

THE TREE AS A FOCUS OF RITUAL ACTION IN MINOAN GLYPHTIC ART

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Introduction

That the tree played an important role in Minoan cult has been emphasized by both A.J. Evans and M.P. Nilsson. Evans, following the ideas of J. Frazer and W. Mannhardt, assumed that the tree was actually "possessed by the divinity"¹. Nilsson, who was also influenced by this school of "primitive thought"², said that the trees were "objects of cult"³. In line with his cauti-

* Sources of illustrations (all drawings by Lily Papageorgiou): Figs. 1. 2. 7. 11. 13. 15. 16. 18 after CMS drawings; Figs. 14. 17. 19 after preliminary CMS-drawings; Fig. 8 after preliminary CMS-drawing, courtesy Drs. A. Sakellariou and I. Pini; Fig. 3 after JHS 22, 1902, 77, Fig. 1; Fig. 4 after Papapostolou pl. 38.28; Fig. 5 after Papapostolou pl. 38.27; Fig. 6 after Rutkowski, Kultdarstellungen, Abb. 2.9; Fig. 9 after C. Davaras, Guide to Cretan Antiquities (1976) 327, Fig. 189; Fig. 10 after Nilsson, MMR, 269, Fig. 136; Fig. 12 after Kenna, Cretan Seals, 75, Fig. 155; Fig. 20 after Evans, PM II, 250, Fig. 147b; Fig. 21 after H. Danthine (cf. n. 59) II, Nr. 173; Fig. 22 after H. Danthine (cf. n. 59) II, Nr. 8.

Abbreviations:

Burkert, S&H	W. Burkert, Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual (1979).
Evans, PM	A. Evans, The Palace of Minos at Knossos I-IV (1921-35).
Evans, TPC	A. Evans, "Mycenaean Tree and Pillar Cult and Its Mediterranean relations", JHS 21, 1901, 99-204.
Marinatos-Hirmer	Sp. Marinatos, M. Hirmer, Kreta, Thera und das Mykenische Hellas (1976).
N. Marinatos, Date Palm	N. Marinatos, "The Date Palm in Minoan Iconography and Religion", OpAth 15, 1984, 115-122.
N. Marinatos, Sacrificial Ritual	N. Marinatos, Minoan Sacrificial Ritual: Cult Practice and Symbolism (Stockholm 1986).
Nilsson, GGR	M.P. Nilsson, Geschichte der griechischen Religion I 3. Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft V 2,1 (1967).
Nilsson, MMR	M.P. Nilsson, The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and Its Survival in Greek Religion, 2. Aufl. (1950; 1. Aufl. 1927).
Persson, RGPT	A. Persson, The Religion of Greece in Prehistoric Times (1942).
Rutkowski, Cult Places	B. Rutkowski, Cult Places in the Aegean World (1972).
Rutkowski, Kultdarstellungen	B. Rutkowski, Frühgriechische Kultdarstellungen, Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung, 8. Beiheft (1981).

¹ Evans, TPC, 190.

² The most influential representative of this school: J. Frazer, The Golden Bough: A Study in Comparative Religion (1890); idem, The New Golden Bough: A New Abridgement, ed. Th. Gaster (1959). The Cambridge school is best represented by J. Harrison, Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion (1903); idem, Themis (1912), as well as by G. Murray, Fives Stages of Greek Religion (1912). M. proposes an evolution of religious ideas. Harrison's work in particular influenced M.P. Nilsson, GGR, 209ff. An influential proponent of vegetation cults was W. Mannhardt, Die Korndämonen (1868). For a good discussion and criticism of these theories: Burkert, S&H, 35.158 with notes 1-6.

³ Nilsson, MMR, 262.

ous scepticism, however, he added, "... we cannot always decide with certainty whether the tree is holy on its own account, or as the embodiment of the deity, or simply because it belongs to a sacred grove inhabited by the god or containing his temple"⁴. B. Rutkowski speaks of holy trees but also notes that it is rather rare that the tree is worshipped in itself. He finds an example of tree worship on the seal from Naxos (*Fig. 11*)⁵.

Modern scholarship has questioned the assumptions about primitive vegetation cults. Functionalist and structuralist approaches have stressed the need to look at religion as an integral part of the cultural system to which it belongs⁶. There are no more primitive religions than there are primitive societies; there are only technically underdeveloped societies and Minoan Crete definitely does not belong to this category.

Thus, it is worth while looking anew at the evidence of the "tree-cult" in Minoan religion. The method I shall use can be sketched as follows. Firstly, the scenes involving a tree in a cultic connection will be collected, categorized and collated. Once classified, the material is easier to deal with and becomes more comprehensible. Secondly, there will be a contextual analysis in order to answer specific questions relating to the content of the scenes: What role does the tree play in the various categories? What kind of worshippers appear? What are their gestures? Thirdly, there will be interpretation. Here I shall attempt to draw conclusions by comparing the various categories and by isolating common denominators, if such can be found. My final step will be to try to define the Minoan "tree-cult" as a religious phenomenon. For this it is necessary to draw upon related fields and look for parallels from the history of religion. Although this step might seem hazardous, the dangers of misinterpretation are minimized if one is true to and does not manipulate the evidence which resulted from the classification. The iconography will show a pattern. Analogy helps throw light on the pattern and although it does not have a binding force, it is necessary to resort to it, if one aims at comprehension of the culture.

Starting with the classification process, it is obvious that there are many ways to classify any given material depending on which criteria are chosen. For example, in our case, one could focus on the type of tree involved, the presence or absence of human agents, the presence of animals, the type of shrine etc. I will classify the scenes according to "who is present" and "location of the tree".

Regarding the question "who is present" three distinct categories emerge. 1. Tree + Worshipper. 2. Tree + Deity. 3. Tree + Worshipper + Deity. It becomes apparent from the above division that an interaction between divinity and worshipper *takes place in the vicinity of a tree*.

To this we might add a fourth category: 4. Tree + Animal which will not be treated extensively here since I have dealt with it elsewhere⁷.

⁴ Ibid., 264.

⁵ Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 195; idem, *Kultdarstellungen*, 53–54. In a recent article (*Der Baumkult in der Ägäis, Visible Religion* 3, 1984 (1985) 159–171) Rutkowski reinstates his position that trees were sometimes objects of worship (160). Although I do not agree with his general interpretation, one of his observations is a very good one: the tree gave rise to sacred columns and standards which had the form of stylized trees.

⁶ Neo-functionalism and structuralism characterize the work of W. Burkert, *Homo Necans* (1967) and Burkert, S&H. The French structuralists: J.-P. Vernant, M. Detienne, P. Vidal-Naquet et alii lay stress on social and structural components of myth and religion. See for example R.L. Gordon, ed., *Myth, Religion and Society: Structuralist Essays* by M. Detienne, L. Gernet and P. Vidal-Naquet (1977); J.-P. Vernant, *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece* 1980 (French edition 1974).

⁷ N. Marinatos, *Date Palm*; idem, *Sacrificial Ritual*.

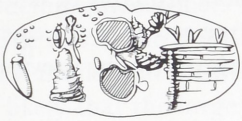


Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13



Fig. 14



Fig. 15

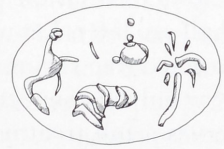


Fig. 16



Fig. 17



Fig. 18



Fig. 19



Fig. 20

Fig. 1 CMS II 3 No. 15. *Fig. 2* CMS IX No. 163. *Fig. 3* Sealing from Hagia Triada, Herakl. Mus. No. 505. *Fig. 4* Sealing from Chania, Mus. No. 2055. *Fig. 5* Sealing from Chania, Mus. Nos. 2071. 2112. *Fig. 6* Sealing from Hagia Triada, Herakl. Mus. No. 523. *Fig. 7* CMS I No. 119. *Fig. 8* Seal from Crete(?) in a private collection. *Fig. 9* Seal from Makrygialos, Hagios Nikolaos Mus. No. 4653. *Fig. 10* CMS II 3 No. 252. *Fig. 11* CMS V 2 No. 608. *Fig. 12* Ring in Oxford, Ashmolean Mus. No. 1938. 1127. *Fig. 13* CMS XI No. 28. *Fig. 14* Sealing from Zakros, Herakl. Mus. No. 47. *Fig. 15* CMS I No. 17. *Fig. 16* CMS I Suppl. No. 114. *Fig. 17* Sealing from Hagia Triada, Herakl. Mus. No. 576. *Fig. 18* CMS II 3 No. 305. *Fig. 19* Sealing from Hagia Triada, Herakl. Mus. No. 522. *Fig. 20* Ring from Crete (Ammissos?) in Oxford, Ashmolean Mus. No. 1938. 1129.

The second criterion for classification was “location of the tree”. Here there are three possibilities: a) The tree is depicted in connection with an isodomic construction, probably of ashlar masonry. Henceforth I shall call this “constructed tree-shrine”. b) The tree grows in the open, often in a rocky terrain. c) The tree is in a boat. Now, these categories overlap with the previous ones so that the following overall classification system emerges.

1. Tree + Worshipper
 - a) near a constructed tree shrine.
 - b) near a free-standing tree.
 - c) in a boat.
2. Tree + Deity
 - a) near a constructed tree shrine.
 - b) near a free-standing tree.
 - c) in a boat.
3. Tree + Worshipper + Deity.
 - a) near a constructed tree shrine.
 - b) near a free-standing tree.
 - c) in association with a boat.

1. Tree + Worshipper

To this category belong a number of seals and sealings, depicting adorants next to a tree. The latter grows either from a constructed tree-shrine (commonly referred to as “enclosure”, see below) or from the ground. This division is important and suggests two different cults, as we shall see later. Let us start with (a) involving the worshipper standing in the vicinity of a constructed tree-shrine. Adorants can be either male or female but it should be noted that males appear only in connection with a very specific type of cult: the shaking of the tree. This subject deserves a full treatment in itself and is the subject of a forthcoming monography by Ch. Sourvinou-Inwood⁸. Consequently, I shall not dwell upon this ritual here. In many representations, however, the worshipper does not interact with the tree in such a direct way but simply stands in front of the tree-shrine. Noteworthy is the fact that the adorant is always female.

These representations are:

1. Sealing from Knossos (*Fig. 1*). From left to right: a pithos; female adorant with right arm bent and reaching upwards, left arm hanging down; tree-shrine in ashlar masonry.
2. Seal from Ligortino, Crete (*Fig. 2*)⁹. From left to right: female adorant left arm at the waist, right arm bent and raised; multi-storeyed tree-shrine. Possibly one sacred horn is visible on top. The tree-shrine has a portal and is decorated with a crescent-shaped object which looks like a new moon but which, I think, is a garland.

⁸ Ch. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Renewal and Divine Return: A Minoan Ritual Reconstructed* (forthcoming). In this monograph, the author uses a structuralist and semiotic approach to decode the iconography of certain glyptic scenes involving the shaking of the tree. She distinguishes different phases of the cult and reconstructs a seasonal ritual.

⁹ Evans, TPC, 185, Fig. 59.

3. Sealing from Hagia Triada (*Fig. 3*)¹⁰. From left to right: three women their arms bent and touching their waist. The central one is noticeably larger; plant; tree-shrine with portal. The large size of the central figure and the gestures differentiate this scene from the previous ones. Levi thinks that the worshippers are dancing¹¹ but this is far from certain. He also does not think it likely that the large figure in the centre is a goddess; rather she is older than the other two. W. Niemeier (in this volume p. 181–182) suggests that she is the goddess.

4. Fragmentary sealing from Chania (*Fig. 4*)¹². From left to right: female adorant frontally depicted. Her right arm is bent and raised, held close to her chest. The left is stretched towards a multi-storeyed tree-shrine, topped by sacred horns. The upper tier contains a portal with a column. I. Papapostolou speaks of a sacred dance¹³.

5. Sealing from Chania (*Fig. 5*)¹⁴. Two female figures, stretching their arms towards each other, are flanking a tree. On either side of them there are shrines *without* trees, topped by sacred horns. Papapostolou thinks that a vegetation cult is enacted by the adorants and compares with CMS II 5 No. 323¹⁵. A similar representation from a seal in the Herakleion museum (CMS II 3 No. 56) depicts two figures with stretched arms flanked by shrines¹⁶. There is no tree in the centre but one may be growing from the shrine, it is difficult to tell with certainty.

6. Fragmentary sealing from Hagia Triada (*Fig. 6*)¹⁷. From left to right: female adorant right arm outstretched, left arm bent and raised; plants visible behind two oval stones; constructed tree-shrine.

7. Gold ring from Mycenae. From left to right a goat; a male adorant right arm bent, left bent and stretched towards a tree growing from a constructed tree-shrine. Another similar tree behind the goat¹⁸.

In the above scenes certain features recur. The adorant is normally female and interacts with the tree shrine often by stretching her arm towards it (*Figs. 1, 2, 4, 7*) while in one scene, the sealing from Chania (*Fig. 5*), two women flank a tree. There is a variety of gestures but the most common one is one arm bent and raised, the other stretched. The tree is always on top of the constructed shrine but in two cases, on the Chania sealing (*Fig. 5*) and ring from Ligortino (*Fig. 2*), the *tree and shrines are shown separately*. This is important to note because it throws light on the relationship tree/shrine, as we shall see later.

The second group of tree + worshipper (b) differs in that the tree grows in the open. I shall start with an, as yet, unpublished seal from a private collection in Crete which I present here thanks to the kindness of Dr. A. Sakellariou (*Fig. 8*). To the left there is a somewhat stylized palm, leaning slightly to the right; in the centre an incurved altar, topped by sacred horns. On the right side of the field, a large female adorant is standing facing the palm and the altar. She has a ges-

¹⁰ D. Levi, *ASAtene* 8/9, 1925/26, 141, Fig. 156. For a similar arrangement of figures see CMS II 3 No. 218. See also W. Niemeier's paper in this volume 181f.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 141.

¹² I. Papapostolou, *Τὰ Σφραγίσματα τῶν Χανίων* (1977) 74, pl. 38,28.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 69–73, pl. 38,27.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹⁶ Rutkowski, *Kultdarstellungen*, 13, Fig. 1, 13.

¹⁷ Levi (*supra* n. 10) 140, Fig. 154.

¹⁸ CMS I No. 119; Evans, *TPC*, 181; Persson, *RGPT*, 52ff; Nilsson, *MMR*, 258ff.

ture well known also from figurines: her right arm is bent, the fist clenched and touching her forehead. The left arm is bent, hand almost touching the breast. Her upper torso is naked and she is wearing a banded skirt. Her hair is long and streaming down her shoulders. The palm and the adorant stand on the same groundline, whereas the incurved altar is above it. This may mean that the altar should be imagined at some distance, whereas the palm and the adorant have a *direct* interaction. Noteworthy is the lack of naturalistic proportions. The palm should be much larger than the woman but this would have meant that the two elements, worshipper + tree, could not have been effectively juxtaposed. The gesture of the adorant and the presence of the incurved altar leave no doubt as to the sacred character of the scene.

A seal from Makrygialos, found by C. Davaras (*Fig. 9*), offers an interesting comparison and is an example of group (c) where the tree is located within a boat. In the boat there are from left to right: a built structure (probably a shrine), a palm¹⁹ and a female adorant with exactly the same gesture as on the previous seal. It is hard to imagine a large palm standing in a boat, so the scene, although probably referring to an actual ritual, introduces an element of symbolic exaggeration. More will be said later about the significance of the transportation of the tree.

The sacredness of the palm tree can be established also from other representations in Minoan art as I have shown elsewhere²⁰. One example from a sealing from Knossos may be of special relevance here. A palm is shown on which two sacral knots or garments are hung²¹. This is significant in so far as it shows that this tree is not an object of worship but rather part of the ritual nexus.

2. *Tree + Divinity*

There are two scenes where the deity is depicted near a tree. On a (now lost) ring from Mochlos (*Fig. 10*) there is a ship with a prow in the form of a monster's head²². On the boat there is a construction reminiscent of the built shrines discussed above from which a tree rises²³. A female figure is seated to the right of the tree-shrine. Although we cannot be sure that she is a goddess there are certain details which point to this direction. Firstly, she is seated, rather than standing as was the case with the Makrygialos seal (*Fig. 9*). Secondly, she is not facing the tree but has her back turned to it. This suggests that she is not directly interacting with it, as the adorants do. The goddess is thus arriving in a boat²⁴. The sea here may have a cosmological rather than a geographical significance similar to that of the ocean in Egyptian religion²⁵.

¹⁹ The tree has been identified as a palm by Davaras, BCH 104, 1980, 47. A possible parallel on a Mesopotamian seal depicting a tree in a boat: E. Strommenger, *Mesopotamien* (1962) pl. 117.

²⁰ N. Marinatos, *Date Palm*, 115–122.

²¹ Evans, PM IV, 602; M. Gill, BSA 60, 1965, 84.

²² The kind of animal that the prow represents is a subject of debate. I accept Ch. Sourvinou-Inwood's interpretation that it is a sea-monster, influenced by Egyptian models. For a discussion with bibliography see Kadmos 12, 1973, 149–158, esp. 150. In the same article Sourvinou-Inwood discusses the divine boat and its Egyptian origin. A similar boat, carrying a female figure (goddess?) on a sealing from Hagia Triada in Levi (*supra* n. 10) 126, Fig. 134.

²³ Nilsson (MMR, 26) says that the tree is behind the boat, not on it.

²⁴ The fact that the goddess is in a boat does not necessarily make her a goddess of sea-faring as Nilsson (MMR, 354) suggests.

²⁵ For the cosmic ocean in Egyptian religion: M. Lurker, *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt* (1974) 105; R.T. Clark, *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt* (1959) 80.

A seal from Naxos (*Fig. 11*) is our second example²⁶. To the right there is a standing male figure wearing a kilt and, probably, a head-dress. One of his arms is outstretched holding a long staff. In front of him, to the left, is a low altar table and above it a sword, a rhyton, a pitcher and a bucket. Further to the left there is a palm. The male figure is usually identified as an adorant²⁷ or a warrior²⁸. I, however, believe that he is a deity, for the following reasons. His gesture of the outstretched arm with the staff is almost always associated with divinities²⁹ (compare also with *Figs. 12, 13*). Only on the "Chieftain's Cup" from Hagia Triada could the man with the staff be considered a mortal. Even so, this is far from certain and it could be argued that he too is a divinity³⁰. At any rate there is little doubt that the gesture of the outstretched arm with the staff implies command and authority of a superior to an inferior. In view of this, I do not think that it is appropriate for a worshipper about to make offerings to a god. Thus, here also we have a divinity near a palm tree.

3. *Tree + Divinity + Worshipper*

In this category the adorant interacts with the deity in the vicinity of a tree. Here again the interaction takes place near (a) a constructed tree-shrine (b) near a tree growing out in the open (c) in association with a boat.

Two rings now in Berlin (*Fig. 13*)³¹ and Oxford respectively³² (*Fig. 12*) depict the encounter between a female votary and a male god³³. They are so similar, that they can be discussed together. In both there is a female worshipper with naked upper torso and a flounced skirt. Both votaries have bent arms although only the one on the Oxford ring (*Fig. 12*) raises her right hand to her forehead. In both rings there are constructed tree-shrines in ashlar masonry containing portals.

²⁶ Ch. Kardara, *Aplomata Naxou* (1977) 6, pl. 6.

²⁷ The figure is presumed to be an adorant because some feel that the palm represents a divinity: Ch. Long, *The Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus*, *SIMA* 41 (1974) 67; N. Kontoleon, *Ergon* 1959, 127; E. Vermeule, *Greece in the Bronze Age* (1964) 290; G. Mylonas, *Mycenae and the Mycenaean Age* (1966) 163. On the contrary, J. Sakellarakis, *PZ* 45, 1970, 173, does not accept the identification of the palm as a deity.

²⁸ Rutkowski, *Kultdarstellungen*, 52–53.

²⁹ This gesture is attested in connection with a divinity on: 1) "Mother of the Mountain" sealing: Evans, *PM I*, 159; IV, 698, *Fig. 597 A,3*; Nilsson, *MMR*, 353, *Fig. 162*. See also Ch. Sourvinou-Inwood's interpretation of the scene in this volume. 2) A sealing from the "Room of Seal Impressions" Knossos, M. Gill, *BSA* 60, 1965, 75. 3) The newly discovered Chania sealing, E. Hallager, *The Master Impression*, *SIMA* 69 (1985).

³⁰ Marinatos-Hirmer, pl. 100. For the identification of the figure as a god: S. Hood, *The Arts of Prehistoric Greece* (1978) 145. For a recent paper with discussion of the bibliography: R. Koehl, *AJA* 89, 1985, 337, *JHS* 106, 1986, 99–110. K. suggests that the two main figures confronting each other are initiate and tutor and connects the scene with an initiation rite.

³¹ Nilsson, *MMR*, 266; Persson, *RGPT*, 67.

³² Evans, *TPC*, 170, *Fig. 48*; *PM I*, 160, *Fig. 115*; Nilsson, *MMR*, 256ff.; V.E.G. Kenna, *Cretan Seals* (1960) 75, *Fig. 155*.

³³ Nilsson (*MMR*, 266) sees the reverse relationship on the figures of the Berlin ring. He thinks that the male is the adorant, the female the goddess. Persson (*RGPT*, 68), on the other hand, identifies the woman as an adorant because of her sacred knot which he thinks characterizes priestesses. He concludes that the scene represents the epiphany of a male god in the summer season. That the male figure is the god can be seen because 1) he looms large, 2) his position close to the tree-shrine corresponds exactly to that of the god of the Oxford ring. See also Ch. Sourvinou-Inwood in this volume for the convention left/right and its relevance for identifying divinities.

On the Oxford ring there is an object in the portal which Evans considered a column or obelisk³⁴. Yet, not only is it too small for a column, but the horizontal projections in its middle render this identification unlikely. I shall return to this object later. In both rings the male god is to the right, the votary to the left. (Here I am going by the impression not the original. The reverse is the case if one uses the original.) The gods have outstretched arms. However, although the one of the Oxford ring is holding a staff, his counterpart on the Berlin ring does not.

There are also some differences. On the Oxford ring the figure of the god is small. His hair is streaming in the air which is an indication of rapid motion in Minoan art. His feet point downwards; evidently he is in the process of descent. On the Berlin ring, on the other hand, he looms large (*Fig. 13*). His hair is resting on his shoulders; his feet are firmly planted on the ground all of which shows that he has landed. Thus, the two rings show us *two phases of the same ritual*. This ritual can be safely identified as an epiphany³⁵.

Another difference is the tall column which appears on the Oxford ring. This column tapers upwards and may well be a flagpole³⁶. It rests on a double ground-line traversed by vertical lines which almost certainly indicate a paved surface. On this area stand both the adorant and the column with the divinity in between. It is therefore evident that they form a cultic nexus and this leads one to think that the column was somehow associated with the epiphany. At any rate, it is significant that in both cases the epiphany takes place in front of a tree-shrine.

One more example may be added to this group, although here the pattern is slightly different. On a sealing from Zakros (*Fig. 14*), a man is depicted standing between two tiered shrines both of which are topped by sacred horns. A tree or flower grows from the shrine to the right. Between the man and the left shrine hovers a figure resembling a bell-shaped idol which is descending obliquely³⁷. The man seems to be bending over the shrine, but this is a misleading impression. After discussions with Dr. I. Pini, I am inclined to believe that the figure is actually bending backwards and that his right arm is bent, his fist touching his forehead: in short, he has the typical gesture of an adorant. Thus, here also there is an epiphany scene near a tree-shrine³⁸. Common to all three above representations is the fact that the deity appears to a member of the opposite sex³⁹.

We now move to those representations where the divinity interacts with the adorant near a tree growing out in the open. The well-known Mycenae ring (*Fig. 15*) can serve as a starting point. A goddess is seated under a fruit tree, receiving floral offerings from two women who are wearing flounced skirts. Two smaller figures, probably young girls, flank the goddess. The one in front of the goddess is offering flowers to her, the one behind her back is touching the fruit of the tree. There is also a smaller figure with a shield and spear, as well as various other symbols

³⁴ Evans, TPC, 170.

³⁵ The classical article on epiphany: F. Matz, "Göttererscheinung und Kultbild im minoischen Kreta" *AbhMainz* 7, 1958. See also R. Hägg, "Die göttliche Epiphanie im minoischen Ritual" *AM* 101, 1986, 41 ff. and W. Niemeier, "Zur Deutung des Thronraumes im Palast von Knossos", both forthcoming in *AM* 101, 1986, 63 ff.

³⁶ S. Alexiou, *KrChron* 17, 1963-65, 339-351; idem, *AAA* 2, 1969, 84-88.

³⁷ J. Hogarth, *JHS* 22, 1902, 76-77. H. thinks that the descending figure is a goddess. He identifies the scene as cultic but is not sure whether the structures are shrines or altars. He identifies the plant as a lotus.

³⁸ Matz (*supra* n. 35) 395, comes to the same conclusion.

³⁹ Sp. Marinatos, *Gnomon* 32, 1960, 642-650.

in the field. It is not my intention to discuss the interpretation of this complicated scene which has been often discussed⁴⁰. Suffice it to say that the goddess when receiving the adorants is seated under a tree.

Similarly on a gold ring from Crete (*Fig. 16*)⁴¹, a goddess is seated under a palm. In front of her, to the left, is a monkey who here takes the place of the usual human adorants. Although this may seem at first surprising, the monkey does in fact appear regularly as a special ministrant of the deity as I have shown elsewhere⁴².

On a sealing from Hagia Triada (*Fig. 17*)⁴³ a tree, growing among a heap of rocks, occupies the centre of the field. To the left stands a female with a flounced skirt and naked torso, her right arm bent, the left stretched towards the tree. To the right, on the other side of the tree, there is another female seated figure with upraised arms. She must be a goddess, as her seated posture, size and gesture indicate; the latter is often associated with goddesses as S. Alexiou has shown⁴⁴.

On a bronze ring from Kavousi (*Fig. 18*)⁴⁵ the same scheme is repeated. Again a tree, growing from a rocky terrain, is in the centre, to the left a female votary with flounced skirt, left arm bent and raised, and a deity to the right of the tree. In this case the divinity is wearing a banded mantle; this can be worn by either sex⁴⁶ so that it is difficult to tell whether a god or a goddess is meant. Noteworthy is the position of this figure which appears to be hovering above ground. For this reason also he/she must be a divinity. In both Figs. 17 and 18 the tree separates the adorant and divinity and seems to be the focal point of the cult activity.

Finally, on a sealing from Hagia Triada (*Fig. 19*)⁴⁷ there is from left to right: a female votary, left arm bent (the other is not preserved) and a tree growing from a rocky terrain. Between the votary and the tree there is a small figure on the upper side of the field. This must be the divinity (a female to judge by what appears to be a skirt) hovering in the air.

There is only one representation with a tree, adorants, a divinity and a boat. On a gold ring from Amnisos (*Fig. 20*)⁴⁸ there is from left to right: An object which Evans identified as a column of a shrine but which more likely is a pithos; a woman and a man, possibly holding hands; a boat with rowers (Evans saw a goddess among them) and a standing steersman; dolphins; above the boat in the field a figure of undefinable sex with a short, banded skirt; a tree. Evans assumed that the vessel was leaving port, but this is not certain, it may be arriving⁴⁹. He thought that the male figure was saluting the departing goddess, who may have been returning with her sacred tree to

⁴⁰ For complete bibliography see CMS I No. 17; S. Hood, *The Arts in Prehistoric Greece* (1978) 225–227.

⁴¹ For bibliography see CMS I Suppl. No. 114.

⁴² N. Marinatos, "An Offering of Saffron to the Minoan Goddess of Nature: the Role of the Monkey and the Importance of Saffron", in: *Gifts to the Gods, Proceedings of the Uppsala Symposium 1985* (1987), 123–132.

⁴³ Levi (*supra n. 10*) 139, Fig. 153, calls the rocks from where the tree grows an altar. He is uncertain as to whether the seated figure is a goddess.

⁴⁴ S. Alexiou, *KrChron* 13, 1958, 179–300.

⁴⁵ H.R. Hastings, *AJA* 9, 1905, 279ff.; Rutkowski, *Kultdarstellungen*, 54, Fig. 143. There are technical reasons why the tree is in the centre of the field: its foliage coincides with the rivet of the ring.

⁴⁶ A female with this garment is the "priestess" from the West House, Akrotiri, Sp. Marinatos, *Excavations at Thera V* (1972) Pl. J. For a male figure with a similar attire: Evans, *PM IV*, Fig. 336.

⁴⁷ Rutkowski, *Kultdarstellungen*, Fig. 14, 5. A similar sealing from Hagia Triada in Levi (*supra n. 10*) 140, Fig. 155, depicts a female adorant and a tree growing from a rocky terrain but no divinity is present.

⁴⁸ Evans, *PM II*, 250, Fig. 147b; Persson, *RGPT*, 81ff; Nilsson, *MMR*, 39, Fig. 7.

⁴⁹ Nilsson, *MMR*, 250.

another holy spot⁵⁰. I feel that it is difficult to associate a short skirt with a goddess and I would prefer to leave the question of god vs. goddess open. For the rest, however, Evans' interpretation seems essentially correct to me. A male and a female adorant interact with a departing or arriving deity in the vicinity of a tree. As for the pithos, visible behind the votaries, it is an important object because it establishes a link with a well defined group of cult scenes. In these a tree is shaken which either grows from a pithos (CMS I No. 219) or the pithos is standing in the vicinity being a part of the cultic nexus⁵¹. It is no accident that it is precisely in such scenes that both male and female adorants are present.

Let us now attempt a summary of the discussed representations.

1. The tree is a focus of ritual action.
2. As one can see from scenes of category 3 (tree + worshipper + deity) this ritual action can be defined as epiphany. Even when the deity is not present as in scenes of category 2 (tree + worshipper) it is reasonable to assume that the worshipper invokes the god in the presence of the tree. The results of this invocation are seen in group 3.
3. The tree is consequently *not an object of worship in itself* but a focus of cultic activity.
4. There are different species of trees involved which may well signify different cults. The palm is prominent among sacred trees, as is the fig-tree⁵².
5. There are three distinct types of locations for the tree, namely a) on top of constructed shrines, b) in the open, usually growing from a rocky terrain, and c) in a boat. This obviously refers to different types of sanctuaries although, as I will try to show later, b) and c) may be connected to related rituals. It is clear that the free standing trees grow in rural, open-air sanctuaries, possibly on mountainous areas to judge from the rocks, whereas built tree-shrines are often associated with paved platforms and groundlines (*Figs. 12, 13*) which suggest an urban setting. Different trees were probably related to different cults as was the case in Greek and other religions⁵³.
6. The sex of the votaries is always female when the scene takes place near a tree growing in the open (b) and mostly female when there are constructed tree shrines. However, males can appear in connection with the latter category (a). There is a male on the Zakros sealing (*Fig. 14*) whereas males appear in association with built tree-shrines when a tree shaking ritual is depicted⁵⁴.

⁵⁰ Evans, PM II, 250.

⁵¹ For the nexus "pithos-tree-stone" see the forthcoming monograph by Ch. Sourvinou-Inwood (supra n. 8).

⁵² For palm see N. Marinatos, *Date Palm*. It has been observed that fig-trees often occur in Minoan iconography: See for example, Evans, TPC, 101 ff; Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 214; Sourvinou-Inwood (supra n. 8).

⁵³ Nilsson, GGR, 209 ff. Evans, TPC, 132, adduces evidence from Hebrew religion where terebinths and oaks marked sacred spots. Trees were sacred to gods also in Hittite religion.: V. Haas, *Hethitische Berggötter* (1982) 13. 59. 63. 84. 109. 190. An example of ritual use of trees in a technologically underdeveloped culture in V. Turner, *The Forrest of Symbols* (1967) 30 ff.

⁵⁴ The mixture of the sexes in the ritual sphere is a rare phenomenon in Aegean art (N. Marinatos, "Role and Sex Division in Ritual Scenes of Aegean Art", *Journal of Prehistoric Religion* 1, 1987, 23-34). Thus, the presence of male and female participants in the tree-shaking ritual (CMS I Nos. 126. 219; Archanes ring: J. Sakellarakis, *Archaeology* 20, 1967, 280, *Fig. 13*; Acts of the 3rd Cretological Congress 1971 (1973) 303-318, pl. 95) must have some special significance.

7. The gestures of the adorants fall into two basic categories although some variations occur. The first is one arm bent, the other reaching towards the divinity or tree or upwards. The second is clenched fist on the forehead; this is the gesture typically associated with worship. It has been, in fact, assumed that the adorant protects himself/herself from the dazzling vision of the deity⁵⁵. If this were so, however, it is puzzling that the gesture in question does not characterize *all* epiphany scenes. Although I cannot offer a better explanation, it is worth noting that the gesture occurs when the divinity appears to members of the opposite sex (*Fig. 12–14*), “Mother of the Mountains” sealing⁵⁶, ring from Thebes⁵⁷.

8. The collation of the scenes with the tree as a focal point of ritual action shows that different phases of the cult are depicted. To illustrate this we can juxtapose two seals. On the one from Naxos the divinity stands in front of the palm (*Fig. 11*) whereas on the one from a private collection in Crete (*Fig. 8*) the adorant stands in front of the palm. Combined, the representations of the two seals would render a scene similar to that of the “Mother of the Mountains” where adorant and divinity are effectively juxtaposed⁵⁸.

9. The categorization of tree + adorant, tree + divinity finds its exact equivalence in Mesopotamian iconography. I cite here two examples. In one (*Fig. 21*) an adorant is making offerings in front of an altar: behind him is a palm⁵⁹. In the other (*Fig. 22*)⁶⁰ the adorant makes offerings



Fig. 21.22 Mesopotamian seals.

to a deity seated under a palm. An altar stands between the deity and adorant (compare with the Minoan equivalents *Figs. 8, 11*, where altars are present). Thus, in Mesopotamia as well the tree seems to mark the sacred spot where the deity appears.

4. Sacrifice

So far we have seen that the tree marks the place of divine epiphany. It has yet another function: to mark the place of sacrifice. Here the palm plays a predominant role. It is under palms that goats and bulls are depicted lying slaughtered on the sacrificial table⁶¹. I have dealt with this subject elsewhere and I shall not repeat myself here⁶². Suffice it to say that other trees can be associated with sacrifice as well, albeit indirectly.

⁵⁵ Persson, RGPT, 61.

⁵⁶ *Supra* n. 29.

⁵⁷ Nilsson, MMR, 179, Fig. 83.

⁵⁸ For a similar methodological analysis: J. Sakellarakis, *AEphem* 1972, 255–75 and esp. Sourvinou-Inwood (*supra* n. 8).

⁵⁹ H. Danthine, *Le palmier-dattier et les arbres sacrés* (1973) I, 99; II, No. 173.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 99; II, pl. 3, No. 8.

⁶¹ Sakellarakis (*supra* n. 27) 166ff; N. Marinatos, *Date Palm*.

⁶² N. Marinatos, *Sacrificial Ritual*.

On many glyptic scenes a live animal is depicted near a tree or a tree-shrine. For example, on a gold ring from Thebes (CMS V No. 198) a crouching bull is shown in the vicinity of a constructed shrine; on a gold ring from Mycenae, now in the National Museum in Athens (*Fig. 7*), a man is proceeding towards a constructed tree shrine (in this case the frame seems to be wooden), followed by a goat. On the Hagia Triada Sarcophagus, the sacrifice of the bull is taking place near a constructed tree-shrine. There are more examples⁶³ but these few will suffice to illustrate the point.

If trees mark the place of both epiphany and sacrifice, can we postulate a connection between the two rituals? Is it possible that sacrifice was meant to invite the divinity? This is very possible given the fact that sacrifice is something offered to the gods and this offering implies their participation. However, the activities performed by the adorants in front of trees form a ritual distinct from that of sacrifice, I believe. Although the ultimate purpose might be the summoning of the divinity, we must be careful to allow for variation of cult practices even within the same religious system.

5. *The Constructed Tree Shrine and Its Function*

So far I have referred to the “constructed tree-shrine”, which appears in several of the discussed categories, without attempting an explanation of what it really is and what purpose it serves.

Both Evans and Nilsson referred to these structures as “enclosures” and imagined them as small buildings inside which a tree grew⁶⁴. This terminology is followed by Rutkowski⁶⁵. This seems a plausible interpretation, given the fact that it is hard to imagine the alternative of a tree growing *on top* of a construction. Still, I favour this latter hypothesis and I shall subsequently try to demonstrate why.

Let us first observe that there are two types of tree-shrines. One is built in ashlar masonry as can be seen in *Figs. 1, 2, 12, 13*. To these we could add the shrine on the Hagia Triada Sarcophagus and one on a fresco from Xeste 3, Akrotiri, Thera⁶⁶. The other type appears to be made from wood; this is suggested by the vertical and horizontal lines which render this shrine iconographically (*Figs. 2 (top section), 5, 6, 7, 9, 10*). It is of course, impossible to make any decisive statement about either the exact type of construction or the reason for the variation, but it is reasonable to assume that the ashlar type is more permanent and more expensive to build, while the wooden one is less permanent and may even be transportable.

A second observation is that although trees are usually growing from these constructed shrines, *this is not always the case*. The ashlar shrine from Xeste 3, referred to above, has no tree on top. It is even possible to have the shrine and the tree as separate entities within the same rep-

⁶³ For example: CMS I Nos. 23, 45, 59, 76, 119, 242, 281, 404, 495 etc.

⁶⁴ Evans, TPC, 185. Extensive discussion in Nilsson, MMR, 265ff. and 270ff.

⁶⁵ Rutkowski, *Cult Places*, 189ff. Ch. Long (supra n. 27) 66.67, speaks of a “shrine” when referring to the structure topped by horns and a tree.

⁶⁶ For the Hagia Triada sarcophagus see Long (supra n. 27). For the fresco from Xeste 3, Akrotiri: N. Marinatos, *Art and Religion in Thera* (1984) 64, Fig. 43; 75, Fig. 53.

resentation as on a sealing from Chania (Fig. 5). On the Mochlos ring (Fig. 10), the ashlar shrine is on shore while the tree is in a wooden construction inside the boat. Note also that on the seal from Ligortino (Fig. 2) the wooden construction, from which the tree grows, is on top of the ashlar construction.

What emerges is that the wooden construction with the tree and the ashlar shrine are *two separate* entities which can exist together or apart. The tree is invariably associated with the wooden piece (Figs. 2, 9, 10) but not with the ashlar building. Note, however, that the tree can grow directly on top of the ashlar shrine (Figs. 12–14, Hagia Triada Sarcophagus). Could we then assume that the tree with or without the wooden construction is an *additive element* which is placed on top of the ashlar shrine on special occasions? This would explain why the ashlar shrine is often shown without a tree, topped only by sacred horns⁶⁷.

My hypothesis can be briefly summarized as follows. The ashlar shrine can function as a focus of cultic activities even if it is not topped by a tree. On special occasions, however, a young, small tree (its large size on certain seals can be explained as symbolic exaggeration) was brought in a wooden construction, or simply in a pot, and placed on top of the shrine⁶⁸. It is significant that the tree is inside such a wooden construction on the ring from Mochlos (Fig. 10). The same type appears also on the Ligortino seal (Fig. 2) as Ch. Sourvinou-Inwood has aptly observed⁶⁹. Further it is paralleled on the Makrygialos seal (Fig. 9). Thus, we see that the tree is *transported* in a boat together with a wooden structure.

The occasions in which the young tree was brought were most likely seasonal ones. This is supported by the fact that there is a garland decorating the shrine on the Ligortino seal and other representations (Fig. 2)⁷⁰. Garlands of flowers or fruit bespeak a season of fertility and renewal, most likely the spring. If my hypothesis about the arrival of the tree in a boat is correct, we are dealing here with the real or, more likely, the symbolic transportation of the plant from an area beyond the sea.

I would now like to comment on some other details of the constructed tree shrines which are possibly related to the ritual of epiphany and hence are relevant to our subject. Already Evans noticed that many contain a gate or portal (Figs. 2, 3, 12, 13)⁷¹. He thought that this served as the dwelling of the god or spirit as is the case in “primitive” religions. Rutkowski suggests that the gates actually lead inside the enclosure⁷², but this is hard to believe since the shrines in question are usually smaller than life-size (Figs. 1–7, 9, 10–14). I would like to suggest that these gates are

⁶⁷ Long (supra n. 27) 66. 67, observes that built shrines have either trees or horns but that the combination of the two is rare. Note however that tree and horns coexist on the Hagia Triada Sarcophagus, the Ligortino seal (Fig. 2) and the Chania sealing (Fig. 4).

⁶⁸ Ch. Sourvinou-Inwood (supra n. 8) has some similar ideas about the uprooting and transportation of a tree from the woods. In a Hittite ritual, the tree was felled as a sign of mourning and death (Haas, supra n. 53, 190). Thus the manipulation of the tree as a ritual object is attested in the religion of a neighbouring culture.

⁶⁹ Sourvinou-Inwood (supra n. 22) 150. Nilsson, MMR, 269, refers to the tree container as a ladder like construction.
⁷⁰ CMS I No. 126; CMS II 3. No. 326. Evans, TPC, 185, calls the garland of the Ligortino seal “moon” but this cannot be so. Its position and the parallel of CMS I, 126 show that it is a garland.

⁷¹ The examples have been discussed by Evans, TPC, 181 ff.

⁷² Rutkowski, Cult Places, 196, implies that the enclosure is a wall surrounding a shrine with a real door to it. Yet, the constructed shrines under discussion are smaller than life-size and could hardly have had real entrances. Thus, I prefer to see the portals as having a symbolical rather than a functional purpose.

not real doors but false doors or niches. Both on the Hagia Triada Sarcophagus and on the fresco from Xeste 3⁷³, the “gate” is decorated with spirals and, in the case of the Xeste 3 fresco, with lilies as well. Similarly, on the stone rhyton from Zakros, the “gate” is decorated with spirals⁷⁴. J. Shaw, in his reconstruction of the tripartite shrine, assumes that the latter is not a functional building but a facade⁷⁵. Thus, the impression is that the doors do not lead into the interior but are merely niches which, to judge by their special decoration, are focal points of the shrine. I wonder if they do not have the same function as the false doors in Egyptian tombs which were means of communication with the beyond; through them the soul of the dead could commute between the two worlds⁷⁶. Given the fact that the main ritual in the vicinity of the constructed tree shrine is the invocation of the deity, it is plausible that, for the Minoans, the false door or niche was the place where communication with the divinity was effected. This is a modification of Evans’ view, who believed that the gate was the actual dwelling place of spirits or gods.

Another element appearing on some of the pictures may offer some slight support to this hypothesis because it also seems to be related to epiphany. It is a curious object with horizontal projections bearing a superficial similarity to the Egyptian Djed pillar. There exist three representations where this object makes its appearance. The first is the Oxford ring (*Fig. 12*)⁷⁷, the second the one from Mochlos (*Fig. 10*)⁷⁸, the third the Archanes ring⁷⁹. Sourvinou-Inwood correctly remarks that, since the object floats in the air in both the Mochlos and Archanes rings, it is more likely a cult object and religious symbol than a functional piece such as a thymiaterion or lamp. She concludes that it is a free-standing Minoan column⁸⁰. I agree with her interpretation and would like to suggest a narrower definition for this – admittedly peculiar – column. It is to be noted that this Djed-pillar-like column appears in scenes which deal with the invocation of the deity (assuming that this is the purpose of the tree-shaking on the Archanes ring) or the appearance of the deity. However, only on the Oxford ring (*Fig. 12*) do we have the moment of the actual epiphany of the god. In the two other cases we see the arrival of the goddess, which is a scene with a symbolic character (Mochlos ring, *Fig. 10*) or a preparatory ritual (Archanes ring). It is no accident that it is precisely on the Oxford ring that we see the pillar in situ, namely inside the false door or niche. I suggest, therefore, that this Djed-like pillar is part of the cult paraphernalia which are used for the invocation of the divinity. It is for this reason that it appears as a symbol on representations related to the epiphany and stands within the niche in the scene where we have the actual descent of the god. Since the tree also appears in these representations the elements “tree”, “shrine” and “Djed-like pillar” should be considered a cultic nexus.

⁷³ Supra n. 66.

⁷⁴ N. Platon, Zakros (1971) 167.

⁷⁵ J. Shaw, *AJA* 82, 1978, 429–48. It is noteworthy that the right or false doors contain objects like baetyls or columns as Evans TPC, 112.118.181 ff., observed.

⁷⁶ For Egyptian false doors: M. Lurker, *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt* (1974) 49.50.

⁷⁷ Evans, *JHS* 21, 1901, 171 and *PM* I, 160, calls it a column. Nilsson, *MMR*, 257, accepts this designation. Persson, *RGPT*, 61, however, calls it a lamp.

⁷⁸ R.B. Seager, *Explorations on the Island of Mochlos* (1912), 91, calls the object a quadruple axe.

⁷⁹ Supra n. 54.

⁸⁰ Sourvinou-Inwood (supra n. 22) 154–155. The identification “thymiaterion” was proposed by Ch. Kardara, *AEphem*, 1966, 180.

6. *The Tree and the Arrival of the Divinity from the Sea*

Why was the tree chosen as a marker of the sanctuary and what connotations did it carry for the Minoans? In our times when urban culture has alienated us from nature, we tend to forget the attitudes of ancient peoples towards their natural environment. They had no idealized or romantic conceptions; it never occurred to the Minoans or Egyptians, for example, to paint a beautiful sunset. For them nature was alive, the source of potency and livelihood but also a source of potential threat and disaster. Trees also were alive. We often see this in Egyptian paintings where the sycamore tree is inhabited by a goddess reaching out to humans⁸¹. A distinctive feature of trees, apart from the fact that they bear edible fruit, is that they are subject to seasonal changes. Thus, they are something of a paradox, incorporating both the permanent (fixed locality) and the transitory.

If we were to use a socio-biological approach we could go even further. Primeval man was dependent on trees not only for livelihood but for shelter as well. The tree is the fixed spot from which the primate derives subsistence but to which it can also retire when a predator appears. It is possible that the importance of the tree derives from the basic needs it fulfilled once in early times: "Die Kombination von Baum und Quelle im heiligen Hain hält also die Minimalbedingungen des Überlebens in sakralisierter Form fest"⁸².

All this might ring speculative, yet we have to explain the fact that trees in sanctuaries are a feature not of Minoan cult alone but are to be found in a variety of religions throughout the world.

Let us be confined to Greek religion only for some examples. As W. Burkert has shown, a variety of Greek myths and rituals connect trees with prosperity, and what is more important, with the arrival of the god/goddess. The "eirisione", a laurel branch hung with wool and various goods and cakes, was brought to the temple of Apollo Delphinios⁸³. The same god's arrival at Delphi was intimately connected with the arrival of a laurel branch brought by boys from Thessaly⁸⁴. At Plataea, it was the bringing of a "daidalon", a plank hewn from a tree, which was cut in the woods that brought the goddess Hera back. At Samos, the same goddess was associated with lygos branches. Even in the Near East the arrival of the god is related to the tree of abundance. To mark the return of the god Telepinus, the Hittites set up a wooden pole from which the fleece of a sheep was suspended containing corn, wine and other goods⁸⁵.

The pattern that emerges is clear, as has been admirably shown by Burkert⁸⁶. The tree is associated with fertility. The bringing of the tree, or its branches, signifies the return of the deity and the arrival of prosperity. Does this scheme fit the Minoan representations?

Indeed, we have seen that the tree and the divinity not only appear together but they arrive together in a boat, as on the Mochlos ring (*Fig. 10*). Other times it is only the goddess that is

⁸¹ The tree-goddess is depicted in both paintings and reliefs from the New Kingdom. See for example, Nofret die Schöne, Roemer und Pelizaeus Museum Hildesheim (1985) 112, pl. 151.

⁸² G.J. Baudy, Exkommunikation und Reintegration. Zur Genese und Kulturfunktion frühgriechischer Einstellungen zum Tod (1980) 78. My thanks to Prof. W. Burkert for the reference.

⁸³ Burkert, S&H, 134ff.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 123ff.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 136ff.

shown in a boat as on a sealing from Hagia Triada⁸⁷, or, alternatively, only the tree is being transported as on the Makrygialos seal (*Fig. 9*). The arrival of the goddess from the sea may be the subject of a seal impression found by Evans in the "Domestic Quarters" at Knossos. It depicts a female figure with a flounced skirt and naked torso lying on a reticulated background which represents the sea⁸⁸. Evans thought that the goddess was reposing on the waves⁸⁹. What is significant here is the association of the divinity with the sea and it is plausible that this sealing also depicts her arrival through the water. The sea functions as symbolic space, an area of passage to and from an unidentifiable beyond⁹⁰.

In conclusion, the tree is sacred in Minoan religion not because it is inhabited by a vegetation spirit, nor because it is an object of worship in itself. Its function is to mark the sacredness of the spot and to be the focus of cultic activities which cluster around the worship of the gods. It is also a symbol of seasonal fertility; its presence on the constructed shrine signifies prosperity and the arrival of the divinity.

DISKUSSION

H. JUNG mißt dem Amygdaloid aus Makrygialos (Marinatos Abb. 9) größte Bedeutung für das Verständnis des Mochlos-Ringes CMS II 3 Nr. 252 (Marinatos Abb. 10) bei. Das gebaute Gebilde mit dem Baum muß man jetzt wohl auf dem Schiff sehen. Er fragt, ob diese Konstruktion nicht mit minoischen Altären zu vergleichen ist. Man könnte auch an die zweistufigen Altartypen des ersten Jahrtausends denken. So könnten auf dem Beispiel aus Makrygialos Baum und kultisches Objekt gleichwertig nebeneinander stehen.

N. MARINATOS ist nicht der Ansicht, daß der Baum innerhalb der Konstruktion wächst.

H. JUNG sieht gerade darin einen Hinweis auf die Gleichwertigkeit. Er verweist auf die problematische Deutung des Adoranten-Gestus, bei dem man nicht eindeutig zwischen einem Menschen und einer Gottheit unterscheiden kann. Er erinnert an das schwierige Problem der spendenden Götter im ersten Jahrtausend und warnt davor, einen für Menschen typischen Gestus bei Göttern auszuschließen. In der minoischen Religion können bei Adorationsszenen beide Geschlechter dem göttlichen Bereich angehören. Denkbar ist, daß sich Götter auf geheiligtem Boden treffen, der durch den Baum gekennzeichnet ist.

N. MARINATOS stimmt zu.

I. PINI kommt nochmals auf die Gesten zurück. Er revidiert seine Ansicht, daß bei Adoration auf jeden Fall die Hand an die Stirn gehalten werden muß. Bei einigen Siegelbeispielen ist die Hand etwas weiter entfernt. Das Feld wird freilich sehr breit, wenn man auch die Hand mit einbezieht, die nur ausgestreckt ist. Dazu kommt, daß in einigen der von N. Marinatos angeführten Fällen die Gestalt auch den Kopf abwendet. Hier geht seiner Meinung nach die Interpretation zu weit und ist nicht mehr präzise.

⁸⁷ Levi (*supra* n. 10) 126, Fig. 134.

⁸⁸ Evans, PM IV, 955–56, Fig. 925.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 956.

⁹⁰ That the sea functions as a symbolic area of passage in Greek myth has been argued recently by Ch. Sourvinou-Inwood in a lecture held in Athens Oct. 1985.

N. MARINATOS schränkt ein, daß in solchen Fällen keine Adoration, sondern eine nicht genauer zu bestimmende Art von Interaktion vorliegt. Ebenso wenig kennen wir die Ursache für das Abwenden des Kopfes, mit dem jedoch in der minoischen Kunst oft Überraschung oder Furcht ausgedrückt wird.

CH. SOURVINOU-INWOOD ist zu dem Schluß gekommen, daß der Baum transportiert wird, und es sich um ein saisonales Fest handelt. Sie verweist nochmals auf die in ihrem Referat vorgetragene Unterscheidung zwischen sogenannten Periboloi und anderen Konstruktionen. Für ihre Periboloi kann sie nur fünf Beispiele nennen, während sie in den anderen Fällen Konstruktionen sieht, in denen sich ein Baum befindet.

J. BETTS stellt für den Fall des Baumtransports die Frage, wo das Vorderteil des Bootes ist.

N. MARINATOS sieht das Boot in Richtung des Heiligtums fahren; denn gewöhnlich befindet sich der Tierkopf am Heck eines Schiffes, wie die theräischen Beispiele und die Darstellung auf dem Siegel aus Anemospilia (J. und E. Sakellarakis, *Ergon* 1979, 31 Abb. 82) zeigen. Auch der Bug ist typisch. Weil der Blick der Gottheit auf das Heiligtum gerichtet ist, nimmt sie dort den Zielpunkt an.

J. BETTS fragt nach der Auswirkung solcher Erkenntnisse auf die Beurteilung des Minos-Rings.

N. MARINATOS glaubt nicht an die Echtheit.