

SPACE IN LATE MINOAN RELIGIOUS SCENES IN GLYPTIC – SOME REMARKS

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This paper presents a very small segment of a long investigation of a series of religious scenes, in which I consider the *Problematik* of reading and making sense of Minoan religious representations and of studying Minoan religion¹, and try to construct a methodology capable of helping us reconstruct – in so far as this is feasible – the meanings with which these scenes were invested in the eyes of Minoan artists and their contemporaries. Here I consider a few aspects of the spatial organization of Late Minoan religious scenes in glyptic, in the framework of a very brief, sketchy outline of the rudiments of my epistemological framework and methodology. I try to show that it is possible to devise a systematic and rigorous methodology which will allow us to see Minoan images at least partly through Minoan eyes, and which gives a more secure basis from which to reconstruct the meanings of Minoan religious scenes than do “innocent”, direct empiricist readings.

Investigations in different fields, from psychology of perception to art history, have shown that we do not make sense of images in some objective, timeless, unchanging manner, but through perceptual filters constituted by culturally determined presuppositions, assumptions and expectations. The process of sensory perception itself is not free from culture-bias. For sensory perception is achieved through the imposition of organizing patterns which allow us to make sense of the vast numbers of stimuli, patterns shaped by implicit culturally determined expectations, which allow us to build and test hypotheses and thus perceive. These operations include filling in missing units so as to recognize the expected ‘shape’ of things and ignoring others which are there but do not fit the perceiver’s implicit assumptions and expectations². Thus, for example, recognition of resemblance between an iconic sign representing a certain object and the object which it represents is culture-dependent, it is frequently based on our knowledge of certain cultural conventions of interpretation³.

* For the photograph of A.M. 1938.1127 (Fig. 2) I am indebted to Mr. M. Vickers. The remaining photographs and drawings are from the archives of CMS.

¹ Reading dumb images: a methodology for Minoan religion and iconography, in preparation (now, after many years, approaching completion).

² R.L. Gregory, *Eye and Brain* (1966) especially 204–28. D.O. Hebb, *The Organization of Behaviour: a Neuropsychological Theory* (1949); idem, *A Textbook of Psychology* (1958); M. Douglas, *Implicit meanings* (1975) 51. Gombrich has written extensively on the subject; cf. especially: E.H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*.⁵ (1977) *passim*, and cf. esp. 76–7, 170–203, 231. On perceptual controls in general cf. e.g. M. Douglas in: M. Douglas ed., *Essays in the Sociology of Perception* (1982) 1–8.

³ Cf. J. Lyons, *Semantics* (1977) 102–5; C.S. Peirce, *Collected Papers*, ed. by C. Hartshorne and P. Weiss (1931, 1974) vol. II paras 276–82; J. Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs*. (1981) 24; cf. also A. Kaplan in: M. Weitz ed., *Problems in Aesthetics*. An introductory Book of Readings (1970) 275–6. U. Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (1976) 204–5; Gombrich, *AaI* (cf. n. 2) 73–8, 230–1.

It is in the realm of art that we can see most clearly how perception is conditioned by cultural habits, especially by established iconic codes⁴. Gombrich has discussed how cultural tradition affects significantly both perception and artistic expression. With regard to the former he has shown that cultural traditions create certain expectations, a “mental set” which affects significantly our perception and “deciphering” of works of art⁵. With regard to expression, he has shown⁶ that an artist who aims at recording faithfully an individual form does not, in fact, begin with a visual impression of that form, but with an idea, a type, a kind of matrix on which he enters the individual visual information pertaining to his particular subject. That is, he first classifies the subject, places it within the network of schematic forms he carries in his mind, and then adapts this generic schema to fit approximately the individual forms. The expectations created by a particular pictorial tradition form “a selective screen”, so that when an artist belonging to that tradition looks, for example, at a landscape, his attention is focussed on those elements which match the schemata of his tradition; thus, it is these (culturally determined) schemata that guide and organize his (selective) perception and artistic expression⁷. Consequently, viewers of images not familiar with the schemata of the culture which produced them cannot make sense of those images in the same way as the artist and his contemporaries⁸.

It follows from this that, if we want to reconstruct the ancient meanings of ancient images, we must not read them “innocently”, look at them and decide what they represent. For since the reader of images always brings into play his own cultural assumptions, any such “direct” reading entails that the modern reader is implicitly and by default deploying his own assumptions and expectations to make sense of images to which those assumptions are alien – thus inevitably distorting the original meanings. Since sense-perception itself is culturally determined, the apparent objectivity of formal analyses, apparently based on obvious formal characteristics and involving basically descriptive operations which appear to be self-evidently correct, is to some extent illusory, and such analyses are also vulnerable to cultural determination⁹. The process of comparison is vulnerable to the (normally implicit and unquestioned) intrusion of our own culture-determined notions of, for example, whether or not an apparently minor divergence constitutes a “significant” difference. As we saw, even the recognition of resemblance between an iconic sign and the represented object is culture-dependent. Since perceptual selections favour and stress the familiar as determined by the perceiver’s cultural tradition¹⁰, the danger of underestimating the importance of apparently small divergences is great. For small divergences are more immediately obvious to the members of the “cultural community” in which the images were produced¹¹. Small divergences are the means by which iconographical schemata are differentiated – and the viewers who shared the same assumptions as the artists were conditioned

⁴ Eco (cf. n. 3) 204–5.

⁵ Gombrich, *AaI* (cf. n. 2) esp. 53–78.

⁶ Gombrich, *AaI* (cf. n. 2) esp. 62–76; idem, *Meditations on a Hobby Horse* (1971)² 33–4.

⁷ Cf. Gombrich, *AaI* (cf. n. 2) 73–5.

⁸ On schemata: cf. Gombrich, *AaI* (cf. n. 2) 76–7; 126; 231. The schemata are, of course, themselves determined by cultural traditions and codes, assumptions and expectations.

⁹ I have discussed this danger and the strategies which I believe are appropriate for countering it in “Menace and pursuit: differentiation and the creation of meaning” in: C. Bérard ed., *Image et société en Grèce antique; l’iconographie comme méthode d’analyse*, forthcoming. (Hereafter: *Menace*.)

¹⁰ See above and nn. 2–7. Cf. also Gombrich, *The Image and the Eye* (1982) 36–7; M. Douglas, (op. cit. n. 2) 51–2.

¹¹ Cf. Gombrich, *AaI* (cf. n. 2) 53.

to read images in this way. Thus apparently small divergences which we may disregard can sometimes signal important differences. Making sense of a picture is a complex process involving continuous toing and froing between the picture and the reader's knowledge and assumptions which were called up by it and through which they made sense of it¹². An operation such as, for example, the individuation of topic¹³, generates certain expectations and directs the reading in certain ways, highlights certain elements, reduces the polysemy in certain directions. During this process, what seems to us an insignificant divergence can have a crucial role and lead to the production of very different meanings from those produced by other, in our eyes very similar, scenes. Consequently, scenes which appear to us to belong to the same category, may in fact have been importantly different in Minoan eyes¹⁴.

In order not to misread the Minoan images through the implicit application of our own culturally determined assumptions we must not begin by trying to make sense of them, but by asking ourselves what strategies we should deploy in order to reconstruct (approximately) the meanings which the pictures had in Minoan eyes. In order to achieve this, we should try to reconstruct deliberately, and step by step, as much as possible of the original process of signification through which the Minoan artists inscribed their scenes, and their contemporaries made sense of them. The first step in this enterprise is to define how signification works, how readers make sense of texts and viewers of images. All signifying elements (signs) are polysemic, and no sign has a fixed meaning¹⁵. The value of each sign in any given text or image is determined by a complex and dynamic movement of interaction between the following. 1. The signifying "event", the individual element under consideration (e.g. a particular representation of a tree) with its semantic field of properties, functions, associations, connotations¹⁶. 2. The syntactical relationships of this 'event' with the other signifying elements in the representation and their semantic fields in the context of the overall signifier. (The value of these other elements is also determined by the same movement of interaction involving 1., 2. and 3.) 3. The element's relationships with the other (semantically related) elements which might have been selected in its place but were not: its value is also determined by the "traces"¹⁷ of those other elements not selected. For example, the value of a spear held in someone's left hand is also determined by the fact that it is not a sword, or a spear being brandished in the right¹⁸. It is impossible for us to reproduce this process fully; we can only attempt to reconstruct it partly. A first step in this attempt is to reconstruct – as far as possible – the Minoan perceptual filters deployed in this operation by reconstructing

¹² Cf. U. Eco, *The Role of the Reader*. (1979) 3–43 on reading texts.

¹³ On this operation in the reading of texts cf. Eco, *RoR* (cf. n. 12) 24–7.

¹⁴ Thus any conclusion based on the presupposition that two scenes are the same except for the small divergence are likely to be fallacious. (Cf. *Menace passim*; and see n. 44 below.)

¹⁵ On signs and signification: cf. e.g. J. Derrida, *Positions* (1972) 29–46, 105–130; idem, *Of Grammatology* (1974, 1976) *passim*, esp. 11–5; 44–73; idem, *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs* (1973) 129–60; idem, *L'Écriture et la différence* (1967) esp. 311–4; idem, *Margins of Philosophy* (1982). Cf. also Culler, *PS* (cf. n. 3) 41–2.

¹⁶ On the notion of event cf. e.g. J. Sturrock in: Sturrock ed., *Structuralism and Since* (1979) 8; Culler in: Sturrock ed. 163–5. Signs are made up of other signs which are "events", down to the minimal iconic units (cf. on these C. Bérard, *Iconographie – Iconologie – Iconologique, Etudes de Lettres* 4, 1983, 7).

¹⁷ On the concept of "trace" cf. Derrida, *Positions* (cf. n. 15) 37–9; idem, *Gr.* (cf. n. 15) 46–73; idem, *Sp. and Ph.* (cf. n. 15) 141–3. 154–8; cf. also idem, *Écrit.* (cf. n. 15) 299–300, 339. Cf. J. Culler, *On Deconstruction* (1983) 94–6.

¹⁸ Cf. *Menace* (cf. n. 9) 3. II. a. II.

the cultural assumptions (shared by the artists and their contemporaries) which shaped those filters, the culturally determined knowledge, presuppositions, and expectations that came into play in the process by which the Minoans made sense of these images. The assumptions and expectations involved in such a process are of two basic types: first, assumptions pertaining to the understanding of the iconographical idiom of the genre in which the images under discussion belong, in our case, the conventions and modalities of the signifying system of Minoan glyptic iconography¹⁹. And second, semantic assumptions, the knowledge, ideas presuppositions and beliefs (shared by the artists and their contemporaries) that pertain to the semantic fields of the representation and come into play in the interactive process by which the image's contemporary viewers made sense of it²⁰. Iconographical and semantic assumptions come into play together, as the viewer makes sense of a text or image. But, as I argued elsewhere²¹, when one is attempting to read the images of a different society, one should ideally study these assumptions separately; for methodological rigour can best be achieved by articulating separately the different parts of what are complex intertwined processes²² and attempting to build towards their deliberate, step by step reconstruction. We have little access to the semantic universe of the Minoans. Nevertheless, the distinction between the two sets of assumptions and the role of each must be made, and the place of the semantic assumptions in the process of making sense of images marked, lest it is forgotten that they have an important role in the process of signification which must not be allowed to be implicitly filled by what appears to be "common sense" and is in fact our own culturally determined ideas and assumptions. We must remember that what we see is not all that there was in Minoan eyes, since the semantic assumptions shared by the artist and his contemporaries helped determine what was perceived and understood.

All representations, we saw, are conventional, but some idioms, including that of Minoan glyptic, are much more conventional than others, further removed from the photographically

¹⁹ "Iconographical assumptions" is a large comprehensive category which for our present purposes there is no point in breaking down into smaller subcategories (other than in the service of false rigour); it is in the analyses that distinctions must be made, and these distinctions must be more subtle than those inherited from traditional scholarship – of one sort or another – and simply adapted to new methodologies, or those based on the somewhat outdated binarism of structuralist analyses. These iconographical assumptions include iconographical knowledge comparable to knowledge of the lexicon, grammar and syntax through which a text is inscribed. For example, at the simplest level, that profile head, frontal torso and profile legs is the canonical way of representing the human figure in black-figure vase-painting. At a more complex level, knowledge of the basic iconographical schemes such as "attack", that may be part of the conventional language of a particular idiom, or the rules by which certain iconographical elements are combined. (For some of the latter and the iconographical analyses through which they can be recovered in the case of Greek ceramic iconography: cf. e.g.: C. Bérard in: *Mélanges d'histoire ancienne et d'archéologie, offerts à Paul Collart* (1976) 61–73; idem, *EL* (cf. n. 16) 2–37; J.-L. Durand – F. Lissarague, *Un lieu d'image? L'espace du loutéon*, *Hephaistos* 2, 1980, 89–106; F. Lissarague – A. Schnapp, *Imagerie des Grecs ou Grèce des imagiers? Le temps de la réflexion* 2, 1981, 275–97.) "Traditional" exhaustive formal analyses also have an important role to play in the recovery of a particular culture's iconographical assumptions. Cf. e.g. the study of iconographical themes (e.g. in Minoan glyptic: I. Pini, *Das Motiv des Löwenüberfalls in der spätminoischen und mykenischen Glyptik*, in: P. Darceque – J.-C. Poursat eds., *L'iconographie minoenne* [1985] 153–66); other analyses of sets of scenes can give valuable guidance concerning the circumstances of production and thus the parameters determining the artists' creation (cf. e.g. I. Pini, *Neue Beobachtungen zu den tönernen Siegelabdrücken von Zakros*, *AA* 1983, 559–72.)

²⁰ Cf. e.g. Eco, *RoR* (cf. n. 12) 23; 24 on how the reader implements semantic disclosures in the reading of texts, bringing into play the semantic store, the semantic encyclopedia in which a society's semantic universe is socially stored.

²¹ *Menace* (cf. n. 9) 2; 3.III.

²² Compare Eco's model of reading texts *RoR* (cf. n. 12) esp. 14–6.

accurate depiction of the represented object. Obviously, the more conventional the idiom of the representations, the more important it is to reconstruct the relevant iconographical assumptions. For the more conventional the idiom, the more strongly it depends on cultural assumptions which we do not share, the further away it is from the implicitly assumed naturalism through which we unconsciously read when we try to make sense of images “directly”, without a systematically constructed “reading grid”. Thus it is necessary to block the intrusion of our own assumptions, and recover the relevant Minoan assumptions, in order to reconstruct as much as possible of the perceptual filters shared by the Minoan artists and their contemporaries and see Minoan images (partly) through Minoan eyes. Before sketching out some aspects of my proposed methodology, I must say something about the overall aims and strategies of the wider investigation of which this short essay is part, and which helped determine its aims and directions. That investigation is divided into two parts. The first, which I call “heuristic”, involves the attempt to read a series of related religious scenes and reconstruct the cultic activities reflected in them. For this it is necessary to determine the relationship between image and reality in those scenes; determine whether or not this relationship is of a kind that may allow us to recover the information necessary for reconstructing, in its general lines, the ritual reflected in the scenes. For this information is mediated through the artistic creation, which makes its own selections from reality, dependent on its own aims and on the genre’s semiotic system and on the society’s semantic assumptions, especially its “imaginaire social”²³. The re-representation of the ritual acts may be only one of the ‘functions’ organizing the images; it must not be assumed to have been their primary aim and thus the main guiding principle in their composition. For example, one aim and guiding principle may have been the depiction of a nexus of religious elements which expressed some fundamental aspects of Minoan religion, and/or were believed to have the power to protect, and bring the blessings of the gods to, the wearer of an object depicting them. Nevertheless, it is legitimate to use these images in order to reconstruct the ritual. For, as Gombrich said, “the information extracted from an image can be quite independent of the intention of its maker”²⁴. But we must not operate unconsciously with, and assess the iconographical data on the basis of, the implicit assumption that these pictures offer an “illustrated outline of the ritual”. The attempt to recover the religious ideas and beliefs associated with, and involved in, the ritual, pertains to the second, “interpretative”, stage of my overall investigation. It is important to keep the two stages separate; otherwise fallacy threatens. For example, speculations pertaining to the more problematic interpretative stage can contaminate the whole investigation. In the procedure proposed here, there is a systematic progress: I begin with the (relatively) securely grounded operations of the heuristic stage, aiming at reconstructing the definite acts which happened in a particular, determinate way, at recovering a determinate, univocal truth about the ways in which certain things happened; and only after that do I attempt to recover the ritual’s meanings and to interpret and reconstruct parts of the Minoan religious system – operations which are, by necessity, much more speculative, and which aim at recovering meanings values and beliefs which are, and always were, multivocal, ambiguous and ambivalent.

²³ Cf. P. Schmitt-Pantel – F. Thelamon in: F. Lissarague – F. Thelamon eds., *Image et céramique grecque. Actes du Colloque de Rouen* (1983) 19; J.-P. Vernant in: *La Cité des Images. Religion et société en Grèce antique* (1984) 5; Lissarague-Schnapp (cf. n. 19) 280–2.

²⁴ Gombrich, *Image* (cf. n. 10) 144.

To return to the heuristic stage: how can we make sense of a Minoan glyptic scene in a way that is not determined by our own assumptions about representation, and about what constitutes a plausible interpretation of given iconographical elements? In my view, the fundamental strategy is to ask questions which are not culturally determined, which do not depend on those assumptions of ours – which may be alien to the Minoan ways of organizing the world in general and iconic space in particular, and thus lead us to interpret the scenes in ways alien to those of the Minoan artists and their contemporaries. But how can we interrogate the representations through questions which are not culturally determined? I suggest that the appropriate strategy is to consider whether there are any universal or constant properties of the iconic space, universal or constant rules or conventions, and where appropriate, also any universal or constant properties of the ritual space; and if there are, try to ascertain whether they can also be shown to obtain in, and to organize, Minoan glyptic religious representations.

But first I must draw a distinction between two types of religious scenes; for the representation of space involves radically different considerations in the two cases. The two categories are: first, religious representations which have a reference in the real or imagined world: ritual representations with a reference in the real world, the sacred structures and spaces in which the ritual performances took place; or mythological scenes, if any, whose reference space was the divine world as imagined in the religious beliefs of the society under consideration. We cannot be certain that the latter subcategory was represented in Minoan art, and in any case it does not concern us here. The second main category of religious representations is “*emblematic*” scenes; that is, representations expressing, articulating and condensing, certain perceptions and beliefs into one “*constructed*” scene in which the iconic space of the image has no reference space outside itself. An example of a scene of this type is the Byzantine mosaic from the church of Saint Sophia in Constantinople which depicts the Virgin, to whom the Emperor Constantine is offering a model of Constantinople and Justinian a model of Saint Sophia²⁵.

Let us now return to the interrogation of Minoan scenes through questions based on the existence of universal or constant properties of the iconic and ritual space. A constant of general importance is that the properties of the iconic space are based on “*the vital values of space as experienced in the real world*”²⁶. Another constant is that when the content of a picture is articulated hierarchically, the central position is the privileged position and denotes superiority, prominence²⁷. The Saint Sophia mosaic mentioned above, for example, offers a characteristic illustration of this property. That this constant²⁸ does obtain in Minoan religious iconography can be easily ascertained. It is, for example, seen in the coincidence between the central position and

²⁵ D. Talbot Rice, *Art of the Byzantine Era* (1963) 101 fig. 88.

²⁶ M. Schapiro, *On Some Problems in the Semiotics of Visual Art: Field and Vehicle in Image-Signs*, *Semiotica* 1, 1969, 236.

²⁷ On this and the other properties of the picture-field as sign-space cf. Schapiro (cf. n. 26) 229–36.

²⁸ Which may be correlative with the fact that in “*primitive*” cross-cultural conceptualizations the centre is associated with hierarchically superior categories of people, men, adults and hosts, while the periphery is associated with women, young people and guests (Cf. C.R. Hallpike, *The Foundations of Primitive Thought* [1979] 284–5).

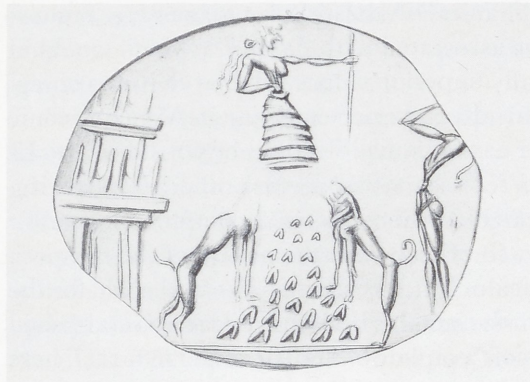


Fig. 1 The 'Mother of the Mountains', Heraklion Mus. No. 141.



Fig. 2 Oxford, Ashmolean Mus. No. 1938. 1127.

the larger size in several scenes²⁹ and in the Potnia Theron schemata³⁰. Let us now see how this type of articulation of the iconic space can help us understand some problematic representations.

Let us consider the "Mother of the Mountains" scene (Fig. 1)³¹. If the representation is hierarchically articulated, it follows that the female figure at the centre is represented in the superior position, as the dominant element of the scene. That this is indeed the case is shown by the fact that the same superior position is attributed to the female figure through other iconographical elements and through another aspect of the scene's spatial articulation. First, the male is making towards her a gesture of worship³². Second she is flanked by two beasts, an iconographical schema denoting an hierarchically superior position, the divine roles Master and Mistress of Animals³³. Third, she is standing on much higher ground than everyone and everything else. In hierarchically organized compositions "above" should be hierarchically superior to "below" unless other signs or arrangements indicate otherwise. For "high" is superior to "low" in cross-cultural "primitive" conceptualizations³⁴ – as well as in our own culture and other cultures

²⁹ Cf. e.g. the H. Triada sealing HM 505 D. Levi, *ASAtene* 8–9 (1925–6) 141 No. 140 fig. 156 and pl. XIV; C.R. Long, *The Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus* (1974) pl. 4 fig. 9; B. Rutkowski, *Frühgriechische Kultdarstellungen*, 8. Beiheft AM (1981) fig. 2.11; M.P. Nilsson, *The Minoan Mycenaean Religion and its Survival in Greek Religion* (1950)² (hereafter MMR2) 268 fig. 134.

³⁰ Cf. several examples in R. Hägg – Y. Lindau, *The Minoan "snake-frame" reconsidered*, *OpAth* 16, 1984, 69 fig. 1. On this type of representation see MMR2 357–63; Hägg – Lindau *op. cit.* 71–2.

³¹ Sealings HMs 141 I–II; 161 I–III; 168: *PoM* IV. 608 fig. 597 Ae; MMR2 353 fig. 162; M.A.V. Gill, *The Knossos Sealings: Provenance and Identification*, *BSA* 60, 1965, 71 and pl. 11; S. Hood, *The Minoans* (1971) 135 fig. 118; E.T. Vermeule, *Götterkult. Archaeologia Homerica* III.V, 13 fig. 2a; Long (cf. n. 29) 56 and 59 n. 26; Rutkowski, *FK* (cf. n. 29) fig. 1.1.

³² We know it is a gesture of worship because it is also performed by votaries in the series of votaries' figurines (Cf. e.g. P. Demargne, *Aegean Art* [1964] fig. 222). I discuss gestures and the recovery of their meanings in detail elsewhere (cf. n. 1). On Minoan gestures of adoration cf. E. Brandt, *Gruss und Gebet* (1965) 1–20 (cf. also S. Alexiou, *Review of Brandt, Gruss etc.*, *Gnomon* 39, 1967, 611–2).

³³ On the Bronze Age Master and Mistress of Animals: E. Spartz, *Das Wappenbild des Herrn und der Herrin der Tiere in der minoisch-mykenischen und frühgriechischen Kunst* (Diss. Munich 1962); cf. also *supra* n. 30.

³⁴ Hallpike (cf. n. 28) 284–5.

whose iconic code is known to us³⁵. The divine “epiphanies” in the air (cf. e.g. here *Fig. 2*) show either that in Minoan cosmology the divine world is associated with “above”, which would in itself invest the category “above” with hierarchically superior values, or that deities are represented “above” because “above” is the hierarchically superior category in Minoan iconic space and Minoan symbolic classification. In either case, “above” should be considered to be hierarchically superior in hierarchically articulated representations unless other elements signal otherwise. (As we saw, meaning is created through relationships in a complex interactive process.) The goddess’ higher position in our scene, combined with the nature of the composition dictated her smaller than the male’s size and scale. But this smaller size and scale for the most important figure did not create ambiguity: for the smaller divine size was an established convention in Minoan glyptic iconography in scenes of “epiphany” (cf. e.g. AM 1938. 1127, here *Fig. 2*). Thus, the female figure’s prominence is articulated in several ways at the same time; this suggests that the expression of that prominence organized the composition of the scene in fundamental ways. This is further reinforced through the consideration of the elements which surround the female figure. In the original of the sealing we have, from left to right, the worshipping male figure, then, on either side of her (and below), the two lions, and on the right the shrine. Thus, in this representation, the elements articulating the female figure’s prominence, and in respect to which she is hierarchically superior, belong to the animal world (lions), the human world (shrine), the world of rude, physical nature (mountain) and to whatever world the male figure belongs to. This, then, is an emblematic image, depicting the place of the female figure in the world system of the Minoans, and thus defining her as divine and supreme. But we can go further and attempt to determine the identity of the male figure: there are very good grounds for identifying him as a god. For in this cosmic articulation of the goddess’ power, the human world is represented by the shrine – and none of the other spheres are represented by two different elements. The slot missing, to which therefore the male figure may reasonably be fitted, is that of the divine world. We know that, whatever the exact constitution of the Minoan pantheon, there was at least one other divine figure apart from the goddess, a young male god³⁶, and we should expect the cosmic articulation of the deity’s position and power to have included also her relationship to the rest of that divine world. The hypothesis formulated here fits this state of affairs precisely. The worship gesture made by the god expresses the hierarchical relationship between the two deities. There is nothing problematic about an emblematic representation of a deity paying homage to another deity, it is not a cultural construct created by modern scholarship; there are unambiguous examples of such representations from cultures about which we are better in-

³⁵ Cf. e.g. (an hierarchically organized Byzantine representation) the ivory representation of Christ crowning Romanos and Eudoxia (Rice [cf. n. 25] 81 fig. 68) in which Christ is in the central position and a higher level. Or the emblematic composition on the Roman engraved gem known as the “Cameo of France” (Cf. R. Bianchi Bandinelli, Rome. The Centre of Power (1970) 194–6 cf. 196 fig. 210; D. Strong, Roman Art (1976) 48) in which (whatever the identities of the persons depicted), the lowest level represents barbarian prisoners, the middle a scene involving the Imperial Court, and the upper various deities.

³⁶ Represented in epiphany in Oxford A.M. 1938. 1127 (here fig. F) and Oxford A.M. 1919.56 (*Kadmos* 10, 1971, 64 pl. I.2). I discuss this god elsewhere (cf. n. 1).

formed, such as that of classical Greece³⁷. We shall also find another, independent, argument in favour of interpreting this male as a god, after we have considered certain other properties of the iconic space, to which we now turn.

Another constant property of the iconic space is the differential value of right and left³⁸, reinforced by the fact, especially pertinent to religious iconography, that right and left are distinguished sharply in religion and ritual³⁹. We will return to this. I will now consider whether or not it can be shown empirically that the differential value of right and left obtain also in Minoan iconography. Let us consider one particular aspect of the differential value of right and left in the iconic space. As Schapiro noted⁴⁰, “The significance of the deity’s or ruler’s right side in pictures and ceremony as the commonly, though not universally, more favoured side, determines ... a representation in which, from the observer’s viewpoint, the left part of the picture surface is the carrier of the preferred values.” Let us test whether or not this common but not universal tendency obtains in Minoan iconography, by considering an appropriate class of Minoan and Mycenaean religious representations, the scenes which I call the “worship scenes”. “Worship scenes” are emblematic scenes (of which one well-known example is the Tiryns ring with the Genii, CMS I No. 179) in which human or non-human worshippers are making gestures of adoration and/or bringing offerings to a deity, or towards a sacred structure or object, and which do not represent a ritual act but are an emblematic articulation and condensation of the relationship between the deity and her human or demonic worshippers, analogous to the Greek votive reliefs. The Greek votive reliefs are emblematic representations of an act of worship with the divinity depicted as “ideally present”, to denote the relationship between her and the devotees and express the latter’s piety⁴¹. The Minoan worship scenes are timeless generic representations, like elaborate, glyptic versions of the Minoan votaries’ figurines; – versions combining into one representation, and showing in direct interaction with each other, elements belonging to two different worlds, “this world” of humanity, and “the other world” in which divinities existed. They are thus different from representations of offerings in the course of a ceremony in which the role of the goddess may have been played by the priestess⁴², where the spatial arrangements are dictated not, as in emblematic pictures, by the properties of the sign-field, but by the spatial arrangements in the course of the ritual. It is beyond my scope here to discuss the question of how we can distinguish worship scenes from cultic ones with a similar iconographical schema. I will only give an example of the type of criteria which I consider appropriate, by saying that one necessary but not sufficient condition for attributing a scene to the “worship” category is the absence of any traits, such as, for example, the so-called “Hornfrisur”⁴³, which would identify the worshipper as priestly personnel performing a cultic act and thus the scene as cultic – rather than a generic

³⁷ See, for example the representation of Dionysos paying homage to Persephone on a Greek 5th century plaque (a Locrian pinax): P. Orsi, *Locri Epizefiri*, BdA 3, 1909, 9 fig. 7.

³⁸ Schapiro (cf. n. 26) 232–4.

³⁹ Cf. R. Needham ed., *Right and Left: Essays on Dual Symbolic Classification* (1973) *passim*.

⁴⁰ Schapiro (cf. n. 26) 233.

⁴¹ On Greek votive reliefs: cf. e.g., most recently, G. Neumann, *Probleme des griechischen Weihreliefs*, *Tübinger Studien III* (1979).

⁴² Cf. Hägg–Lindau (cf. n. 30) 74 and n. 49 with bibliography; R. Hägg, *Epiphany in Minoan Ritual*, *BICS 30* (1983) 184–5.

⁴³ Such as we see for ex. in the seal Athens N.M. 8323 (CMS I No. 279).

and emblematic condensed representation of worship⁴⁴. What is of interest to us here is that in all the Minoan and Mycenaean representations which, in my view, can be recognized as “worship scenes”, in the original the deity or sacred structure is always on the left side of the picture (from the observer’s viewpoint) and the worshippers approach from right to left. This consistency indicates that this spatial organization is determined by compelling reasons. The iconographical constant quoted above provides those reasons. Thus we see that an empirically observed phenomenon coincides precisely with the arrangement which the semiotic constant leads us to expect – constant which can thus provide the motivation for that empirically observed phenomenon. One further conclusion which can be drawn from this state of affairs is that in Minoan Crete, as is commonly, but not universally, the case, it is the right that is the deity’s preferred side.

Let us now return to the “Mother of the Mountains” representation (*Fig. 1*). On the original of these sealings, the male figure would be to the left of the goddess. We saw that in “worship” schemata the left side of the field carries the preferred values, and the right carries the subordinate to the deity beings, including humans offering homage. In this scene, the right of the field is indeed occupied by the human sphere, here represented by the shrine, with the deity to its left. For – and this, we saw, is a universal semiotic principle – value is ascribed in context, through relationships of similarity and differentiation: the shrine, a node where the human and divine world intersect, when juxtaposed to a human worshipper making gestures of adoration stands for the divine world worshipped there; when juxtaposed to deities – especially when, as here, in a cosmic context – it stands for the human world who worships the deities in the shrine. If the

⁴⁴ It may be asked, with reference to this distinction I am proposing, how can I be certain that I am not imposing here our own culturally determined categories? Since all reading and interpretation is a cultural construct (cf. J.A. Boon, *Other tribes, other scribes* [1982] 27–46) certainty is impossible. But not all cultural constructs have the same value (cf. J. Derrida, *Écrit.* [cf. n. 15] 414), and a rigorous methodology can allow us to approximate considerably the ancient realities. In my view, there are scenes which on any reading represent ritual activities and others which on any reading appear emblematic. This, if correct, would suggest that these two categories were indeed represented in Minoan religious iconography. Space prevents me from discussing this in detail. But the following points are of more general import. First, these two categories of religious scenes are not themselves a modern construct, for they are widespread in the religious iconography of other societies more accessible to us than Minoan Crete. Second, the category “emblematic representation of worship” is certainly represented in Minoan religious art, in the figurines of votaries depicted as making various gestures of adoration. Third, I am not using these categories in a way that would distort the evidence by forcing it into self-validating preconceived moulds if after all these categories do not correspond to the Minoan realities. And fourth, when we study Minoan images it is no more rigorous to omit to make distinctions when they should be made (i.e. when the categories involved were distinguished by the Minoans) because they cannot be proved beyond the shadow of doubt to be correct, than to make distinctions between categories which the Minoans did not consider distinct. Refraining from doing things with the evidence may appear more rigorous to us, because this type of so-called healthy scepticism is part of our cultural conditioning. But in fact, as I try to show elsewhere (cf. n. 1) this is a delusion of reception, not an epistemologically sound argument. A symbiotic mistake is to think that one can operate safely in, and apply this “healthy scepticism” by never leaving, the purely descriptive and formal level. As I mentioned earlier, formal analyses are also vulnerable to cultural determination. Let me take a hypothetical example. If one refrains from making a distinction between a series of combat scenes because one thinks one is on safer ground by not speculating too much (by not committing, thus erring by omitting), and the divergences appear insignificant (cf. above on the potential significance of small divergences), while in fact in Minoan eyes the divergences meant that some among the scenes in question represented ritual combat while the others depicted non-ritual combat, one would be distorting the evidence if one took the two groups together, as though they were the same, and drew conclusions on the descriptive level (about, for example, how the weapon was used or held) on the basis of the assumption that they were part of the same corpus. For ritual combat is not necessarily the same as non-ritual combat, and it may involve different weapons, or different use of the same weapons.

male figure is a god, then the organization of the field is exactly the same as in the worship scenes. For in that case the divine beings occupy the left of the field and the human sphere the right, as in the worship schemata. This, given the consistency of this arrangement, is a further, independent, strong argument in favour of the hypothesis that the male is a god. Thus, apart from the arguments in favour of this identification set out above, the male figure fits the slot “god” – rather than “human worshipper” – in two further different and important ways, deriving from the above consideration of the differential value of right and left in the iconic field. First, as we just saw, if he is a god the left side of the iconic field would be occupied by the divine beings (god and goddess taken together) and the right by the human sphere – in the way in which, we saw, was the norm in emblematic religious scenes. Second, if the male were human, this would be the only example known to me in which a human worshipper in an emblematic scene is represented on the deity’s left. But if we take him to be a god his position on the deity’s left makes perfect sense in terms of the semiotic rules set out here. For in that case different, more complex, relationships would obtain. Since he would also be divine, his right is a deity’s preferred position. Thus, one possible iconographical articulation of the two divine figures is the one shown in this scene: the goddess who is hierarchically superior is to the god’s right, his preferred side, while he is on her left, not her preferred side. This arrangement, which represented the goddess as hierarchically superior, is in harmony with the overall nature of the scene, the fact that, as we saw, the articulation of the goddess’ hierarchical superiority has determined the spatial organization of this scene in fundamental ways.

To put the above differently, and try to reconstruct the process by which Minoan viewers made sense of this representation: I suggest that, given what has been said above, the fact that the male figure was in the left part of the iconic field, and on the goddess’ left, blocked, for Minoan viewers reading through their taken for granted iconographical assumptions, the possibility of understanding him to be a human worshipper, and characterized him as a god. In these circumstances, the identification of the male figure as a god is as certain as any reading can be in these images of a culture to which we have extremely limited access. Moreover, the above analyses have shown, I submit, how a systematic attempt to read iconic space through Minoan assumptions can help us build a good foundation for making sense of the images as a whole.

Scenes representing ritual activities have a reference space, therefore we must consider how that reference space is reflected in, and affects, the organization of the iconic space. One small point is worth mentioning, for it can serve as an empirical control on our analyses, since it suggests that (as we should expect on *a priori* grounds) Minoan religious iconography does indeed reflect ritual reality with regard to at least some aspects of the ritual space. It concerns the representation of religious structures. The outside walls of the sacred enclosures on the rings HM 2490 from Knossos (*Fig. 3*), the lost Mochlos ring HM 259 (*Fig. 4*), the ring from Sellopoulo J 8, Berlin 30219,512 and Oxford Ashmolean Museum 1938.1127 (*Fig. 2*)⁴⁵ are not crowned with horns of consecration, while the peribolos and other outside walls of peak

⁴⁵ Knossos ring: CMS II 3 No. 15; here Fig. 3. Mochlos ring: CMS II 3 No. 252; here Fig. 4. Sellopoulo ring: BSA 69, 1974, pl. 37a–c. Berlin ring: Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz. Antikenabteilung. Berlin. A. Greifenhagen, Schmuckarbeiten in Edelmetall. Band II. Einzelstücke (1975) pl. 53.3–4); MMR2, 266 fig. 130. A.M. 1938.1127: here Fig. 2; Kadmos 12, 1973, 154–5 pl. IIa; V.E.G. Kenna, Cretan Seals (1960) pl. 10 fig. 155; MMR2 256 fig. 123.

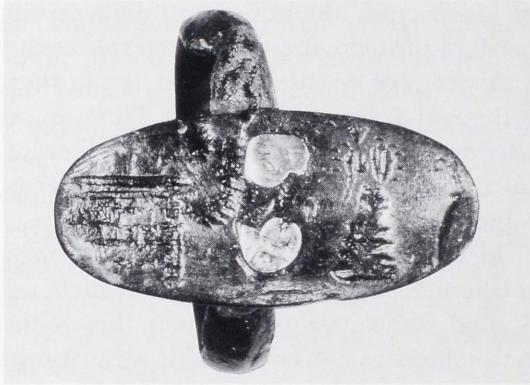


Fig. 3 CMS II 3 No. 15, Heraklion Mus. No. 2490.

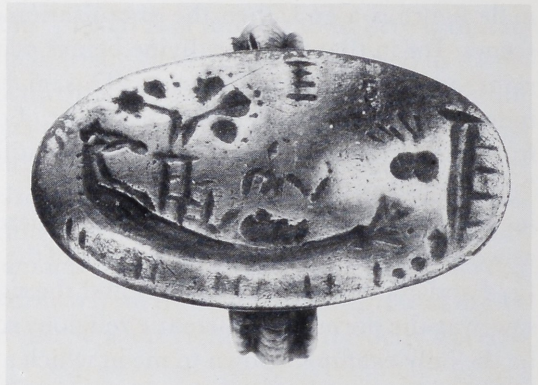


Fig. 4 CMS II 3 No. 252, Heraklion Mus. No. 259.

sanctuaries are⁴⁶. This differentiation suggests that the Minoan artists did not place horns of consecration indiscriminately on all sanctuary walls. Moreover, the representation of horns of consecration on the peak sanctuaries' periboloi corresponds to cultic reality, since at Juktas such horns of consecration were found along the sanctuary's peribolos⁴⁷. This small indication that the relationship between image and cultic reality in Minoan religious iconography is of a type that could allow the reconstruction of cultic space at least in its basic lines⁴⁸ offers a little independent confirmation for the conclusions of the analyses that will now follow.

One of the constant properties of iconic space is, we saw, that it reflects the vital values of its reference space in the real world. We also saw that it appears to be a ritual universal that right and left have importantly different, antithetical, symbolic values⁴⁹. This entails that rituals are always perceived and articulated with reference to a particular point of reference, a fixed orientation point, from which left and right (and front and back) were reckoned⁵⁰. This important characteristic is consistent with, and reinforced by, another, related characteristic of symbolic space: symbolically significant spaces and structures are articulated, have symbolic value, with reference to a fixed point of view, reference point for the symbolically loaded coordinates which

⁴⁶ Cf. the Zakro rhyton (HM 2764: N. Platon, *Zakros* [1971] 165; 167; Hood, *Minoans* [cf. n. 31] pl. 114;) and the steatite fragment of a rhyton (P. Warren, *Minoan Stone Vases* [1969] 175; *History of the Hellenic World. Prehistory and Protohistory* [1970] 236).

⁴⁷ A. Karetsov, *Prakt* 1975, 330. Karetsov op. cit. comments on the fact that this corresponds to the representations of horns of consecration on such periboloi.

⁴⁸ On the relationship between representations of peak-sanctuaries and the peak-sanctuary of Juktas cf. also A. Karetsov, *Prakt* 1980, 343.

⁴⁹ On the differential value of right and left in ritual cf. Needham ed. (cf. n. 39) *passim*; cf. esp.: Kruyt (in: Needham ed.) 85–7; Needham op. cit. 122; La Flesche op. cit. 35–6; Evans Pritchard op. cit. 95–6; Bedelmann op. cit. 134. The general symbolic differential value of right and left appears to be a universal (though the particular meanings of course are culturally determined); cf. Needham ed., *passim*.

⁵⁰ Sometimes the orientation point is one of the cardinal points (cf. e.g. Faron in: Needham ed. [cf. n. 39] 194).

structure those spaces⁵¹. Thus, the spaces in which the rituals depicted in the glyptic scenes took place were articulated and reckoned (in the Minoan perception of the ritual) from one particular reference point. In these circumstances, the presumption must be that all the representations of each ritual were also articulated from this same reference point; for they were created by artists whose selections were determined by their knowledge and assumptions about that ritual, which shaped the composition of the scenes without need of conscious decision. This hypothesis gains support through the fact that, we saw, the left and right sides of the iconic space of Minoan religious glyptic scenes can be shown to have differential values – which means that such differential values were another assumption determining the scenes' composition by the artists. In these circumstances, the presumption must be that all representations of the same ritual by artists belonging to the same cultural community were articulated from the same orientation spot, that from which left-right and front-back were reckoned in the symbolism of the ritual. If this is correct, we should be able to reconstruct in its general lines the sacred space in which particular rituals took place⁵². This hypothesis can be empirically tested and confirmed, as I will now try to show.

The reference point through which the symbolically significant spaces are structured and ascribed symbolic value is often located at the entrance of a building or structure, along an ideal axis, from just outside to just inside⁵³. This, I will be suggesting, obtains in our case also: the reference point for the ritual which forms the focus of my study was the ceremonial entrance of

⁵¹ Cf. e.g. Hallpike (cf. n. 28) 290, 291, 293; Cunningham in: Needham ed. (cf. n. 39) 206–7 cf. also 216–22; R. Needham, *Structure and Sentiment* (1962) 88–9. Cf. the differentiation of the right and left sides in Palaeolithic habitations: A. Leroi-Gourhan, *Le geste et la parole II* (1965) 149. On spatial orientation, spatial ordering and symbolic organization of space cf. also S. Kus in: Hodder ed., *Symbolic and Structural Archaeology* (1982) 53–61 with bibliography; cf. also L.W. Donley in: Hodder ed., 63–73. Even countries can be considered to be on the right or left of the perceiving country (Chelchod in: Needham ed. [cf. n. 39] 246–8).

⁵² The instinctively sceptical reaction of some scholars to the notion that we may be able to achieve such a reconstruction is not, I submit (I develop this argument elsewhere [cf. n. 1]) a sign of rigorous thinking, but another manifestation of the culturally determined reception set that implicitly evaluates all scepticism as rigorous; this set is historically determined, the result of the (correctly sceptical) reaction to the easy, unsystematic speculations of earlier generations of scholarship. This mental set makes it appear (at the implicit, unexamined level of reception) that to say that we cannot reconstruct some ancient reality is *ex hypothesi* more rigorous than to think that that reality may be accessible – regardless of the implications of this negative position in particular cases. In this case, taking the negative viewpoint would entail denying that a whole series of constants is applicable here, and this despite the fact that in so far as empirical validation is possible, it is forthcoming. (Since a principle can be shown to be a constant characteristic of human societies, but it is virtually impossible to prove that something is an exceptionless universal.) I cannot exclude this, or that I may be mistaken in the application of my methodology. But it can hardly be considered more rigorous to reject without argument that fundamental organizing principles, which as far as we can tell are universal, apply also to Minoan religion and iconography than to attempt to consider systematically whether or not they do apply here also, and to reach the conclusion (after a systematic step by step investigation) that they do. I must stress that I am only talking about Minoan iconography here, since for the Minoan artists Minoan ritual was a living thing, an important part of their semantic universe. Mycenaean iconography is another, more complex, matter, which I cannot touch upon here.

⁵³ Cf. e.g.: Cunningham in: Needham ed. (cf. n. 39) 206; Needham, *Struct.* (cf. n. 51) 88–9. Boundaries are very important in “primitive”, that is, non Euclidean-projective organization and representation of space – in which the categories of space are also cosmological and social categories (On this “primitive” organization of space cf. Hallpike [cf. n. 28] 281–94) – and, as Hallpike (op. cit. 286.) notes it is for this reason that gates and doors are often crucial aspects of spatial ordering.

the sacred enclosure. For that ritual, we shall now see, took place in and around a sacred enclosure⁵⁴. The criteria on the basis of which I selected the corpus of scenes which I attributed to this one ritual do not concern us here. Since religious structures have one reference point from which they are symbolically organized (so that the same reference point obtains in all the rituals that take place in it) it is not necessary for my present purpose – which is to reconstruct the space of the sacred enclosure – to limit the investigation to scenes from one ritual; only to scenes representing a sacred enclosure⁵⁵.

The ritual representations in my corpus involve two main spatial categories: the space inside the sacred enclosure (denoted by the shrine with the tree) – such as on the ring from Kalyvia HM 45 (CMS II 3 No. 114) and that from Archanes (Archaeology 20, 1967, 280 Fig. 13; P. Warren, *Aegean Civilizations* [1975] 99); and the space outside the sacred enclosure. It is beyond my scope here to discuss the separate question of the angle from which Minoan glyptic depicts three-dimensional structures; the Minoan conventions for the representation of three-dimensional space in a two-dimensional medium can be studied with the help of models from other, better known, artistic traditions which share the same type of approach, similar sets of rules articulating the perceptual attitude which Schäfer called “aspective” – as opposed to perspective⁵⁶. I will simply say that the representation of three-dimensional structures in aspective art, including Minoan glyptic, involves the selection of the side most frequently viewed, and/or the juxtaposition – instead of foreshortening – of adjacent sides of three-dimensional structures⁵⁷.

The scenes situated outside the sacred enclosure are of two types: those in which part of the peribolos of the sacred enclosure is shown, and those in which it is not (which do not concern us here). Two examples of the former are the Mochlos ring (cf. n. 45) and the ring from Sellopoulo J 8 (cf. n. 45). That they represent the space immediately surrounding the sacred enclosure is clear by the juxtaposition of spatial indicators denoting “outside” (on the Sellopoulo ring rocks and a tree growing in the wilderness, on the Mochlos ring⁵⁸ rocks and sea) with a part of the enclosure’s peribolos (on the Sellopoulo ring represented by an upright and courses of what appears to be isodomic masonry, on the Mochlos scene through an upright, a cornice, and sketchily rendered masonry courses). That the element I am identifying as part of the enclosure peribolos on the two rings is indeed that, and that these scenes are indeed located just outside the sacred enclosure, is confirmed by another series of representations. First, the ring HM 2490 from Knossos (cf. n. 45): on it the peribolos resembles those on the Mochlos and Sellopoulo rings, but is larger and includes clearly depicted isodomic masonry and a tree coming out from behind the wall. And second, scenes taking place just outside the sacred enclosure entrance, Oxford A.M. 1938. 1127 (cf. n. 45) and Berlin 30219, 512 (cf. n. 45). Oxford A.M. 1938. 1127 combines rocks and

⁵⁴ On sacred enclosures: cf. B. Rutkowski, *Cult Places in the Aegean World* (1972) especially 196–7 with bibliography.

⁵⁵ Thus Oxford A.M. 1938. 1127 may not be, and Berlin 30219, 512 (cf. below) is probably not, part of the ritual under consideration.

⁵⁶ H. Schäfer, *Principles of Egyptian Art*, translated and edited by J. Baines (1974).

⁵⁷ Schäfer (cf. n. 56) *passim*; cf. esp. 91; 95–7; 100–3; E. Brunner-Traut, *Aspective: Epilogue*, in: Schäfer op. cit. 424 cf. 428.

⁵⁸ Which is an emblematic scene located in a ritual space; I cannot discuss this here; I am considering this ring elsewhere (cf. n. 1). I discussed some aspects of it in *Kadmos* 12, 1973, 149–58. In my new study the investigation (now part of the integrated consideration of a corpus of related scenes) is protected against culture-determination and based on a systematic methodology.

vegetation on uneven ground with part of a peribolos with sketchily rendered isodomic masonry, a cornice, an opening framed by two uprights and a horizontal lintel, and a tree coming out from the top of the cornice; on the right of this there is a pole of the type seen also elsewhere outside sanctuaries. The Berlin ring depicts part of a peribolos in isodomic masonry, with a cornice, a tree coming out from the top of the cornice, and a closed door with two leaves framed by two uprights and a horizontal lintel (like the opening on A. M. 1938. 1127, thus confirming that the latter represented an open door). Given these representations of the sacred enclosure from the outside, if our hypothesis of a consistent orientation point is correct, we should be able to reconstruct the *Gestalt* of the sacred enclosure; and thus also to locate the space in which a particular ritual act, represented in an individual scene took place, locate it with reference to the enclosure and its entrance, and thus also with reference to the space in which other ritual acts, depicted in other representations, took place.

Of the five scenes located in the space immediately surrounding the enclosure, on two, Sellopoulo and Mochlos, the enclosure is on the right part of the iconic field; on three, the Knossos ring, the Berlin ring and A. M. 1938. 1127, it is on the left. If it is correct that all these scenes are represented from one orientation spot, since the two dimensions of the iconic space represent the three dimensions of the ritual space, the various permutations in the spatial organization of these scenes just outside the enclosure must represent the three sides of the enclosure visible from one orientation point. If, as is most plausible, that point is a spot facing the entrance, these three sides should include the entrance. If this is correct, we should expect two main types of spatial organization (one with the enclosure on the left, the other on the right), one of which represented two different sides, and should thus appear in two variants. We should also expect one of the three variants to represent the entrance to the enclosure. The absence of this pattern would not have invalidated our reconstruction, since it could have been due to the accident of find; but the fact that we *do* find these two types, one of which occurs in two variants, does provide good confirmation for this reconstruction. The type in which the sacred enclosure is shown on the left of the iconic field does occur in two variants, one of which depicts the entrance: on the Knossos ring the rendering of the enclosure is similar to that on the Mochlos and, in so far as it is visible, the Sellopoulo rings, with one upright element at the extreme end, isodomic masonry and a cornice. On the Berlin and Ashmolean rings an entrance is shown on the right part of the enclosure. This allows us to conclude that the Berlin and Ashmolean rings represent one side of the enclosure⁵⁹, that with the entrance, the Knossos ring another, and the Sellopoulo and Mochlos rings a third. The side shown on the Sellopoulo and Mochlos rings lay on the left of the orientation spot. Everything then falls into place, and a consistent picture emerges, if we understand the Berlin and Ashmolean rings to be showing the side immediately in front of the orienta-

⁵⁹ On A.M. 1938. 1127 a pole is represented in front of the entrance (On poles: E. Hallager – M. Vlasakis, Two new roundels with Linear A from Khandia, *Kadmos* 23, 1984, 4–5 with bibliography), while on the Berlin ring no pole is shown. The most likely explanation is that the pole was movable, only put up in the context of specific ritual activities. Unlike the poles depicted in representations of peak-sanctuaries (cf. n. 46 for references) it is wholly free-standing, it has no supports connecting it to the wall. (Given the extremely schematic style of execution of the Berlin ring, we cannot entirely exclude the possibility that the object in front of the woman's skirt may be a sketchy representation of a base in which the pole may have been fixed when the occasion demanded.) Alternatively, it may not have been represented on the Berlin ring because it had no part in the religious theme represented.

tion spot, which is thus in front of the entrance, and the side shown on the Knossos ring to be on the right of the orientation spot.

Space prevents me from considering other aspects of the spatial organization of these scenes. I hope to show elsewhere (cf. n. 1) that my reconstruction of the internal spatial organization of the enclosure provides a separate, independent, argument in favour of the view that the reference point from which the ritual and the representations were perceived and rendered was around the entrance of the enclosure, facing it from the outside or, in the case of the internal organization, just inside with one's back to it. I should add that in my extended study of these scenes (cf. n. 1) I am using the reconstruction of the spatial organization of the sacred enclosure and of the space outside it as the basis for the reconstruction of the various phases of the ritual in their general lines.

DISKUSSION

L. MORGAN ist der Ansicht, daß die Methode, die innere Struktur bei Siegeln zu analysieren, sehr nützlich ist. Sicher ist es richtig, auf die Ausrichtung der Abbildungen zu achten. Nach ihrer Meinung kann dies auch auf andere Szenen ausgeweitet werden, wie z.B. bei Tier- und Kampfszenen auf die Frage nach dem Gewinner. Sie hat Schwierigkeiten, Ch. Sourvinou-Inwoods Gedanken zu folgen, die verkleinert dargestellten Figuren als Epiphanien zu verstehen. Ch. Sourvinou-Inwoods Argument, es habe eine »established convention« gegeben, sieht sie als einen Zirkelschluß und fragt, woher wir wissen, daß es sich um Epiphanie handelt, nur weil eine Gestalt kleiner dargestellt ist.

CH. SOURVINO-U-INWOOD kann nur ihre persönliche Meinung zu dieser Frage sagen. Die schwebende Figur in Kombination mit einer nackten männlichen Gestalt mit bestimmten Attributen, die Lokalisierung des Geschehens in einen geheiligten Bezirk und Gesten der Anbetung, all diese Hinweise zusammen veranlassen sie zu ihrer Annahme. Mit Epiphanie meint sie nicht den Gott als »ἐπιφαινόμενος«. Sie sieht hier ein Zeichen für die Anwesenheit einer Gottheit in einem besonders entscheidenden Moment einer rituellen Handlung, etwa im Sinne der Griechischen Votivreliefs, von denen sie sprach. Nicht die verkleinerte Gestalt, sondern vielmehr die Art der ganzen Szene in Kombination mit all den anderen Elementen veranlassen sie, von symbolisch zu sprechen. Ch. Sourvinou-Inwood fügt hinzu, daß sie in ihrem Vortrag nicht so sehr auf diese Dinge hat eingehen wollen, sondern mehr auf stilistische Probleme. Sie hat einfach die herkömmliche Meinung vertreten und wollte keine Verwirrung stiften bei der wichtigen Frage der verkleinert dargestellten Gestalten.

L. MORGAN hat weiterhin Bedenken zu diesem Fragenkomplex. Einen anderen Punkt aufgreifend, fragt sie nach den Begriffen semantisch und ikonographisch, die Ch. Sourvinou-Inwood zu Anfang ihres Referates gebraucht hat. Da für sie beide Begriffe das gleiche bedeuten, bittet sie um Erläuterung.

CH. SOURVINO-U-INWOOD sieht einen Unterschied zwischen beiden Begriffen, da der eine auf den anderen einwirkt. Sie versucht, das Problem in der historischen griechischen Kunstgeschichte anzugehen und beschreitet nicht den in der minoischen Kunst üblichen Weg. Sie nennt ein Beispiel: Aus ihrem Buch über Theseus (Theseus as Son and Stepson [1979]) konnte man entnehmen, daß die Darstellungen des Theseus mit der Lanze oder mit dem Schwert zwei ver-

schiedene Dinge sind. Jetzt ist es leichter, bei rein ikonographischer Betrachtungsweise die Annahme zu machen, daß Theseus eine Angriffswaffe hatte. In damaliger Zeit sahen die Menschen in Theseus mit der Lanze das Zeichen Theseus. Das semantische Feld war aktiviert und erlaubte ihnen, das ikonographische Zeichen zu lesen. Wir dagegen haben diese semantischen Voraussetzungen nicht; es sei denn, wir versuchen sehr systematisch zu rekonstruieren, was man damals zusammengefügt hatte. Die semantischen Voraussetzungen sind sehr verschieden. Schon ein sehr kleines ikonographisches Detail kann, wenn es uns nichts bedeutet, unserer Aufmerksamkeit entgehen. Wenn wir wissen, was unter den semantischen Voraussetzungen jener Menschen – nicht ikonographisch – das Schwert meinte, können wir es manchmal entdecken, manchmal auch nicht.

L. MORGAN fragt nach ihrer Definition des Begriffes Ikonographie.

CH. SOURVINOU-INWOOD versteht unter Ikonographie etwas, das auch wirklich dargestellt ist. Die ikonographische Betrachtung hält sie nicht für einen nützlichen Weg. Sie meint vielmehr die Zeichen, die eine sehr komplexe Sache sind, auf die die meisten sicher nicht eingehen würden. Aber es gibt ikonographische Konventionen, wie z.B. die von ihr gezeigte Darstellungsweise des geheiligten Peribolos. Die semantische Voraussetzung jener Leute war, daß es einen Gott gab, der auf Kreta umherwandelte.