Minoan overseas influence and activity beyond the confines of Crete in the neo-palatial period - was essentially confined to what we have called the first zone of Minoan expansion abroad [4]. But Minoan cultural influence - along with trade - is well in evidence beyond the confines of the south Aegean, within the second and even the third geographical zones, including Egypt [5]. The nature of the material record points to various forms and different levels of intercourse with Crete

2   R. HARRE, *Social being* (1979).
3   M. SHANKS and C. TILLEY, *Social theory and archaeology* (1977), p. 179; M. BRAITHWAITE, "The significance of archaeology : as enquiry into the nature of material practices and the construction of historical knowledge", *Arch. Review from Cambridge* 1 (1981), pp. 3-9; Z. BAUMAN, *Semiotics and the function of culture*, p. 287 (referred to by BRAITHWAITE, *op. cit.*, p. 6).
4   M. MELAS, "Minoans overseas : Alternative models of interpretation", *Aegeum* 2 (1988), p. 47-70, and map on p. 50.
5   M. MELAS, *op. cit.*, p. 57-60; we now have, for the first time, new evidence from Samothrace in the form of a MM IIB-III Minoan roundel (see D. MATSAS, "Samothrace and the northeastern Aegean: the Minoan Connection", *Studia Troica* 1 [1991] in print). Concerning the scope and social implication of the Minoan 'Versailles effect', see recently, G. WALBERG, "Kamares imitations in Egypt and their social and economic implications", in *Proceedings of the third Symposium on ancient Greek and related pottery*, J. KHRISTIANSEN and T. MELANDER (eds.), p. 633-39, Nat. Mus., Copenhagen.

during the period of the Minoan flourishing. This intercourse gave rise to a regional cultural homogeneity, and to what is seen by some as the first European civilization [6] comprising a cluster of polities sharing a number of common features [7].

The evidence of Minoanization consists of material items - mainly those of Minoan daily life - and other features either imported or made and developed under Minoan impulse and inspiration. These can be divided into two categories. The one pertains to art and technology: pottery and frescoes, architectural and domestic styles, as well as technological and economic features, such as spindles, looms, and a system of weights and measures. The other category refers to the dissemination of Minoan cultural and socio-political features. These include the adoption of Minoan culture in general, and more specifically of Minoan tastes, such as cooking and table habits, and of burial and religious practices or cults [8]. Undoubtedly the latter were often merged into local variations with their specific patron deities and paraphernalia. The evidence points to a widespread take over of Minoan structured symbolic - not only religious - systems, whose extent would normally have been greater than the power span of Cretan Bronze Age polities.

In the sphere of social and political organization, Minoan institutional transmission and influence manifests itself in such processes as settlement relocation, including urbanization [9], and in such features as "bureaucratic and administrative mechanisms" underlying the widespread occurrence of Linear A tablets and Minoan seals and sealings within and outside Crete [10].

The overall picture is one of apparent cultural change and subsequent homogeneity in many parts of the south Aegean in LM IA. This involves the spread of neo-palatial cultural traits over a wide area at sites either already existing or generally considered entirely Minoan foundations. This great Minoan impact appears to have occurred on prepared soil, given the nature and extent of proto-palatial finds in the Aegean - and beyond - testifying to an early outward thrust of Crete. According to certain estimations, the rates and degrees of Minoan penetration in LM IA are roughly similar in intensity at different sites ('Minoan' and 'Minoanizing' alike) within the first zone, although differing in various aspects of culture. This of course need not imply Cretan overseas supremacy, as some scholars still argue [11].

Examples of similar cultural *continua* - although geographically broader - in the LBA are provided by the so-called Mycenaean *Koene* and Mediterranean *Koine* [12]. The latter involved a

6   M. MELAS "The Minoan origins of Greek civilization" (in Greek), in *Themes of Greek Civilization*, in *Proceeding of the first Colloquium of the "Aegean Centre of Greek Philosophy"* (1984), p. 148-164, and refs.

7   Cf. C. RENFREW and J. CHERRY, *Peer polity interaction and socio-political change* (1986).

8   See particularly N. MARINATOS, *Art and religion in Thera* (1984); ID., "Minoan Threiskeiocracy on Thera", in *Minoan Thalassocracy : Myth and Reality*, ed. by R. HÄGG and N. MARINATOS (1984), p. 167-76; MELAS, *op. cit. (supra*, n. 4), p. 49, and refs.

9   MELAS, *op. cit. (supra*, n. 4), p. 53-4, 65-7; ID., *The islands of Karpathos, Saros and Kasos in the Neolithic and Bronze Age, SIMA* LXVIII (1985), pp. 159-62, 173-76, figs. 4-6.

10 MELAS, *op. cit., (supra*, n. 6), p. 153; see recently, E. HALLAGER, M. VLASAKIS, B. HALLAGER, "The first Linear B tablet(s) from Khania", *Kadmos* 29 (1990), p. 24-34, for a re-examination of the Linear A tablets from Chania; on seals and sealings see J. BETTS, "New light on Minoan bureaucracy : a re-examination of some Cretan sealings", *Kadmos* 6 (1967), p. 15-40; more recently, in addition to the new evidence from Samothrace, see J. WEINGARTEN, "More unusual Minoan clay nodules : addendum II", *Kadmos* 29 (1990), p. 16-23, and footnote on p. 16 with her previous work; see also her contributions to the 1989 conferences at Oxford and Athens (notes 33 and 75 below).

11 See recently M. WIENER, "The isles of Crete ? The Minoan thalassocracy revisited", *Thera and the Aegean World* III *Proceedings of the Third International Congress Santorini, Greece, 3-9 September 1989*, I, Archaeology (1990), p. 128-161.

12 See notes 33 and 75, below.

spirit of cultural internationalism, mediated through rigorous trade and materially manifested in art and technology, including pottery design, sculpture, domestic and burial architecture, and particularly bronze working.

What is undeniable is the existence of close contacts between Crete and the south Aegean, including most of the islands and the coasts of S.W. Asia Minor and of the south and eastern Peloponnese. It is difficult, however, to establish the exact character of these contacts as well as the nature and degree of Minoan impact at the various sites of the Aegean, including Crete itself. What we need to explain is the profound difference between a 'pre-Minoan' (or pre-neopalatial on Crete itself) and a 'Minoan' society, between two contrasting forms of social organization, which involves different social, ideological and residential institutions. As we'll see, these social parameters will have to be associated with other factors - such as economic development and innovations - either in a dialectical fashion or by putting the first down to the impact of the second.

The customary way - within the traditional and, most often, the new archaeology approaches - of viewing the Minoan world outside the major Cretan centres is as a zone that received Minoan settlers, manufactured products and ideas in the context of a growing and expanding power, wealth, population, trade networks and social complexity, and often in exchange for such things as raw materials. This stand-point propounds an imperialist model of economic, political and cultural hegemony, and reduces the Minoan periphery virtually to a colonial status, thus failing to investigate internally, i.e. socially, derived developments. It also runs the danger of considering any social and political changes in the area as a response to outside interaction only. As we shall argue, concepts were borrowed but they were certainly transformed to fit different forms of socio-political organization and cultural milieu.

Traditional explanations tend to identify pottery, and other cultural aspects, with people and to postulate Minoan population movements (colonization) and political control (thalassocracy) over parts of the Aegean in LM IA [13]. The prevailing models within traditional approaches, namely those relating to formal trade, settlement or emigration and empire, all emphasize or directly imply the physical presence of Minoans abroad. But, as we repeatedly stressed [14], such hypotheses reflect historically anachronistic ideas, and project into the past present concerns and preoccupations. There are always limitations in interpreting historical events merely by comparing the formal similarities or differences among artefacts recovered from different components. Artefacts alone cannot define cultures, and even less can they be used as guides for the identification of ethnic groups and their movements. Mere objects, without their cultural context, are not sufficient proof for Minoan physical presence abroad; and evidence from cultural contexts in their turn is a necessary condition for identifying Minoans, but not a sufficient one. As Franz Boas pointed out long ago [15], cultural traits tend to spread out from their place of origin, and as a result of this prolonged diffusion similar cultures are sometimes shared by people with different physical and linguistic characteristics.

The long processes required for a cultural *Koine* to build up - which involves both long continuity and change - are emphasized by the new archaeologists themselves [16]. They point to

13   See recent publications, such as *Minoan Thalassocracy: Myth and Reality*, ed. by R. HÄGG and N. MARINATOS (1984); MELAS, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 4), p. 49-57, WIENER, *op. cit.*

14   MELAS, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 4), p. 48, 69-70; ID., "Exploration in the Dodecanese : new prehistoric and Mycenaean finds", *BSA* 83 (1988), p. 309; ID., "More 'Minoan' sites in the S.E. Aegean", *Proceedings of the 1987 colloquium on the archaeology of the Aegean islands, Canadian Archaeological Institute, Athens,* forthcoming.

15   F. BOAS, *Race, language and culture* (1940).

16   E.g. L. BINFORD propounding long internal (within systems) processes and continuities in change; likewise G.R. WILLEY, *Prehistoric settlement patterns in the Virú Valley, Peru* (1953), p. 284; K.C. CHANG, *The archaeology of ancient China* (1963). The slow processes involved in the formation and

the slow rate of culture transformations, involving long term continuities and change, which indicate internal developments rather than migration and diffusion. Yet an initial kick from outside is often postulated, either of material/economic form (emigration due to over population, trade etc.) [17] or as a result of peer polity interaction [18], which may result in sharing common cultural features, such as a similar representation of society in general. In either case, there is a functionalist concern which finds expression in such exogenous factors as technological determinism [19], or in the requirement of a detailed functional understanding of the interacting cultures [20].

My own estimation [21] was that, despite the apparent measure of similarity in the quality of Minoan penetration, the rate of the latter and its impact upon different areas and aspects of culture, were complex and varying. This points to a variety of degrees and types of contact with Crete, as different places, within the range of three different geographical zones [22], appear to have been affected in different ways in terms of volume and direction of Minoan influence. By applying three different interaction models involving three corresponding forces (settlement, the 'Versailles effect', and trade), to the three zones, I tried to show that the difference in the distribution of Minoan traits often relates to the distance of the recipient cultures from the Minoan centres.

"All three forces involved in the three models appear to have had some degree of operation outside the zones of their primary application, that is the first, second and third zone respectively. They are, in other words, complementary to each other, rather than restricted to one band alone... Besides the casual involvement of itinerant craftsmen, some very limited Minoan emigration cannot be excluded, consisting perhaps mainly of artisans and possibly also of merchants; and trade with Crete must have been very active. Nevertheless, these factors are not sufficient to account for the astonishing degree and extend of cultural uniformity, behind which other, more significant, unifying forces must have been in operation. Forces, that is, of a purely ideological and cultural character, which in the present context were not just passive constituents of social life, but appear to have played an active and dynamic role... In estimating the overall primacy of each model, irrespective of geographical zones, it appears that the so-called 'Versailles effect' was probably the most significant force in the armoury of this expansion [in association with] the notion of social emulation which may have played some part in Minoan emigration and trade, but certainly a major role in the process of Minoanization resulting from widespread imitation and social snobbery' [23].

The 'Versailles effect' hypothesis with its social underpinnings was first introduced by Malcolm Wiener [24], who, in a recent paper [25] seems to have moved towards the adoption of a new archaeology approach instead, by seeking verification through empirical tests (of dubious reliability, I think) rather than a model based on social theory proper:

development of the *Koine* under investigation are underlined by recent re-appraisals of the duration of LM IA, which may even have lasted over c. 150 years.

17 E.g. P. WARREN, *The Aegean civilizations* (1975), p. 101-103 : "This pattern... seems to represent a natural expansion in terms of production and population from a civilization in its most developed state"; ID., "The place of Crete in the thalassocracy of Minos", in *Minoan Thalassocracy: Myth and Reality*, ed. by R. HÄGG and N. MARINATOS (1984), p. 39-44.

18 Cf. RENFREW and CHERRY, *op. cit.*

19 Childe's assertion, for instance, that technology travels but not ethnic traits is particularly notable : G. CHILDE, *The dawn of European civilization* (1925).

20 Cf. J.W. BENNET, "Middle American influences on cultures of the south eastern United States", *Acta Americana* 2 (1944), p. 25-50.

21 MELAS, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 4).

22 ID.., *op. cit.*, *passim* and map on p. 50.

23 ID.., *op. cit.*, p. 69-70.

24 M. WIENER, "Crete and the Cyclades in LMI : the tale of the conical cups", in *Minoan Thalassocracy: Myth and Reality*, ed. by R. HÄGG and N. MARINATOS (1984).

25 WIENER, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 11).

"We discard results from tests dependent upon the appearance of, and trade in, high-status luxury goods, or the adoption of certain types of status-affected behaviours, since such aspects of the archaeological record may be produced through cultural emulation by local elites, sometimes of a self-serving nature with respect to maintenance and aggrandizement of power".

Our purpose being to explicate developments within the societies mentioned in order to recognize one of the major horizons of change in Aegean prehistory, we have to develop a detailed theory of the way in which social reproduction may have been achieved in those communities. Instead of forcing the data to conform to ideal forms of social archetypes - such as tribes or 'lineage society' as opposed to chiefdom or 'Germanic community' - which might misrepresent the variability of real societies, we must view the latter in a dynamic fashion and look at each social aspect of their culture (architecture, technology, pottery, settlement location etc.) as enmeshed in the process of social renewal. During the course of the sixteenth century B.C. (and probably from as early as the seventeenth century) each of these expressions of society of which we have archaeological evidence underwent profound changes. The question arises how, and within what context, those changes came about.

Context versus Function, and the Social Dimensions of Change

With my present contribution I intend to demonstrate that such positivist methodologies and functionalist ideas are of limited applicability to the problem at hand. Settlement and political explanations, with their materialist/economic implications and functional contexts, are archaeologically unwarranted. What I hope to show instead is the feasibility of a contextual, historically orientated method, and of a social approach to the evidence emphasizing the significance of social forces in the process of change and acculturation, whereby a superior civilization is wholly adopted by inferior cultures. That such changes were not (as I think) merely economic, nor did they relate purely to functional considerations, such as the spread of institutions [26] for political ends, indicates that the whole character of social reproduction had changed. It is probably fair to say that although the process of this social change may have started prior to acculturation, the latter was responsible for the relatively sudden increase of the evidence pointing to the volume and quickening pulse of the former. In other words, it seems that the relationship between acculturation and social mobility is a reflexive one, not an one way affair [27].

What is expounded in the following pages draws upon various current schools of thought in social and anthropological theory, which has inspired recent archaeological thinking of every theoretical persuasion including processual, structural Marxist and post-processual [28]. They all share a commitment to the notion of open social systems as a remedy to the limitations of

26   E.g. prestige systems, ritual and cult, and the representation of society in ritual. See especially, MARINATOS, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 8).

27   Cf. F.A. WINTER and H.A. BANKOFF, "Diffusion and cultural evolution in Iron Age Serbia", in T.C. CHAMPION (ed.) *Centre and periphery : comparative studies in archaeology* (1989), p. 159-172; J. THOMAS, "Relations of production and social change in the Neolithic of north-west Europe", *Man* 22 (1987), p. 405-30.

28   C. RENFREW and S. SHENNAN (eds.), *Ranking, resource and exchange* (1982); C. RENFREW and J. CHERRY (eds.), *Peer polity interaction and socio-political change* (1986); M. ROWLANDS, M. LARSEN and K. KRISTIANSEN (eds.), *Centre and periphery in the ancient world* (1987); T.C. CHAMPION (ed.), *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 27); A.G. SHERRAT, "Plough and pastoralism : aspects of the secondary products revolution", in I. HODDER *et. al.* (eds.), *Pattern of the past* (1981), p. 261-305; ID., "Mobile resources : settlement and exchange in early agricultural Europe", in RENFREW and SHENNAN (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 13-26; J. HOWELL, *Settlement and economy in Neolithic northern France*, Oxford BAR S 157; S. SHENNAN, "Central Europe in the third millennium B.C. : An evolutionary trajectory for the beginning of the European Early Bronze Age", *J. Anthro. Arch.* 5 (1986) p. 115-46.

evolutionary models. These systems can be either equal (peer polities) or disparate (centre/peripheries) and their prolonged contact and interaction may result - through the operation of various mechanisms, such as exchange and attendant processes of acculturation, and social forces, such as competition among groups and individuals - in radical social change. The Minoan world, and its relative degree of coherence and homogeneity, may be regarded as an example of such broad interaction spheres, a world system. The formation of this *Koine* was preceded by (or ran concurrently with) substantial socio-cultural changes evidenced in material culture and settlement location [29]. These changes may be accounted for in terms of an acculturation model that incorporates conceptions of world systems, centre/periphery, and peer polity interaction; and views change as the result of interaction between foreign innovations and internal evolution of the local societies [30]. Minoan impact of each of the categories of evidence may be attributed to one of these two factors. As already stated, the relationship between Minoan innovation and social organization in the recipient communities was a dialectical one:

"For such a phenomenon to occur special socio-economic and political conditions must have prevailed both in Crete and in the receptor societies. The pulse of the change process in Cretan society, which started from MM IB as shown by increases in building activity and the reorganization of local industry and technology, is now quickening and manifests itself in an overseas expansion. The latter takes largely the form of a borrowing of Minoan cultural innovations, which was favoured by the growing socio-economic complexity in the receiving communities - increased specialization and intensification of production" [31].

As noted above, the two main sets of processes involved in the interplay are those of gradual acculturation, and of social mobility. Although they seem to operate in a clockwise fashion, the former appears to have often preceded the latter, at least during LM IA. We may venture an evolutionary scheme of the specific processes pertaining to each phase.

 I (1) Diffusion of goods and ideas from the centre to the periphery. This was followed by
 I (2) gradual innovation (technology/economy) and acculturation. End result of both I (1-2):
 I (3) reproduction of social hierarchies on the one hand, and growing social complexity on the other. This inevitably led to inequalities and contradictions which generated
 II (4) competition and related social strategies encouraging
 II (5) social mobility through emulation. The reaction of the elites created a kind of
 II (6) counter-emulation, which created need for a growing
 II (7) more sophisticated imports of goods and ideas (cf. I[1]), and further acculturation and innovation (cf. I[2]). This in its turn was followed by
 II (8) further complexity and social realignment.

Exchange and Acculturation

The flaw of prestige goods and ideas (both technical information and lifestyles) within the Minoan world was one-directional, from the Minoan centres to their peripheries, inside and outside Crete. The centres (conventionally called palaces) were innovative, developing, dynamic and culturally dominant regions. They need not necessarily have extracted surplus

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29 In material culture : new artefact types (including luxury or elite goods) and architecture showing heavy morphological influence from Crete, and technological innovation, including the increasing use of the potter's wheel and of metal, in some areas evidently for the first time. For site re-location and proto-urban trends see note 9.

30 WINTER and BANKOFF, *op. cit.*

31 MELAS, *op. cit. (supra*, n. 4), p. 70.

from the periphery [32]. The latter was initially backward and ultimately subjected to the cultural and economic/organizational superiority of the centre. Its local resources and markets were thus bound to be exploited by the Minoan centres, which were in desperate need for raw materials, especially from MM IB onwards. The newly dominant mode of production, bronze working, was totally dependent on raw materials only obtained overseas (including the Aegean islands and coasts), but other materials, such as wood, were also in much demand. What the locals received in return were luxury goods and *exotica*. This is exemplified by the discovery of LM IA pottery at Cypriot sites near copper mines (e.g. Toumba tou Skourou and probably also Ayia Irini). The types and scale of exchange and the mechanisms involved will not concern us here [33], but there is little doubt that reciprocity was the standard practice, and some measure of gift exchange may have been in operation, although perhaps not frequently on an inter-island level.

The evidence is in line with the above hypotheses. The bronze used in the 'palaces' (but also in the major sites of what I shall call the semiperiphery of the Minoan world), as well as lead, silver and stones of various sorts were invariably imported as the artefact analyses by the Gales and other comparative studies have shown. Besides bronze, there are other foreign luxury products, *exotica* and precious materials. They were all imported from the East, i.e. from outside the Minoan world (see map on p. 177) and this certainly underlines the association of their (social) value with their being rare and alien. This has important interpretive implications, to which we'll come back later on. Among such imports, for instance, were relatively large numbers of Late Cypriot I White Slip pottery. They are found, among other sites at Zakros (along with ivory tusks and copper ingots) whose wealth was probably, at least partially, dependent on its favourable position in the communication networks with the East.
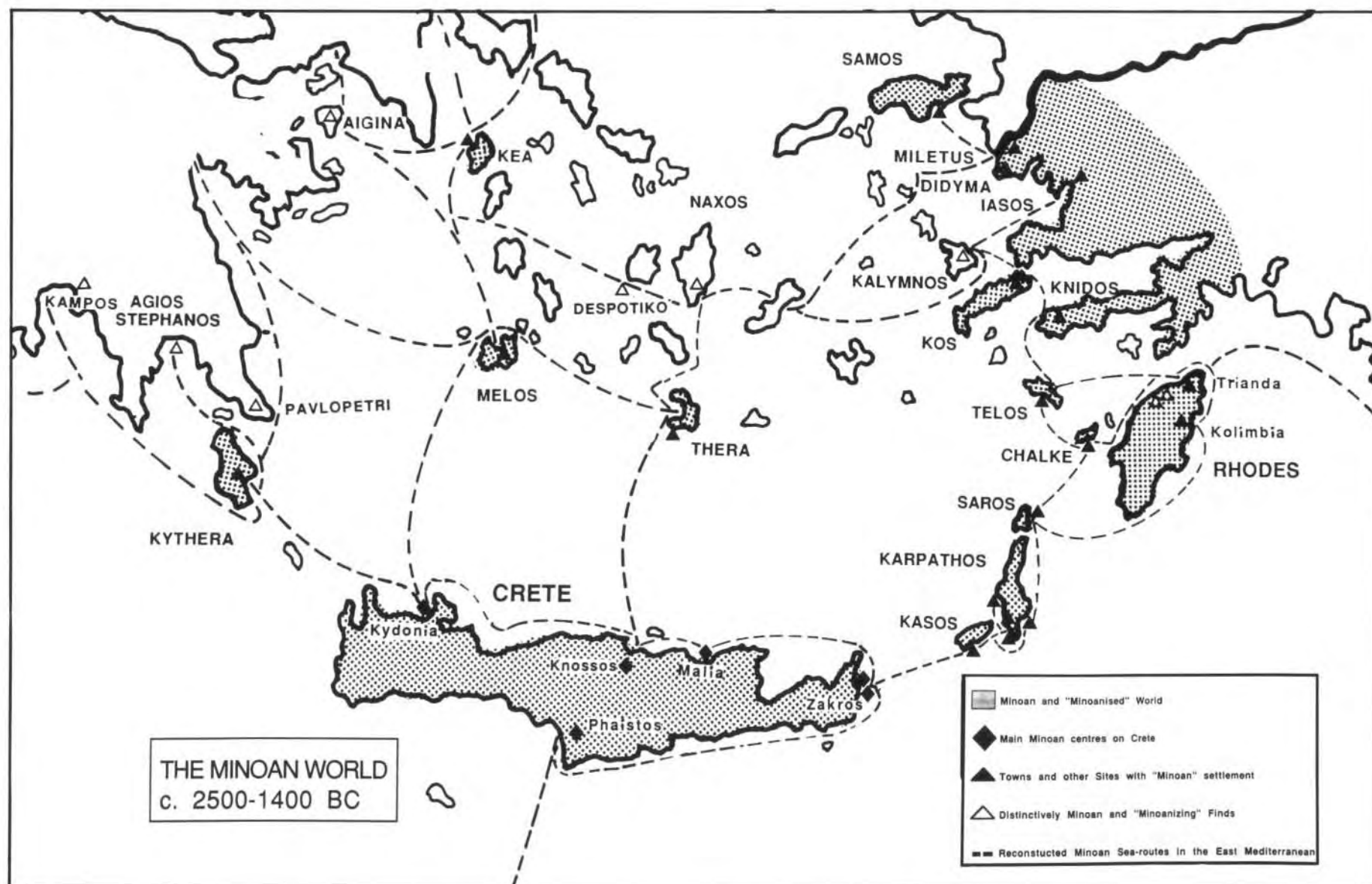
The nature of the exported 'palatial' items also points to a prestige goods system of exchange: massive bronze items (swords, double axes, cauldrons and saws) whose non-utilitarian character and find contexts leave little doubt that they were exclusively intended for social display and ceremonial use; and high quality decorated and "ritual" pottery intended for similar purposes. This is corroborated by the occasional export of conical cups.

Both raw materials and products in long-distance circulation seem to have been luxuries, without exception. Commodity exchange, if it ever occurred, remains to be convincingly demonstrated, as does the postulation of directional trade, of Minoan dominated trade networks, or even of elites (in the receiving societies) involved in external commercial activities. The existing evidence rather points to a high-level reciprocal, and occasional gift exchange among elites rather than to formal commerce that is more akin to class-based capitalist societies. Such a form of exchange is considered to be the dominant form of prehistoric inter-societal relationships and the foundation of intra societal social order. It follows that foreign exchange processes of this kind may effect cultural change, but do not themselves normally bring about social dissolution and change [34]. This is because, once the foreign goods reach their destination, through whatever mechanism, they (and their internal circulation) are bound to come under the control of the local elites, an obvious but not fatal constraint in the process of social transformation. But we'll come back to this later on.

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32   Cf. I. WALLERSTEIN, *The modern world systems : Capitalist agriculture and the origins of the European World-economy in the sixteenth century* 1 (1974).

33   See M. MELAS, "Mediterranean trade in the Bronze Age : A theoretical perspective", *Proceedings of the Oxford conference on Bronze Age trade in the Mediterranean (1989)*, forthcoming.

34   See M. MAUSS, *The gift* (1954), following relevant Marxian and Veberial views.

SAMOS

AIGINA
KEA
NAXOS

MILETUS
DIDYMA
IASOS

KAMPOS AGIOS
STEPHANOS

DESPOTIKO

KALYMNOS
KNIDOS

KOS

PAVLOPETRI

MELOS

TELOS

Trianda
Kolimbia

THERA

CHALKE
RHODES

KYTHERA

SAROS

KARPATHOS

KASOS

Kydonia

Knossos   Malia

Zakros

Phaistos

CRETE

**THE MINOAN WORLD
c. 2500-1400 BC**

Minoan and "Minoanised" World

Main Minoan centres on Crete

Towns and other Sites with "Minoan" settlement

Distinctively Minoan and "Minoanizing" Finds

Reconstucted Minoan Sea-routes in the East Mediterranean

Control of internal circulation of imports - possibly associated with control of long-distance exchange at times - will in turn act as a spur for further local intensification of production, elite wealth control and increased complexity [35]. This will inevitably involve (both as a medium and effect) technical and economic innovation and growing acculturation through foreign influence. As the Minoan periphery opened to the increased volumes of 'palatial' goods and ideas, the process of innovation and cultural change begins. Artefacts themselves acted as a spur, but the major role was probably played by agents and middlemen [36]. We know from archaeological and epigraphic evidence that Greek merchants were playing such a role in archaic Etruria [37], and it is likely that Minoan middlemen and emigrants were occasionally residents in some Aegean and Cypriot sites [38]. Mercantile activity has been particularly linked to innovation both in contemporary and ancient contexts [39]. It is claimed that different modes of production, existing as historical givens, are brought into exchange with each other through the entrepreneurial rôle of specialist traders. As already noted, the dominant mode of production in the Minoan core was metallurgy. Raw material was obtained from abroad, no doubt through intermediaries (rather than specialist merchants) whose presence in the periphery, along with the occasional existence of resident Minoan entrepreneurial families, itinerant craftsmen and artists [40], and the impetus of competition, stimulated the adoption of the superior Minoan technology. A similar process of innovation has been postulated by Sherratt [41] to explain social changes in N.W. European Neolithic (c. 4500-2000). He applies his model of secondary products or mobile resources revolution, which is held responsible for the spread of new forms of productive technology including plough agriculture across Europe from the Middle East. It seems that analogous processes operating in LM IA led to the adoption by the Minoan periphery of a complex package of interrelated economic innovations, including new or improved modes of production such as metallurgy and weaving, as well as means to effect the intensification and organization of production and exchange (e.g. the potter's wheel, weights and measures, and scripture).

In the contexts that interest us here, the process of innovation is closely linked to that of acculturation. This involves the adoption of features of a foreign and superior culture to the extent that the recipient culture may deviate in ways that it would not have done in the absence of these stimuli [42]. The concept of acculturation is also dialectically related to foreign exchange activity. The notion of foreignness and its wide appreciation within broad interaction spheres

35   Cf. R. CHAPMAN, *Emerging complexity : The later prehistory of south-east Spain, Iberia and the west Mediterranean, New Studies in Archaeology* (1990), p. 270-1.
36   MELAS, *op. cit. (supra,* n. 4), p. 69-70; cf. P.S. WELLS, *Farms, villages and cities : Commerce and urban origins in late prehistoric Europe* (1984), assigning a major role to entrepreneurs coming from outside the established local elites and bringing about social change.
37   N. SPIVEY and S. STODDART, *Etruscan Italy* (1990), p. 94-5.
38   WIENER, *op. cit. (supra,* n. 11).
39   See, e.g., E.R. WOLF, *Europe and the people without history* (1982), p. 183; M. ROWLANDS, "Centre and periphery : review of a concept", in ROWLANDS *et al., op. cit. (supra,* n. 28).
40   MELAS, *op. cit. (supra,* n. 4), p. 49-57, 59, 67-70; WIENER, *op. cit. (supra,* n. 24), p. 20 and (*supra,* n. 11). Frescoes in the Minoan periphery, e.g., may have been made by travelling painters. For itinerant craftsmen, builders and artisans in the Minoan world and the Mediterranean in general see W.W. CUMMER, in *Temple University Aegean Symposium* 5 (1980), p. 3-14; cf. also the identification of an itinerant smith at the Cape Gelidonya shipwreck, and the arrival in Nubia, as from 580 A.D., of foreign church architects and builders, following the Christian conversion (B.G. TRIGGER, *Time and traditions : Essays in archaeological interpretation* [1978], p. 224-5).
41   SHERRATT, *op. cit. (supra,* n. 28).
42   C.C. LAMBERG-KARLOVSKY, "The longue duree of the ancient Near East", in J.L. HUOT *et al.* (eds.), *De l'Indus aux Balkans, Recueil Jean Deshayes* (1985), p. 58-60.

was acknowledged by the new archaeologists from as early as the early 1970's [43]. Their interest in the issue became more explicit in the 1980's [44], when they conceded that many of the most complex features associated with tribal societies are products of acculturation resulting from external contacts and from political and economic articulation with more advanced societies, rather than spontaneous internal developments. The cultural connections involved in the process of acculturation (formerly studied as diffusion) were thought to become intelligible only in functional and systemic terms, when they are set into a broader political and economic context. The significance of the functional understanding of the recipient societies had been emphasized by Bennet [45] long ago, when he observed that some Meso-American traits would have been readily accepted by less complex cultures in the United States, whereas others would have been rejected, however many times they have been transmitted.

All too often acculturation manifests itself in art and material culture, thus allowing archaeologists to trace its effects on two major cultural areas of social life: a) social mores and ritual (often including religious beliefs but not necessarily) and b) language, literacy and myth. Prior to examining the Minoan evidence pertaining to each of these two aspects of acculturation, it may be salutary to quote a couple of contemporary and ethnohistoric examples where the deeper social meaning and mechanisms of acculturation are more clear. Cultural imitation is often reduced to fashion and its 'connotations'. Whatever is advertised as fashionable is readily subject to meaningful consumption, imitation and copying, always for social ends. Certain products (e.g. coca-cola) are closely associated with and naturalize the image of, e.g., being young, modern and successful. It thus becomes part of a symbolic code, of a wider cultural scheme. So, what is arbitrary seems to be inevitable *conditio sine qua non*, if one wishes not to feel inadequate [46]. In attempting to explain the process behind the Greek acculturation of Etruria (7th-5th Century B.C.), Spivey and Stoddart [47] note the impact of fashion among modern Italian youths, who, without necessarily denying the value of their own culture, perceive the need to wear, drink or learn whatever is deemed to be fashionable: American style jackets or sweat shirts (with their, often unintelligible to them, legends in English), coca-cola, English language. The authors then discuss the analogous process as it occurred in Etruscan society. It is clear that, as Etruscan Italy opened to the increased volumes of Mediterranean trade, as colonists, refugees, artisans and merchants began to move freely within a broad interaction sphere, the catalysts of acculturation caused a series of transformations on the face of Etruscan society, including such aspects as social mores and rituals [48].

Whole social institutions then, and not only artefacts, can spread out of their original settings. Cults and rituals in particular are usually subject to wide imitation or adoption due to their power to promote group solidarity and coherence, and individual or kin aggrandisement. Thus we can explain, for instance, stylistic distributions in Mexico, Peru and elsewhere, which were formerly interpreted in diffusionist terms; and see, e.g. why elaborately decorated copper and shell artefacts appear in widely dispersed Mississippian sites, or how a Hopewellian cult,

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43 E.g. L.R. BINFORD, *An archaeological perspective*, New York, Seminar Press, p. 204; M.H. FRIED, *The notion of tribe* (1975).
44 E.g. RENFREW and SHENNAN, *op. cit. (supra*, n. 28); RENFREW and CHERRY, *op. cit. (supra*, n. 7); WOLF, *op. cit. (supra*, n. 39).
45 BENNET, *op. cit. (supra*, n. 20).
46 R. BARTHES, *Mythologies* (1972).
47 SPIVEY and STODDART, *op. cit.*, p. 91, 96-8, 108.
48 Greek influence on Etruscan ritual was no less marked than on literacy and myth : *ibid.*, p. 110-26.

involving offerings made of exotic materials in high status burials, came to be shared by numerous prehistoric societies in the American Mid-West [49].

To come back to the question of acculturation in Etruria, one area that gives a more satisfactory idea of the phenomenon is that of language, myth and literacy. These form three facets of a major process of cultural change, which can be summarised in the following 'reading' of the Aristonothos krater found in the 7th century Cerveteri. The pot depicts a Greek mythological scene with inscribed Greek names, and it is quite clear that it presents a package of legitimizing cultural value by vaunting two precise factors of prestige: capacity for two things, to comprehend Greek myth and to use Greek letters. There was no need for understanding the correct meaning or for proper pronunciation [50].

The preceding analysis renders the acculturative processes at work within the Minoan world more comprehensible, as it provides us with the appropriate methodology and pertinent anthropological theory offered through ethnographic analogy. The contextual method employed in this paper requires that (socially) functional associations of stylistic distributions be sought, as well as an understanding of the geographical, historical and politico-economic conditions within the context and the hierarchy of the core, semi-periphery and periphery. Such an approach will enable us to see e.g. that all 'Minoan' and Minoanized sites were apparently dependent on trade for their prosperity and security no less than Crete, and acted within a Minoan sphere of influence at least [51]; and that

"by the time her expansion began, Crete was far more civilized than her Aegean neighbours; and being insular only in a physical sense, she was exerting enormous cultural and ideological impact both in the Aegean and in the wider Mediterranean world... Under these circumstances, the growth of Minoan expansion must have been inevitable and unimpeded; and it was probably encouraged by the - conscious or less conscious - willingness of the southern Aegean populations to submit themselves under the aegis - not necessarily political - of Crete... The evidence from abroad is well in accord with the picture at home (Warren 1984). In Crete itself the LM IA period appears to have been one of peace, security, stability and prosperity, which allowed for an outward projection of Minoan influence" [52].

On the other hand a contextual interpretation of Minoan (imported) or Minoanizing (locally made) artefacts, as well as of other cultural features and their associations, provides overwhelming evidence of Minoan acculturation (= Minoanization) in the form of adoption of Minoan social mores, habits and tastes, such as architectural and domestic styles, as well as

"items of daily life across the social spectrum, including particularly matters normally resistant to change such as a) cooking, eating, drinking and weaving practice, b) religion and cult practice and c) statistically significant evidence of any particular identifying mass behaviour (e.g. the conical cups)" [53].

A major mechanism behind this process of acculturation appears to have been the desire to acquire or imitate what was fashionable at that time, capable of legitimizing social statuses, of reproducing hierarchies or of transforming the social order. The social value of such items or features was set by (silent) common consensus among the elites within the broader Minoan interaction sphere. That the accepted standards derive from the 'palaces' comes as no surprise, given both their indisputably superior quality and their being patronised by the powerful

49   J.R. CALDWELL, "Interaction spheres in prehistory", in J.R. CALDWELL and R.L. HALL (eds.),
     Hopewellian studies (1984), p. 133-43; A.J. WARING and P. HOLDER, "A prehistoric ceremonial
     complex in the south eastern United States", *American Anthropologist* 47 (1945), p. 1-34.
50   SPIVEY and STODDART, *op. cit.*, p. 96-8, 106-8.
51   WIENER, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 11).
52   MELAS, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 4), p. 49, 70.
53   WIENER, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 11).

'palatial' elites, whose tastes and predilections would determine what, and when, might be transmitted to the periphery through the operation of the 'Versailles Effect' [54].

According to Wiener:

"close similarity in architecture, furniture, painting, decorative arts, clothing, jewelry, the pastimes of youth and even the language of the upper classes may appear in two or more societies without political control, economic domination or a major movement of people from the culturally dominant society... A 'Versailles effect' is most likely to occur where the cultural prestige of one society within an interconnecting set of societies is great, as was surely the case in the Bronze Age Aegean with regard to Crete from the beginning of the old palaces through LMIB" [55].

In a more general sense, the 'Versailles effect' may refer to the takeover of certain sophisticated traits and fashions of a superior culture by a less developed one. In the present case it refers to the large scale imitation of Minoan cultural features. Minoans were indeed so far in advance - artistically, technologically, etc. - of their neighbours that their products were sought and imitated everywhere, even beyond the Aegean. There is plenty of evidence, for instance, to show that at Mycenae and elsewhere ruling elites were importing and making Minoan and Minoanizing articles of great value and quality. This resulted in a considerable degree of Minoanization of arts and crafts, which probably involved an emigration of craftsmen [56]. This tendency of course must have been even stronger within the first zone, where - besides Minoanizing pottery, statuettes, etc. - architecture and frescoes of Minoan type from Miletus, Iasos, Trianda, Thera, Phylakopi, and Ayia Irini may be accounted for by the 'Versailles effect' rather than through settlement. We may assume that in these areas, as contact intensified especially with the inception of the New Palace Period, the superior cultural achievements of palatial Crete gradually asserted themselves in local import and copying of various artefacts and perhaps also aspects of technology and bureaucratic organization.

The evidence of a widespread Minoan ritual is particularly strong in the periphery. This need not indicate a Minoan 'threskeiokracy' with political implications, as all the items, features, areas, and practices, usually associated with Minoan cult, have strong social connotations implying that Minoan religious infiltration affected the whole social structure [57]. This means that we cannot separate the mundane (be it social, political or economic) from the religious, as they were dialectically structured. Hodder [58] has recently shown that features and practices such as village enclosures and plough agriculture in the European Neolithic had probably originated in a ritual context. On a less concrete level, early states are generally thought to have a basis in religion, expressed through such behaviour as the erection of shrines, bonding via ritual feasting and the frequent communication of religious messages [59]; accordingly, cult objects and ritual iconography and symbolism (and whatever 'religion' or 'cosmology' was involved, about which we know very little as we do of the notion of the divine) was probably no more than the 'Versailles effect' operating in the sphere of cult practice. As Malcolm Wiener put it,

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54   *Ibid.* (1984); MELAS, *op. cit.* (1988a), p. 57-60.

55   WIENER, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 24).

56   O. DICKINSON, *The origins of Mycenaean civilization, SIMA* XLIX (1977); ID., "Cretan contacts with the Mainland during the period of the Shaft Graves", in *Minoan Thalassocracy: Myth and Reality*, ed. by R. HÄGG and N. MARINATOS (1984), p. 115-18; MELAS *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 6), p. 156-59.

57   See MARINATOS, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 8); MELAS, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 4), p. 49, 59.

58   I. HODDER, "Material culture texts and social change : A theoretical discussion and some archaeological examples", *PPS* 54 (1988), p. 67-75. See also ID., *The domestication of Europe*, Blackwell 1990, where he interprets the archaeological evidence for cultural changes (associated with the emergence of farming and settled villages) in terms of the enormous conceptual power of its symbolic - including ritual - structures.

59   D.L. WEBSTER, "On Theocracies", *American Anthropologist* 78 (1976), p. 812-28; WIENER, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 11).

"one would expect religion, omnipresent in LM I Crete, to have participated in Minoan expansion abroad" [60].

As stated before, entire cultural subsystems can spread widely, as cultural borrowing is not limited to traits or trait complexes but extends to whole institutions and often leaves material traces.

"Changes in custom without changes in population can indeed affect the archaeological record; the conversion of pagans to Christianity was the probable cause of the sharp decrease in grave goods in some areas, and the break with Rome of Henry VIII led to the replacement of funerary masses by funerary banquets" [61].

The religious conversion of Nubian kings which began in 580 A.D., manifested itself in churches and frescoed walls made by foreign architects and painters [62]. The introduction of Christianity into England, and of Buddhism in Japan in the 6th century undoubtedly involved similar processes, but not necessarily population movements. This was part of the beginning of a long process that led to the gradual formation of a vast Christian *Koine* over most of the Mediterranean and Europe. An analogous *Koine* of 'religious' beliefs and cult practices of Minoan derivation may be postulated for the LM IA Minoan world. This appears to reflect a common cult background - with Anatolian antecedents, and with Cretan and Cycladic elements - that, in its MM IIIB/LM IA manifestation was dominated by Minoan 'religious' fashion and iconography. In addition to architectural and artefactual evidence, lavish rituals of 'palatial' type are depicted on frescoes, rings and seals found in the Minoan periphery (both in Crete and beyond). There is also plenty of evidence for frequent feasting in ritual and funerary contexts in the form of the accelerating increase in numbers of conical cups:

"Certainly one among the many uses must have been ritual, as shown by the numerous examples of conical cups found with ritual equipment, or in foundation deposits, or in inverted rows in ritual contexts and containing vegetable matter... In both Egypt and the Near East, ritual use of cups identical or similar to Minoan conical cups and also occurring in great numbers has been suggested... At Akrotiri they are concentrated in three major... areas containing indications of cult activity, ritual feasting, or at least, plain feasting... The wholesale adoption of a Minoan religious or feasting ritual by a basically Cycladic population is the main possible alternative explanation (to major if not overwhelming Minoan immigration) for the superabundance of conical cups at Akrotiri, Phylakopi and Ayia Irini in LMIA-LCI" [63].

As shown before, in the case of the 'Hellenization' of Etruria, religious matters (including myth) form a prime mover in ancient exchange. This is more so in prehistoric contexts [64]. Thrane has introduced the useful term 'hierotopic' that defines the interdependence of three aspects of prehistoric life: cult, import and affluence. In a particular Danish context, this is reflected in the symbolic iconography of imported artefacts, as well as (at one instance) in the agglomeration of sacred place-names in precisely the area defined by gold deposits and other possible cultic finds [65]. Evidence for exchange of symbolic cult objects in the Minoan world is provided by prestige items like high quality clay objects, metal artefacts, seals and jewellery whose form, decoration, postulated function and, frequently, context may imply ritual

60   WIENER, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 11).

61   *Ibid.*

62   *Ibid.*; TRIGGER, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 40), p. 218, 224-5.

63   WIENER, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 11).

64   E.g. C.HAWKES, "Double axe testimonies", *Antiquity* 48 (1974), p. 206-12; I. HODDER, "Toward a contextual approach to prehistoric exchange", in J.E. ERICSON and T.K. EARLE (eds.), *Contexts for prehistoric exchange* (1982), p. 207; B. HÅRDH, "Coastal connections in the Scanian Middle Neolithic", in B. HÅRDH *et al.* (eds.), *Trade and exchange in prehistory* (1988), p. 69.

65   J.K. SØRENSEN, "Gudhem", *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 19 (1985); H. THRANE, "Import, affluence and cult-interdependent aspects ?", in HÅRDH *et al., op. cit.*, p. 187-96.

associations. A strong case, for instance, could be made for the bronze figurines of Minoan type found outside Crete [66] especially if scientific analysis shows they were imported.

The most compelling indication, however, is provided by the concrete evidence for export of what most probably had been objects used in ritual practices: conical cups on the one hand, and offering tables and double axes on the other. Conical cups are not expected to travel, and their possible cultic use is implied by their sheer quantities and find contexts, perhaps pointing to their intended (ritual ?) breakage. Some exhibit traces of fire which is a likely indication of their being used as lamps or incense burners. Some are found in tombs, and indeed some even travelled: a handful of Cretan and Melian examples were found at Ayia Irini, and a few from the northern Cyclades at Phylakopi. These need not necessarily have come as stoppers for wide-mouthed jars [67]. The second category of evidence does not seem to have had any practical use. It consists of relatively large numbers of sizable double axes (of bronze sheet, mounted on poles) and clay offering tables (with plaster decoration) apparently waiting for export at the double-harboured port of Nirou Khani [68].

The Emergence of Complexity: from Social Reproduction to Social Change

Whatever the exact nature, background and implications of the exchange of raw materials, good and ideas between core and periphery, and of the attendant processes of innovation and acculturation, the degree of their socio-cultural impact must have been substantial within both the central and peripheral areas, whose social structure and inter-societal relationships were strongly affected by those factors. The evidence suggests that at an initial stage the benefits from the latter were exclusively enjoyed by the elites who manipulated them (i.e. prestige goods etc.) to maintain and enhance their status, on a community or 'international' level. According to some [69], these factors may have played an important role in maintaining what they call 'palatial prestige and control', within both the core and the periphery, in part by setting standards for the 'Versailles effect' and for emulation respectively. In any case, the end result at that stage seems to have been a growing social complexity involving there production of the existing social order and hierarchy on the one hand, and on the other the structured growth of inequality within the context of developing socio-political systems which might tentatively be considered to correspond to what evolutionists call large-scale tribal or primitive chiefdom societies [70]. This is not, however, the end of the story. The evidence also points to processes of social mobilization operating concurrently with the processes described above, or at an immediately subsequent stage, and as a result of the same factors in addition to the challenge of the new standards and scales of prestige and hierarchy posed by the elites. It is to those processes that we now turn.

An example from a well documented historical period will be useful in understanding the phenomena of Minoan social mobility and the emulative processes involved: as a result of the relatively great scale and proportion of commercial activity and its material rewards in 11th century A.D. Italy, a widespread desire for social recognition was more deeply felt. This gave rise to extensive imitation of the nobility in buying land, building impressive houses and

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66   MELAS, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 4), p. 49; WIENER, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 11).
67   WIENER, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 11)
68   MARINATOS, *PraktArchEt* 1925, p. 141-7; WARREN, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 17), p. 93.
69   See recently, WIENER, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 11).
70   A reference to 'state societies' or 'chiefdom states' is avoided here, as the existence of such political formations in the Minoan world does not seem to be supported by present evidence.

keeping special retainers; and in possessing the proper materials of capitalist display, such as individual objects of value, including spices and scents, clothes, furnishing and jewellery [71].

As is usually the case with prehistoric societies [72], evidence for similar processes in the Minoan world is provided by intra-site and inter-site (across the Aegean) spatial analysis that enables us to examine the quantitative and qualitative distribution of Minoan and Minoanized artefacts and features, as well as the internal circulation of imported items. This kind of circulation now occurs within a social unit, and is therefore bound to take a different form from that of ordinary external trade, as it is influenced by social factors, such as an elite control of the monopoly. Modern anthropological studies have shown that the circulation of prestige goods and gifts relate to the distribution of inalienable rank in kin-ordered societies [73]. Indeed the evidence appears to suggest LM IA was a fundamental phase of socio-political transformation, which can be measured both in a major reorganization of settlement patterns, and in a re-alignment of social hierarchies. The first involves a horizontal hierarchization of settlements reflecting a differential scale of magnitude of society, whereas the second refers to the vertical differentiation and mobility. As already stated, the latter is evidenced in the distribution of both settlement location and artefact or feature distribution.

An examination of the internal circulation of imported items and features and their fluctuating spatial distribution on varying occasions in four different sites of the Minoan periphery or semiperiphery may be instructive [74]. At one stage, in the case of Ayia Irini definitely earlier than LM IA, features and items seem to concentrate in only one house. So at Ayia Irini period V (= end of MC) that marks the beginning of the Minoanization of the site, Minoan refinements, such as lightwells, bathrooms, toilets and frescoes are confined to house A. Likewise, on Pseira all imported pottery came from one house, and house A at Zakros seems to have been the control point of all goods. At another stage (At Ayia Irini definitely later than the one mentioned before) not only the range of Minoan goods and features is broad, but the range of people who had access to them seems to have been equally broad. Thus at Ayia Irini and Akrotiri, Minoan (imported or not) and local pottery, decorated or not, tend to be stored or used together, and their proportion in each deposit and building is similar. At Ayia Irini in particular the features referred to above have a wider distribution, beyond house A. The latter, however, continues to be of a relatively higher status as shown by the exclusive predilection for, and the ability to afford, imported Minoan pottery. While the coarse and plain ware is locally made, the fine decorated pottery is imported, with only one possible exception, a griffin jar, which is nevertheless assigned by Davis to a Melian workshop. This comes as no surprise given the ideological significance of fine wares in small scale societies, where they were intended for social display [75].

Symbols and Social Mobility: Social Emulation and Ideological Consumption

Certain categories of vessels were considered to be luxuries and consequently items of prestige, their social value depending on their relative superiority which in turn was linked to two factors: the degree of their physical and aesthetic value, and their being foreign, i.e. *exotic*. It is on such grounds that one could explain for instance the high value attached to imported

71   R.R. BOLGAR, *The Classical heritage and its beneficiaries* (1977), p. 136-7.
72   Cf., e.g., SHERRAT, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 28), for 3rd millennium B.C. Europe.
73   ROWLANDS, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 39), p. 6.
74   See WIENER, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 11); W.W. CUMMER and E. SCHOFIELD, *Keos* 3 *Ayia Irini : House A* (1984), p. 41, 142.
75   M. MELAS, "Ideology, pottery trade and society in the Aegean Bronze Age", *Proceedings of the Wace and Blegen conference on pottery as evidence for trade in the Aegean Bronze Age : 1939-1989, British School at Athens (1989)*, forthcoming.

Minoan metal vessels or their striking influence on Minoan and Mycenaean pottery and stone working, or even their depiction in Egyptian tombs. The same line of reasoning certainly applies to the other aspects of Minoan acculturation. The acquisition, adoption or imitation of Minoan material culture and social mores were part of a social strategy in the context of social mobility and internal class or individual competition within the Minoan periphery. They were evidently related to the (individual or kin-based) desire for power and 'apparatuses' of power that organized the everyday life of the time [76]. The use of material culture must have been prominent in this connection. People usually employ, in a conscious or sub-conscious manner, meaningful material symbols to express their power, social rank or status, prestige, ideology etc. As already said these symbols travel, and their adoption by local elites not only enhances their status but becomes actively involved in maintaining this status by setting standards of emulation. Two distinct mechanisms are thus involved in the process of symbolic appropriation and social manipulation: acculturation or the 'Versailles effect' which has already been discussed, and competitive emulation.

How a social strategy may work in terms of the social manipulation of material forms may be exemplified in a particular form of the pursuit of reputation - the process of emulation, i.e. of copying by a social group of higher status forms from another that is perceived to be superior [77]. Emulation, like culture, ethnicity or migration, is the creative product, as well as the medium, of social, political and economic structures in society. Individuals always pursue prestige and power, and explore the conditions under which it may be gained. Interest however cannot be reduced to individual motivation or desire, but is rather taken as conventional, the individuals seeking what is socially desirable, according to the position held in relation to society, although being ascribed a measure of 'discursive penetration' that enables them to rationalise their interest as strategy [78]. The means employed are extraordinarily various and may encompass symbolic as well as material capital [79].

The symbolic capital refers to the possession and manipulation of signs which involves the pursuit of human interest through the generation of variability - observed in archaeological terms - of these signs. Social position is largely derivative from possession of signs. This particular relationship between signs and the structure of social relations has several necessary corollaries. The pattern of introduction, acquisition and use of new signs suggest the existence of a hierarchy of social relations, with unequal access to high status signs, and from it we may be able to pinpoint the dominant group or groups. By extension one could argue for a distinction of socio-cultural systems between those in which rights to signs are derivative from social position and those in which social position is derivative from possession of signs [80].

According to Miller, the process of emulation

"may be used to show how, where a material-culture set is used to express social hierarchy, this may result in a dynamic force generating continual change in the material forms without any corresponding change in social structure. Thus, if a society has several ranks and a particular form is associated with a high rank, then the

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76 Cf. M. FOUCAULT'S ideas, e.g., *Power/knowledge : Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977* (1980).

77 D. MILLER, "Explanation and social theory in archaeological practice", in C. RENFREW *et. al.* (eds.), *Theory and explanation in archaeology* (1982); ID., "Structures and strategies : an aspect of the relationship between social hierarchy and cultural change", in I. HODDER (ed.), *Structural and symbolic archaeology* (1982).

78 A. GIDDENS, *Central problems in social theory* (1979), p. 5.

79 P. BOURDIEU, *Outline of a theory of practice* (1977), p. 171-83.

80 BRAITHWAITE, *op. cit. (supra, n. 3)*; ID., "Ritual and prestige in the prehistory of Wessex c. 2,200 - 1,400 B.C. : A new dimension to the archaeological evidence", in D. MILLER and C. TILLEY, *Ideology, power and prehistory* (1984), p. 93-110.

lower ranks may wish to raise their status by copying this form... The actual process of emulation occurs when hierarchy has developed as a fundamental principle of social organisation. Words and objects may become symbolic of persons or groups within such a hierarchy, in the most formal cases as insignia of rank. In this situation, when an individual or group wishes to raise its relative position within the hierarchy, it may seek to copy the group above by adopting some of the products or styles associated with that group" [81].

Building on his discussions of categorization and naturalization processes, Miller [82] proceeds to an analysis of emulation of material objects and its role in creating and maintaining status among social classes in a modern ethnographic context. For him context implies not only other category sets but also human practice: by investigating the acceptance of new pottery forms in the context of north India over two millennia, he considers the relation of pot categories to social strategies - in particular emulation which in south Asian ethnography has been termed 'sanscritisation'.

Some scholars [83] have studied the relationship between emulation and fashion, or consumer choice, in our society, and have illustrated its importance in accounting for various kinds of cultural transformations, such as the continual linguistic change in New York. Bourdieu's [84] recent theories on taste and snobbery are relevant here. He studied the social factors that play a part in a French person's choice of clothing, furniture, leisure activities, and many other matters of taste. What he found is that social snobbery is everywhere in the bourgeois world, which functions simultaneously as a system of power relations, and as a symbolic system in which even minute distinctions of taste become the basis for social judgement.

Modern ethnographic studies suggest that, despite the process of emulation, the social hierarchy remains constant. This is usually effected through two alternative means. One is coercion, where lower groups are forbidden to adopt the traits of higher groups. In one recorded example in India, a district regulation asserted that untouchables 'should not use other than earthenware vessels in their houses' [85]. The other involves a process of counter emulation, which provides a dynamic force producing continual change in material items.

"If the higher group wishes to maintain the previous contrast, it must seek either to prevent this or to promote new differentiating symbols in order to maintain the distinction... If higher groups adopt new forms (a pot with a handle, for example), as a result of emulatory pressures, this will result in a dynamic force continually producing change in the material forms, but having no significant effect upon the social structure itself. Labov has pointed out that one effect of this is that, at any given times, certain words (or objects) will be in the process of moving along this sequence, and for the period, until they become universally adopted, will be symbolic of social differentiation" [86].

There is little doubt that similar processes of emulation and counter-emulation were in operation in the Minoan world, resulting from (but also mediating further) foreign innovation and acculturation. All this may have been linked to (preceding or ensuing) changes in the social relations of production, and may have led, depending on various local and historical conditions

81   D. MILLER, "Explanation and social theory in archaeological practice", in C. RENFREW *et. al.* (eds.), *Theory and explanation in archaeology* (1982), p. 92; ID., *Artefacts as categories* (1985), p. 185.
82   D. MILLER, "Structures and strategies : an aspect of the relationship between social hierarchy and cultural change", in I. HODDER (ed.), *Structural and symbolic archaeology* (1982); ID., *Artefacts as categories* (1985).
83   See refs. in MILLER, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 81), p. 92.
84   P. BOURDIEU, *Distinction : A social critique of the judgement of taste* (1986).
85   D. MILLER, *Artefacts as categories* (1985), p. 185-87.
86   *Ibid.*, p. 185.

to either social reproduction or (temporal or enduring) social mobility. The following passage by Braithwaite [87] will probably lend us further assistance in understanding the problem at hand.

"Considerable change is apparent in the material culture of the period with notable innovation and dissemination of new styles and items. New signs, which may be new items or merely stylistic changes on traditional forms, appear initially to be associated with a small number of people, but through time become associated with greater numbers of people. As the associations change so the significance of the signs will change, finally losing their differentiating function when all groups within the community are able to acquire those particular signs. This pattern of innovation of new signs, initial association with a minority of people and gradual dissemination, or 'democratization', of the signs down through the social hierarchy appears, in the evidence, to repeat itself over and over... The repeated introduction of new signs as older signs are acquired more widely in the community also indicates a lack of control of access to signs. The structure of social relations is maintained and signified by the introduction of new signs, rather than through restrictions on the acquisition and use of high status signs by other than the dominant groups. The consequences of these for the structure and content of the associated economic, political and ideological dimensions of the practices depicted in the evidence may then be explored. For instance, necessary ideological positions may involve an emphasis on democratic positions rather than on ideas of 'natural' differentiation, as in caste-type societies. The production and acquisition of signs will be organised to allow such a relationship to exist. Production of items is perhaps not completely controlled by or restricted solely to the dominant group or groups since other groups are gradually able to acquire the high status signs. Other questions may be posed and then explored through determinations of the evidence. Why are the dominant groups not able to, or do not, attempt to make their position more secure - perhaps by restricting access to signs or by ideological changes emphasising their 'natural' and historically dominant position ? Or are they attempting to do so, but without success ? How might the production of these signs be organised to allow such a system to function ?"

Conclusion

Development in material culture and settlement locational decisions in the south Aegean during the first half of the second millennium B.C., and particularly in LM IA may be explained in terms of a model that sees social systems not as closed units, but as forming broad interaction spheres, a kind of 'world systems' within which they find themselves in continuous contact, be it on an equal (peer polities) or unequal basis (centre/periphery). Change is thus viewed as the result of an interaction between two factors: foreign innovation and acculturation, on the one hand, and the internal evolution of the local societies on the other. There seems to have been no actual priority or primacy of the one factor over the other, as they are dialectically related [88].

On the one hand, the desire or need on the part of 'palatial' societies to acquire raw materials brought Minoan people, goods and ideas into the periphery of Crete and the Aegean. The ensuing 'international trade' focused the attention of the natives on the world outside their immediate regions. The development that followed the initiation of foreign mercantile activity and the consumption of foreign goods by local elites may be seen as the primary source of the inspiration that led to an alteration of the local cultural systems, and to an increasing demand for foreign status-marking goods and their local equivalents, thus further drawing the periphery into the Minoan orbit. The end result was the development of more complex social formations, including various forms and degrees of mobilization. This was due to new factors now operating, such as the reliance on extraction rather than production, which led to the concentration of wealth and power in a small elite who controlled the contacts with those buying the raw material and supplying the luxury goods.

On the other hand the internal developments of the local societies were apparently under way prior to the operation of the processes (described in the preceding paragraph) which rather

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87   BRAITHWAITE, op. cit. (supra, n. 3).
88   Cf. WINTER and BANKOFF, op. cit. (supra, n. 27).

seem to have accelerated an already existing trend towards social change. It is interesting to note that some of the economic 'innovations' of the period, such as metal working and the use of the potter's wheel, had been available to a degree, in most places of the periphery, prior to any change. The relatively sudden increase in their use, which seems to be archaeologically manifested, and coincides with a sudden increase of imported Minoan artefacts and features into the periphery in LM IA, was probably not related to innovation alone, but perhaps also to a major transformation of the relations of production which provided the social context into which innovation occurs. The likely causes and processes of this transformation must have been located within the society itself, as we hope the preceding analysis to have shown [89].

As we have seen, the initial processes of innovation and acculturation were evidently followed by growing social complexity involving the consolidation of local hierarchies and intergroup relationships both by elite affluence and by a consensus at an ideological level. This meant that not only the means and forces of production had changed, but also the whole character of social reproduction, including the relations of production. The balance is thus redressed away from a technological determinism to an emphasis on the reproduction of a set of social relations of production apparently shared across the Minoan world. Those relations seem to have been enshrined in an ideological structure articulated through various aspects of material culture, according to the standards provided by the 'Versailles effect'.

In short, the change appears to have been initiated by external factors, and manifests itself in both culture and society. The causes, however must be sought within the systems themselves. We may recognize the potential of the pre-existence of internal conflicts of interest which must have gradually intensified as the processes of innovation and acculturation were under way, evidently accompanied by the breakdown of the homogeneity of economic practice across the periphery. Hence the need for 'ideological consensus' expressed through material forms. We may assume that the latter could not always be successful in suppressing the existing contradictions and inequalities. This may have generated competition and related social strategies encouraging social mobility through emulation of cultural, including material culture, forms. In order to counter such strategies and maintain differences eroded by emulation and thus the social *status quo*, elites may have sought to raise the standards of their 'symbols of excellence', by increasing the quality and by renewing the repertoire of imported items and ideas. This translates into further acculturation and innovation, which in their turn may have led to further complexity and social mobilization. It seems that such a reflexive succession of causes and effects went on for a considerable time in a clockwise fashion.

Manolis MELAS

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89   Cf. THOMAS, *op. cit.* (*supra*, n. 27) for comparable processes in NW European Neolithic.