

## THE LILIES OF THE PRINCE: THE ORIENTATION AND GESTURE OF THE ‘MALE TORSO WITH THE LILY COLLAR’ FROM KNOSSOS

by Ute Günkel-Maschek 

University of Heidelberg

*With the reconstruction of the Prince of the Lilies (also known as Prince with the Lily Crown or Priest-King) from a group of fragments of painted stucco relief found in the palace at Knossos, Arthur Evans and the Gilliérons created not only one of the most famous icons of Crete’s early Late Minoan past, but also its most controversial. Addressing a debate that has taken place over the last 45 years, this paper considers the question of the orientation and gesture of the figure, which some scholars would like to see as a right-facing boxer or deity with his left arm extended forward and his right arm bent at the side, rather than the well-known man striding to the left with his right fist on his chest. Focusing on the key relief fragment described by Evans as ‘male torso with the lily collar’, a comparison of the orientation of the eponymous piece of jewellery with contemporary depictions of necklaces conclusively confirms the leftward orientation of the figure to which the torso once belonged. The iconographic analysis of the gesture of the right fist on the chest and of the contextual associations of the waz-lily allow the ‘Man with the waz-Lily Necklace’ to regain his central place in Minoan religious imagery as well as in the monumental relief decoration of the Late Minoan I palace at Knossos.*

Among the many achievements of Minoan artistic production, the large-scale painted stucco reliefs constitute the most monumental and sophisticated way to cover the walls of rooms with figurative or ornamental compositions. During the Late Minoan (LM) I period (c. 1600–1450 BC), the technique of giving lively, even lifelike, plasticity to human and animal figures, plants and abstract elements on painted walls was carried out at various sites on Crete and at Akrotiri on Thera, and even inspired decorative programmes at Tell el-Dab’a in Egypt (Blakolmer 2006, 10–11 with references, 21–2, figs 1–3). However, unlike smaller categories of relief-bearing artefacts such as stone vessels, ivory plaques or seal impressions with their wide range of complete or near-complete figurative compositions, the poorly preserved fragments of painted stucco relief usually leave us with nothing more than scraps in a game of ‘guess the picture’, of which only the general theme can be gleaned.

At Knossos, where by far the greatest concentration of pieces of painted stucco relief has been unearthed (Kaiser 1976, 258; Blakolmer 2006, 10), their extreme fragmentation did not discourage Arthur Evans, in his endeavour to ‘preserve something of the inner life’ and of the history of the building, from completing large-scale relief compositions from the existing fragments and replacing their replicas on ‘reconstituted’ walls (Evans 1935, 5–6; cf. Sherratt 2000, 8). Here, the vivid form of representation was chosen in particular for depictions of bulls, bull leaping and bull catching, which like no other images represented the palace and the ideas associated with it to people outside and inside the building (Shaw and Mellink 1995, 97, fig. 8, 98–100, 104–5; Hallager and Hallager 1995; Blakolmer 2006, 11–12, 18–20; Haysom 2018; Günkel-Maschek 2020, 66, 133, 165, 272). Similarly, life-size male and female figures were literally made to stand out in relief, suggesting that they represented figures and actions that were equally central to the function, use and significance of the palace (see Blakolmer 2006, 13–14 for an overview and references). One such male figure was ‘reconstituted’ by Arthur Evans and his restorers, Emile Gilliéron *père* and *fils*, into the famous Prince of the Lilies, also known as Priest-King or Prince with the Lily Crown, a facsimile of which visitors to the palace have since been able to admire

on the wall of the partially restored North–South Corridor south of the central court (Evans 1928, 797, fig. 520, suppl. pl. XXIX; Sherratt 2000, 16–17, fig. 20). The reconstruction including the original fragments is on display in the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion (Fig. 1; Dimopoulou-Rethemiotaki 2005, 76, fig.). With a plumed lily crown on the head, the right arm and fist folded to the chest, the left-facing<sup>1</sup> figure has since become the most iconic representative not only of the Minoan palace but also of that new aspect of Cretan prehistory and identity that had emerged from its excavation and ‘reconstitution’, as can be gauged from its widespread appearance on buildings, means of transport, and souvenirs (cf. Coulomb 1985, 67; Niemeier 1987, 66; J.K. Papadopoulos 2005, 120–1). However, among experts, the amalgamation of the crown, plume, torso, arm and leg fragments into the ‘remarkable painted relief of the personage wearing a plumed lily crown and collar’, who, according to Evans (1928, 774), represented none other than ‘one of the actual Priest-Kings of Knossos’ on a wall of the LM IA palace, is far from being unanimously accepted.

### EVANS’ PRINCE OF THE LILIES: CREATION AND CRITIQUE

In his first report on the discovery, in a basement space south of the central court, of fragments of a male torso with a bent right arm, of plumes, of a crown with lilies and of legs and another arm represented in painted stucco relief, Evans expressed that he was looking at the remains of no less than three figures: a figure wearing the lily crown, ‘another figure’ represented by ‘the male torso with the lily collar’ (Fig. 2) and a third figure of which ‘the thigh and the greater part of the leg were also found near the torso’ (Evans 1900/1, 16). Whereas the figure wearing the lily crown and the man of whom only the legs were preserved would have been facing to the left, Evans’ (1900/1, 16) comment that ‘the attitude and clenched hand may suggest a boxer’ implies that he considered the figure represented by the ‘male torso with the lily collar’ to be oriented to the right.

However, as early as 1903, his view had changed,<sup>2</sup> and over the following years the fragments, now all aligned in the same direction, were united into the famous ‘Priest-King Relief’, first by Emile Gilliéron father, then by his son.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the lily crown with peacock feathers, the man as restored wears a blue necklace and a collar of red *waz*-lilies and blue(?) beads around his neck, a bracelet around the wrist of the preserved arm and a loincloth with a backflap. The head, thigh and legs were rendered in profile, the upper part of the body in a facing position (Evans 1928, 779). The ‘faint muscular indications supplied by the small remaining part of the left arm’ led Evans (1928, 783) to suggest that it originally had been ‘engaged in downward action’. The arm was restored accordingly with the hand holding ‘some kind of cord or thong by which, according to a well-known scheme, he was depicted as leading a sacred animal’. Inspired by the depiction of a male long-robed figure leading a griffin on a lentoid seal from Vapheio (CMS I no. 223) and by the depictions of flowers and butterflies on fragments of painted plaster found with the relief fragments, Evans (1928, 790) envisaged the figure of the ‘Priest-King’ as moving ‘in Elysian fields amidst mystic blooms and butterflies from another sphere, and if his attitude be rightly interpreted, ... leading a Griffin, wearing, like himself, the sacral lily crown’. Aware of the well-attested ‘connexion of the plumed lily-crown with the winged monster’, i.e. the Minoan sphinx, he arrived at the conclusion that the man with the lily crown was ‘one who possessed something more than terrestrial sovereignty. We have here, surely, the representative on Earth of the Minoan Mother Goddess – himself her adopted son – a Priest-King after the

<sup>1</sup> Please note that unless otherwise stated, the description of the orientation of a figure is from the spectator’s viewpoint, while the indications of right or left hand, arm, etc. refer to those of the figure itself.

<sup>2</sup> Evans 1903/4, 2; Momigliano and Hood 1994, 143. For first signs of a tendency in this direction as early as 1901 see Bosanquet 1901, 336; Niemeier 1987, 71.

<sup>3</sup> Evans 1928, 774–95, pl. XIV; see also Niemeier 1987, 70–2, pl. 8:1–4, and Sherratt 2000, 10–19, for more details and earlier versions of the Prince of the Lilies.



Fig. 1. Reconstruction of the Prince of the Lilies in the Heraklion Archaeological Museum. Drawing Ute Günkel-Maschek, after Dimopoulou-Rethemiotaki 2005, 76, fig.

order of Minos. In other words we here recognize Minos himself in one of his mortal incarnations' (Evans 1928, 778–9).

Indeed, it was the physical connection of the plumed lily-crown with the male body fragments that first prompted doubts about the reliability of Evans' reconstruction, since only sphinxes and female figures were known to wear such headgear (e.g. Müller 1915a, 16–18; Bossert 1921, 27–8, no. 74; cf. Niemeier 1987, 74). Some decades later, these early doubts whether the fragments belonged to one figure led on to the reconstruction of the left-facing figure as a whole being called into question. With the focus now set on the fragment of the 'male torso with the lily collar' (Figs 2, 3), arguments were put forward for its attribution to a right-facing figure. The first to make this point was Jean Coulomb (1979; 1981; 1985), who argued that the representation of the left pectoral muscle indicated that the figure's left arm had originally been raised, not lowered. Reverting to Evans' original suggestion, Coulomb concluded that the left arm belonged to a boxer raising it to deliver a blow to his opponent (Fig. 4; Coulomb 1979; 1981, 34, fig. 5; 1985). In his reconstruction, only the torso and the right arm and fist, understood as being folded at the side of the torso rather than on the chest, belonged to the



Fig. 2. The ‘male torso with the lily collar’ as first published in 1901. After Evans 1900/1, 17, fig. 6.

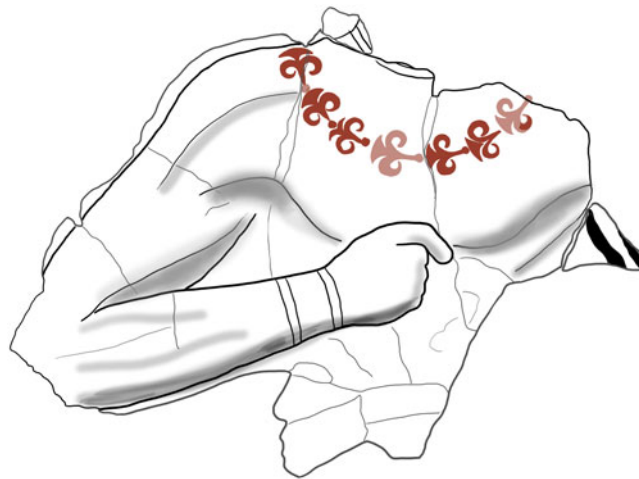


Fig. 3. The ‘male torso with the lily collar’, including joining fragments at neck and under left shoulder. Drawing Ute Günkel-Maschek, after Evans 1900/1, 17, fig. 6; 1928, pl. XIV.

boxer; the other fragments showing human body parts and the lily crown were attributed to a priest-king, priestess or sphinx (lily crown) and to a second boxer (lower extremities) in left profile (Coulomb 1979, 48).

A second reconstruction was proposed only a few years later by Wolf-Dietrich Niemeier (1987; 1988). Following up on Coulomb’s observations regarding the rendering of the muscles and the resulting position of the left arm and inspired by the then recent discovery of the so-called Master Impression at Chania (CMS V SiA no. 142), Niemeier suggested a reconstruction of the figure as a god extending his left arm towards the right of the image in a commanding gesture (Fig. 5; Niemeier 1987, pl. 9:1; 1988, 239, fig. 2). Again only the ‘male torso with the lily collar’ was attributed to the god; the other fragments were attributed to male, female or sphinx figures in left profile, but still within the same composition as the supposed deity.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Niemeier 1987, 95–7, with three tentative reconstructions of the overall composition in figs 24–6.



Fig. 4. Coulomb's reconstruction of the torso fragment (inset from Fig. 3) into a boxer.  
Drawing Ute Günkel-Maschek, after Coulomb 1981, 34, fig. 5.

These generally well-received attempts to dismantle Evans' left-facing Prince of the Lilies and reassign its torso to a figure acting in a rightward direction were countered by Maria Shaw in the last major article on the fragments attributed to the 'Priest-King Relief' (Shaw 2004), in which she pointed out inconsistencies between the traces of painting that were preserved on, or indeed absent from, the fragments, on the one hand, and the reconstructions proposed by Coulomb and Niemeier, on the other hand. Her observations were based on close inspection of the fragments in the Heraklion Archaeological Museum, including pieces of plaster that had been found to join the torso at the junction of shoulder and neck and next to the left arm pit in the final restoration made by Emile Gilliéron *fi*ls in 1926 (Figs 1, 3; Evans 1928, pl. XIV; Shaw 2004, 67, figs 4:1b-c), but had not been considered by Coulomb and Niemeier, who had based their arguments on the photograph of the torso first published by Evans (1900/1, 17, fig. 6; here Fig. 2). Shaw's observations allowed her to establish that the figure had long hair hanging down the side of the body under the left arm, while there was no hair, only 'solid red', in the background area above the figure's right shoulder (Shaw 2004, 71-2), which is exactly where the

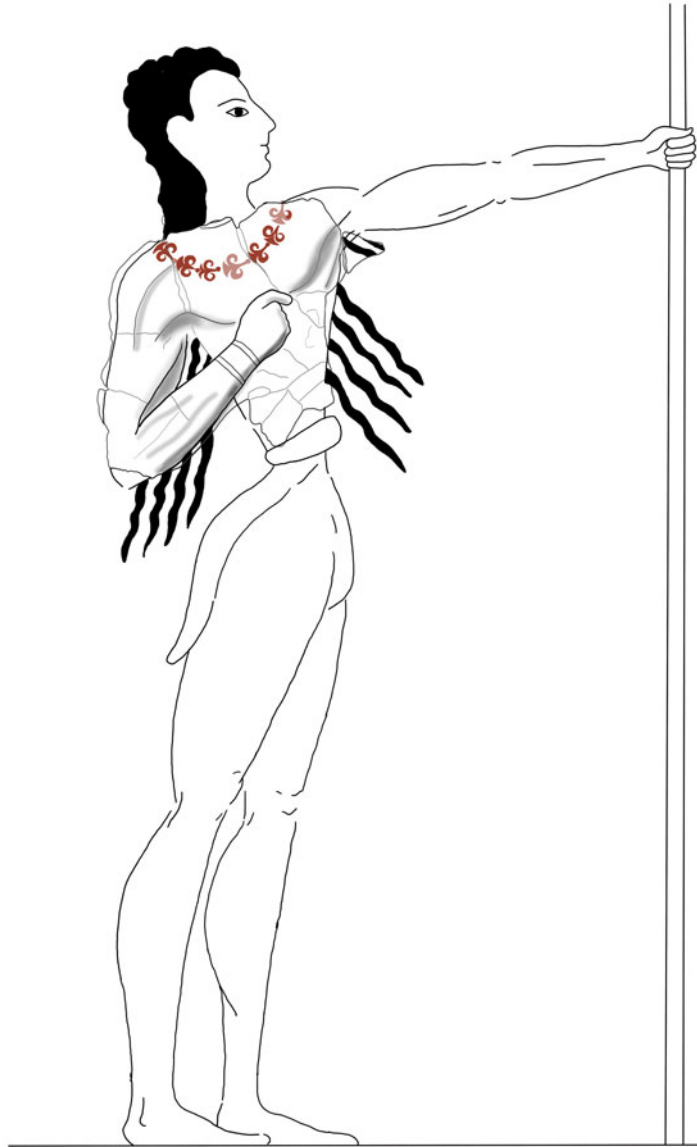


Fig. 5. Niemeier's reconstruction of the torso fragment (inset from Fig. 3) into a god. Drawing Ute Günkel-Maschek, after Niemeier 1988, 239, fig. 2.

back of the neck would have been and where traces of hair ought to be expected in Coulomb and Niemeier's reconstructions. Moreover, the perpendicular angle of the line of the neck and the piece of collar, which gave an indication for the positioning of the torso, as well as the only slight difference in the angle of inclination between the left and right pectoral, provided little evidence for 'an acutely raised left arm as in the more recent reconstructions' according to Shaw (2004, 72).

Shaw thus rejected the reconstructions proposed by Coulomb and Niemeier of a figure facing to the right and defended the orientation of the torso, and thus of the entire figure to which the fragment once belonged, to the left, right fist on the chest (Fig. 6; Shaw 2004, 68, fig. 4:5). For the missing left arm, Shaw (2004, 72) suggested that it was 'simply swinging back, perhaps lower than in the restoration, thereby conveying the impression of a figure moving vigorously forward', although she was unable to find Minoan parallels for such a combination of arm movements. In her own interpretation of the figure as a crowned male athlete walking in procession, Shaw (2004, 77–82, with references to similar ideas in earlier scholarship) once again resorted to the



Fig. 6. Shaw's reconstruction of the torso fragment (inset from Fig. 3) into a crowned male athlete. Drawing Ute Günkel-Maschek, after Shaw 2004, 68, fig. 4:5.

plumed lily-crown and referred to an acrobat in a painting from Tell el-Dab'a with 'a special ornament on his head consisting of two featherlike forms that stream out of a blue *waz* surmounting a white lily'.<sup>5</sup>

The debate of the last 45 years has thus been characterised, on the one hand, by a certain desire to follow Evans in his assumption that the fragments all belong to the figure of the Prince of the Lilies, complete with the dynamic right-fist-on-chest gesture so distinctive of his powerful stance and with the plumed lily-crown as his most striking and defining attribute. However, given that there are still no Minoan parallels for male figures wearing exactly such crowns, at least the attribution of the lily-crown to the male figure remains doubtful. On the other hand, arguments

<sup>5</sup> Shaw 2004, 80, fig. 4:7. For a detailed depiction see Bietak, Marinatos and Palyvou 2007, 150, fig. 138.

have been put forward for dismantling the notion of a left-facing 'Prince' in its entirety and instead allocating only the torso fragment to a right-facing male figure with his left arm extended forward, in a boxing or commanding posture which are both attested in LM I imagery. But these attempts were challenged profoundly by Shaw's observations, particularly due to the absence of hair in a place where one would expect it next to the back of the neck of a right-facing figure.

From this debate, the 'male torso with the lily collar' literally emerges as the linchpin in the question of the reliability of Evans' reconstruction of the Prince of the Lilies, as it constitutes the key piece of evidence not only for the orientation of the male figure to which it once belonged, but also for the way in which this figure held its arms. The question, therefore, is whether the torso fragment itself can provide a more reliable indication of the direction in which the original figure once faced and thus of its overall posture. By displaying two distinctive features, the right arm and fist bent to the chest and the necklace of *waz*-lilies, the torso fragment indeed offers no fewer than two starting points for an iconographic pursuit of this question. As a prerequisite for such iconographic pursuit, however, it is first necessary to establish the chronological framework within which the figure of the 'male torso with the lily collar' was executed and displayed in monumental painted relief on one of the palace walls at Knossos.

#### UNEARTHING THE 'MALE TORSO WITH THE LILY COLLAR'

The fragments of painted stucco relief that went into the reconstruction of the Prince of the Lilies were found while excavating south of the central court of the palace at Knossos in 1901 (Evans 1900/1, 14–17). The progress of the discovery as recorded by Duncan Mackenzie in his excavation notebook has been cited and discussed by Coulomb (1979, 29–32), by Niemeier (1987, 67–70), by Nicoletta Momigliano and Sinclair Hood (1994, 142–6) and by Shaw (2004, 73–7) and needs not be repeated here in detail. The (re-)readings of the evidence have, however, led to different views on whether the fragments had fallen from a corridor (Evans 1928, 762, fig. 490, 774–5; Shaw 2004, 74, 76–7) or shrine (Niemeier 1987, 70, 98) on the upper floor into the basement, whether they had already been in the fill before this event (Momigliano and Hood 1994, 129, 131, 143–4; Hood 2005, 68; Shaw 2004, 76–7; Macdonald 2005, 188) or whether they were still on the walls at the time of the final destruction (Haysom 2018, 262–3). Since this question has a direct bearing on the chronological position of the figure represented by the 'male torso with the lily collar' at Knossos and in Minoan iconography, I shall briefly set out my reading of the evidence.

The fragments were brought to light over the course of almost a week in May 1901 in one of the spaces lining the south side of the palace hill. Extensive post-Minoan erosion in this area had led to the disappearance of all structures corresponding to what Evans referred to as the main floor, which he located at the level of the West Porch and of the Corridor of the Procession Fresco (Evans 1928, 758, 796; Shaw 2004, 74). According to Mackenzie, the first fragments of painted relief turned up 'adjacent to' the western face of a north–south wall just 0.30 m below the surface (DM/DB 11 May 1901, cited after Palmer 1963, 153; Coulomb 1979, 31; 1985, 67; Niemeier 1987, 67; see also Boardman 1963, 12; Shaw 2004, 74). On its eastern side, this north–south wall abuts the west wall of the Room of the Wheat, the northern corners of which had been brought into view as early as 24 April 1901 (Palmer 1963, 153). The wall 'adjacent to' which the fragments first came to light thus had already been visible from the start of the excavation in this area. Its top surviving height roughly corresponds to the conjectural 'main floor level' (Fig. 7), so the appearance of the first fragments occurred just beneath it. This circumstance nevertheless prompted Evans to report that the relief fragments came to light 'above the floor level', 'along the base of the Eastern wall', of the South–North Corridor he envisioned to have run above the basements (Evans 1900/1, 15; 1928, 775). His addition, 'from a metre below the surface' (Evans 1900/1, 15), presumably refers to the datum point in the south-west corner of the Central Court (cf. Boardman 1963, 9), which is about a metre higher than the conjectural main floor level. Mackenzie, on the other hand, presumably took his measurements from some surface in the closer vicinity, perhaps from the top of the previously exposed east wall or the surface of the soil



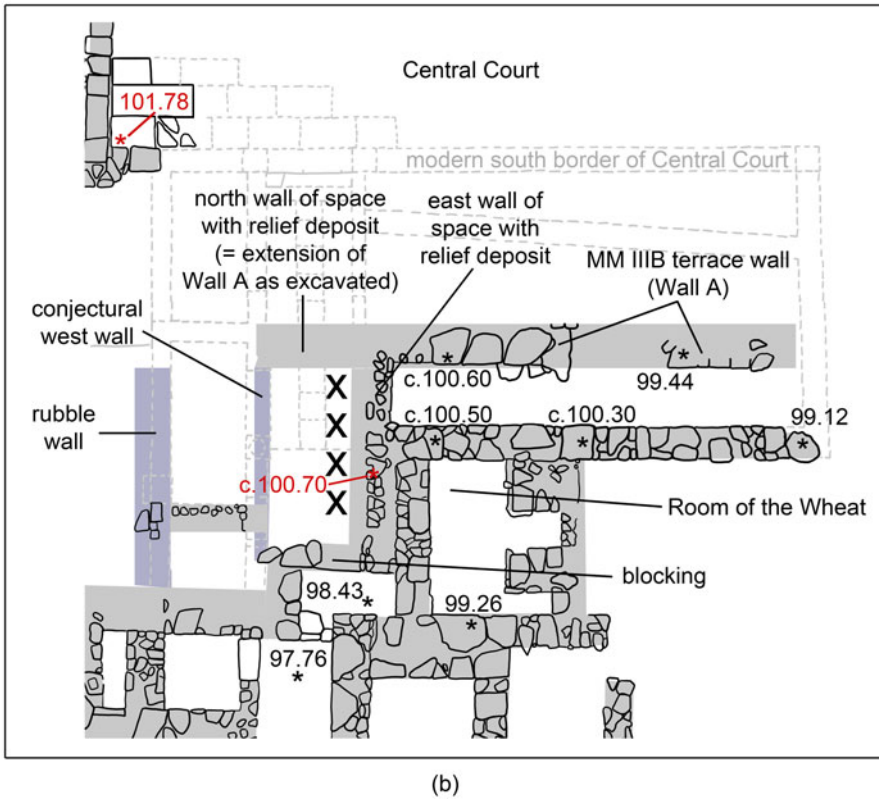
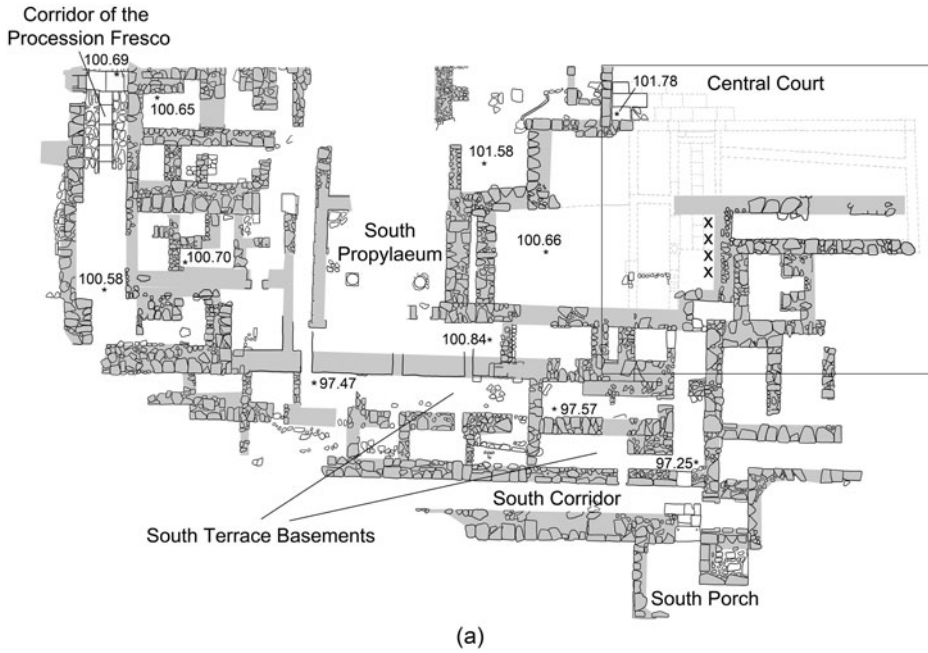


Fig. 7. Ground plan (a) and detail (b) of the south-west area of the palace at Knossos, with absolute levels taken from main plan or measured from sections 6 and 9 in Hood and Taylor 1981. Drawing Ute Günkel-Maschek, after Hood and Taylor 1981; Xs mark the area in which the fragments of painted stucco relief were found; extension of north wall after Evans 1900/1, pl. 1; Wall A after Macdonald 2002; rubble wall after Evans 1928, 762, fig. 490B; west wall and indication of blocking after Momigliano and Hood 1994, 144–5.

covering it, which would have been at a lower level due to erosion. All the levels given here, including the minus 30 cm for the first appearance of painted relief fragments ‘adjacent to’ the east wall, approximately relate to this datum level (Fig. 7).

The first fragments of painted stucco relief, which included part of the plume, part of a leg and the right shoulder (DM/DB 11 and 14 May 1901, after Coulomb 1979, 31, n. 8; Niemeier 1987, 67), were followed by more discoveries on the following working days, as excavation progressed into deeper levels. The right arm and hand joining the shoulder fragment and the lily-crown were collected at a depth of 1.50 m (DM/DB 14 May 1901, after Coulomb 1979, 31; Niemeier 1987, 67). The last fragments of painted stucco relief were noted to have come out on 16 May, on which a depth of 2.20 m had been reached (DM/DB 16 May 1901, after Coulomb 1979, 32; Niemeier 1987, 67). The fragments amalgamated into the reconstruction of the Prince of the Lilies were thus discovered successively across a depth of at least 1.20 m, mixed with soil and/or debris. In his last entry describing the excavation of the area, Mackenzie concluded that ‘the whole space is substructure into which the fresco had fallen from the main upper floor’ (DM/DB 18 May 1901; see Niemeier 1987, 68, 70; Momigliano and Hood 1994, 145). In view of the find situation, however, only the former interpretation as a substructure seems conclusive.

Given the generally highly fragmentary nature of fresco and relief finds, the possibility to reconstruct the ‘male torso with the lily collar’ from fragments found interspersed with soil across a depth of at least 1.20 m is remarkable (cf. Niemeier 1987, 74). No traces of a floor layer were found across the more than 3 metres of depth excavated in the area of the deposit, before the Neolithic deposit was reached (DM/DB 16, 17, 18 May 1901; see Niemeier 1987, 67–8) – at the same level as in the rooms to the south, if the reference point reconstructed here is used (Fig. 7). Therefore, it can be assumed that no floor existed here at the time when the fragments came into their final resting position. Given the vertical distribution of joining torso fragments across no less than 1.20 m of basement space, the assumption that the fragments had fallen from the wall corresponding to the upper main floor entails that the relief figure would have gradually crumbled from this wall down into the open basement over a considerable amount of time. In view of the close proximity of the space to the southern border of the Central Court, such a process seems unlikely to have occurred while the palace was still functional. However, there are also indications that the deposition of the fragments had not happened after the final destruction in early LM IIIA2 either: unlike in the rooms immediately east and further south, no seal impressions or Linear B tablets were found with the relief fragments (Palmer 1963, 153; Boardman 1963, 12; Momigliano and Hood 1994, 109, 133, 144; Hood 2005, 68; Shaw 2004, 74, n. 32). If the fragments had fallen from an upper floor into the basement at the time of, or after, the final destruction, i.e. at the time when Linear B tablets and seal impressions that had been kept on the same upper floor as the relief wall decoration fell into the surrounding basement rooms, one would expect the same material to have found its way into the room containing the relief fragments or for other relief fragments to have fallen also into the surrounding basement rooms (Momigliano and Hood 1994, 144). Since neither was the case, the most plausible conclusion is that the fill containing the relief fragments had already been in place when the destruction of the upper floor level occurred, preventing any objects from above from falling into the space west of the north–south wall. The recovery of joining fragments on different levels strongly suggests that the deposit was the result of a single filling operation.<sup>6</sup>

Both the east and the north wall of the space with the fragments were found ‘intact to a considerable depth from the surface down’ (DM/DB 14 May 1901, cited after Niemeier 1987, 67). The north–south wall on the east side shows partial doubling, presumably to provide stronger support for the main upper floor level, a modification to existing walls that was also observed elsewhere in this area (e.g. Momigliano and Hood 1994, 132, 146–7; Macdonald 2005, 96–7; cf. Niemeier 1987, 70). The north wall is actually the terrace wall which formed the southern border of the Central Court of the Middle Minoan IIIB palace (Evans 1928, 796–8; Niemeier 1987, 70, n. 15; Macdonald 2002, 50–2, pl. XI:Wall A; 2005, 103). This provides the earliest possible

<sup>6</sup> For a similar finding and interpretation, see Momigliano and Hood 1994, 113.

terminus post quem for the filling operation. A north–south rubble wall to the west, which was described by Evans (1928, 762, fig. 490B, 775) as having had its face already torn away, and another wall between it and the preserved east wall, of which the southern end was still visible in 1987 (Momigliano and Hood 1994, 145–6), may have belonged to basement structures (Fig. 7; on these walls, see also Niemeier 1987, 68–9; Shaw 2004, 76; Haysom 2018, 262–3; cf. Macdonald 2005, 96–7). As neither is mentioned by Mackenzie (who notes twice that no west wall was found), these basement walls possibly went out of use and were partially dismantled prior to the filling operation, which would therefore post-date any such use as a basement. Taking into consideration Mackenzie’s observation that ‘the primitive clay rises up rapidly W’ (DM/DB 14 May 1901, cited after Niemeier 1987, 67), one may indeed suggest that this same space was at least in its western part set against the rising slope of the palace hill, and so the remains of walls west of the well-preserved north–south wall possibly represent an earlier, wall-built substructure to the main floor. Last but not least, the southern blocking, which completely separated the space under consideration from the basement rooms to the south (Fig. 7; Momigliano and Hood 1994, 144), also needed to be in place for bringing in the fill. All this points towards a remodelling (see also Shaw 2004, 76), which transformed former wall-built basement space or substructure next to the northern terrace wall into a solid, platform-like substructure for the main floor.

It is reasonable to associate such a remodelling with one of the more substantial reorganisations of the interior of this southern area either at the end of LM IB or at the end of LM II/beginning of LM IIIA (Momigliano and Hood 1994, 147–8). This remodelling preceded the continuous use of the main upper floor, not least for the storage of seal impressions and Linear B tablets, and therefore the continuous use of the palace as, most presumably, a functional administrative centre until its destruction early in LM IIIA2 (cf. Weingarten 1994, 151–2; Boardman 1963, 20). It is indeed tempting to propose that the renovation, which included the execution of the Procession Fresco on the main floor at the end of LM IB or early in LM II (Macdonald 2005, 95; Günkel-Maschek 2020, ch. 4), extended so far east as to require the construction of the solid, platform-like substructure for the final section of the continuation of the Corridor of the Procession Fresco to the central court, i.e. Evans’ conjectural South–North Corridor (Evans 1928, Plan C; cf. Macdonald 2005, 96–7). Without re-examining the architectural evidence, however, this cannot be ascertained.

Although it thus remains difficult to narrow down the date when the relief fragments were buried in the fill of the substructure, some conclusions can be drawn nevertheless. First, the suggestion that the relief fragments were dumped means that they could have come from anywhere in the palace, perhaps even from different compositions, and need not have fallen from the floor directly above (but see Niemeier 1987, 94–7; Shaw 2004, 76). Secondly, the relief fragments were not on the walls at the time of the final destruction (Momigliano and Hood 1994, 143–4; Shaw 2004, 77; Hood 2005, 68; Macdonald 2005, 188; *contra* Haysom 2018, 262–3). Instead, the execution and period of display of the composition(s) to which the ‘male torso with the lily collar’, the lily-crown and the other painted (relief) fragments belonged, predate the (re)installation of the upper floor, perhaps at the end of LM IB or early in LM II.

This revised chronological framework for the substantial remodelling in the southern part of the palace generally supports the LM I stylistic date of the relief fragments previously suggested by Evans (1928, 777 [LM IA]), Kaiser (1976, 284, 292 [LM IB]), Hood (2005, 68–9 [LM IA or IB]), Momigliano and Hood (1994, 129, 134), Macdonald (2005, 188 [LM IB]) and others. The execution of the male figure with the lily collar in painted stucco relief on a wall of the palace at Knossos was thus most plausibly created during the apogee of Minoan relief figurative art in LM I. Any conclusive reconstruction of the orientation and gesture of the male figure therefore needs to consider comparative evidence among the figural compositions that emerged during this period.

#### THE ODD ONE OUT: THE PRINCE OF THE LILIES AND MINOAN GESTURE STUDIES

Described above as the linchpin in the controversy surrounding the Prince of the Lilies figure, the fragment of the ‘male torso with the lily collar’ and with the right arm and fist bent to the chest has

inspired reconstructions that differ fundamentally not only in the orientation of the figure, but also in the gesture combination that comes as a result of it. In Evans' (and Shaw's) reconstruction, the Prince of the Lilies is a left-facing figure with his right fist placed on the chest (Figs 1, 6), thus displaying the hand pose referred to in various works on Minoan bodily comportment as fist-on-chest gesture. Depending on the type of gesturer and the context, this gesture has been variously interpreted as an expression of supplication, gratitude or respect, a gesture of prayer or salute, or an expression of pride or social superiority (e.g. Verlinden 1984, 137–9; Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1995, 111; Poole 2020, 102, n. 1; Kekes 2021, 617–29). However, the Prince of the Lilies remains conspicuously absent as a confirmed Minoan depiction of this arm pose, even though Shaw (2004, 72–3, 77) has suggested that ruler or high-status qualities might have been conveyed by the fist-on-chest gesture in analogy with representations of Egyptian and Near Eastern rulers. In other words, the famous large-scale representation has never been fully related to the group of figures that display the fist-on-chest gesture as their primary arm pose. As this group and the gesture displayed by it will be of importance further on, a few words are needed to explain exactly how they differ from other poses including one arm bent to the chest.

In LM I two-dimensional depictions, human figures usually have an orientation to one or the other side. This is due to their depiction either entirely in profile or with the head and lower part of their body in profile, while the torso is shown in frontal or three-quarter view. Therefore, each figure has a front side, which is the communicative side, and a back side (see also Murphy 2018, 17). In the depiction of non-symmetrical gestures, one arm is normally held at the front of the figure, the other arm at the side or, in fact, at the back of the figure. For obvious reasons, the primary communicative expression in non-symmetrical gestures is made with the arm on the front of the figure (or, more precisely, of the upper torso of the figure, since figures can have their upper body turn around). Or, as Murphy (2018, 9–10) recently put it, the arm held out in front of the body 'illustrates the *subject* of the communication' while the other arm defines 'the gesturing figure's *attitude* during communication'. The front side is the side that is naturally associated with the face, gaze and 'expressive surface' of the figure, and it is also, of course, the side that is closer to a communication partner or target object, if there is one. This pictorial convention applies to any LM I two-dimensional depictions of gestures that communicate dialogically or express an inner state, including original seal images and their impressions in clay. One may note that any question of left or right is irrelevant in this regard: it was not a matter of actual left or right, but of intuitive and logical representation and, essentially, of pictorial convention, which dictated the choice of arm in non-symmetrical gestures. Although the fist-on-chest gesture was probably a gesture made with the right hand in real human interactions, as is also suggested by the exclusively right-fist representations in clay and bronze figurines (e.g. Myres 1902/3, pl. X:6; Verlinden 1984, cat. nos 107 [Fig. 8*h*], 118, 130, 142), in two-dimensional renderings, conventional rules of depiction dictated that the primary expression was always shown on the front of the upper torso, which means that, when represented as a primary expression, any figure facing left placed their right hand on the chest (Fig. 8*aeg*), a figure facing right the left hand (Fig. 8*bcf*).

As for the 'male torso with the lily collar', Evans' and Shaw's reconstructions as a left-facing figure means that the Prince of the Lilies placed his right fist on his chest as the gesture that primarily defined his appearance, thus aligning him with the similarly gesturing figures in Fig. 8. However, as we have seen, the reconstruction as a left-facing figure is not the only possibility offered by the torso fragment, nor by LM I iconography. In Coulomb's and Niemeier's reconstructions and interpretations as the right-facing figure of a boxer or deity, respectively (Figs 4, 5), the bent right arm became the complementary arm to a missing primary one. Indeed, depictions of the fist held to the side of the torso as a complementary arm pose abound in LM I two-dimensional imagery.<sup>7</sup> Again, the question of left or right is irrelevant in the light of the pictorial conventions outlined above, as a figure facing left would have bent the left arm as a complementary arm pose to a primary right arm (Fig. 9*ac*), whereas a figure facing right

<sup>7</sup> On this specific subject see now Murphy 2018.

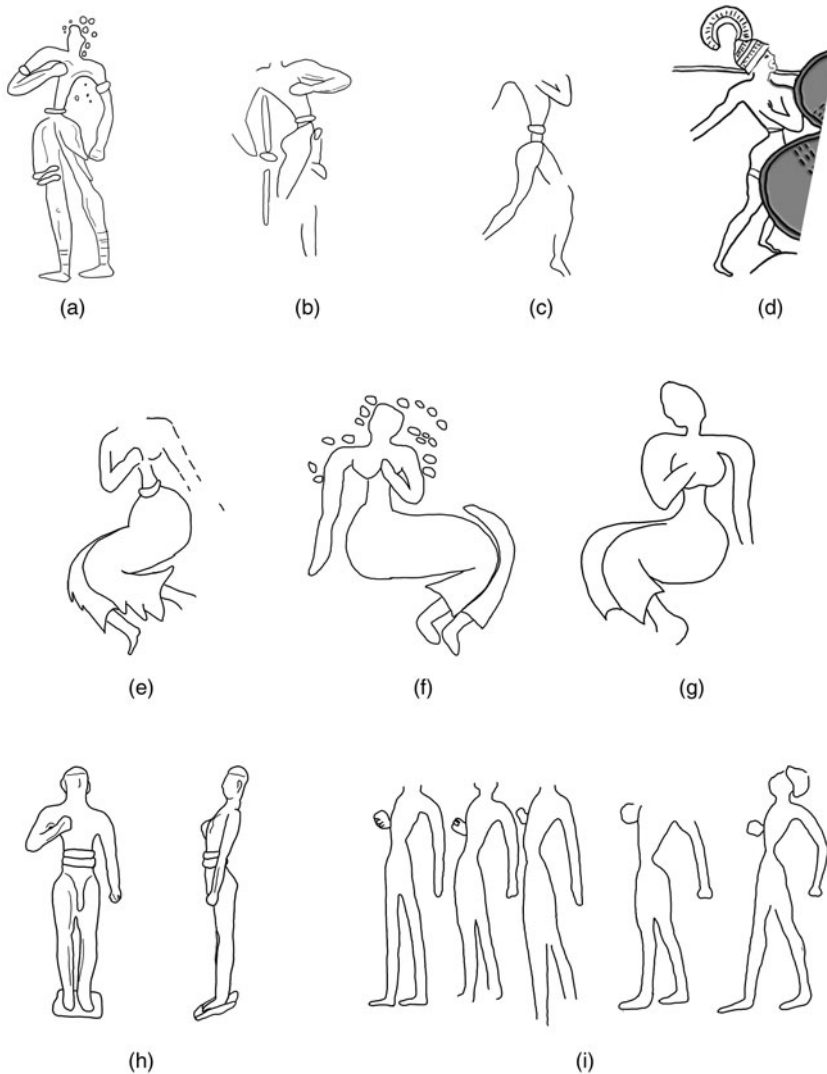


Fig. 8. Figures with one fist on the chest as a primary gesture: (a) detail of gold ring (original image) from Kalapodi; (b) detail of metal ring impression from Kato Zakros; (c) detail of metal ring impression from Knossos; (d) detail of Silver Battle Krater from Mycenae; (e) detail of metal ring impression from Ayia Triada; (f) detail of gold ring (original image) from 'Thebes'; (g) detail of metal ring impression from Chania; (h) bronze figurine from Tylissos; (i) 'spectators', miniature frieze, West House, Akrotiri. Drawings Ute Günkel-Maschek: after (a) *CMS VS3* no. 68; (b) *CMS II.7* no. 3; (c) *CMS II.8* no. 276; (d) Blakolmer 2007, pl. LVI:1; 'The Unseen Museum: the silver krater of the battle', online at <[www.namuseum.gr/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Unseen\\_krater.pdf](http://www.namuseum.gr/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Unseen_krater.pdf)> (accessed March 2023); (e) *CMS II.6* no. 5; (f) *CMS V* no. 199; (g) *CMS VS1A* no. 177; (h) Verlinden 1984, pl. 49, cat. no. 107; (i) Doumas 1999, 84, figs 46–7.

would have bent the right arm to the side of the chest (Fig. 9*b*). As regards the complementary role assigned to the bent right arm of a right-facing boxer or deity in the works of Coulomb and Niemer, respectively, complementing the primary action (striking a punch) or communicative expression (command) of the none-preserved left arm, at least Niemeier's version would also be conceivable against the background of LM I representational conventions.<sup>8</sup> However, as

<sup>8</sup> For the lack of accurate parallels for the bent right arm of Coulomb's boxer see already Niemeier 1987, 76–9; 1988, 238.

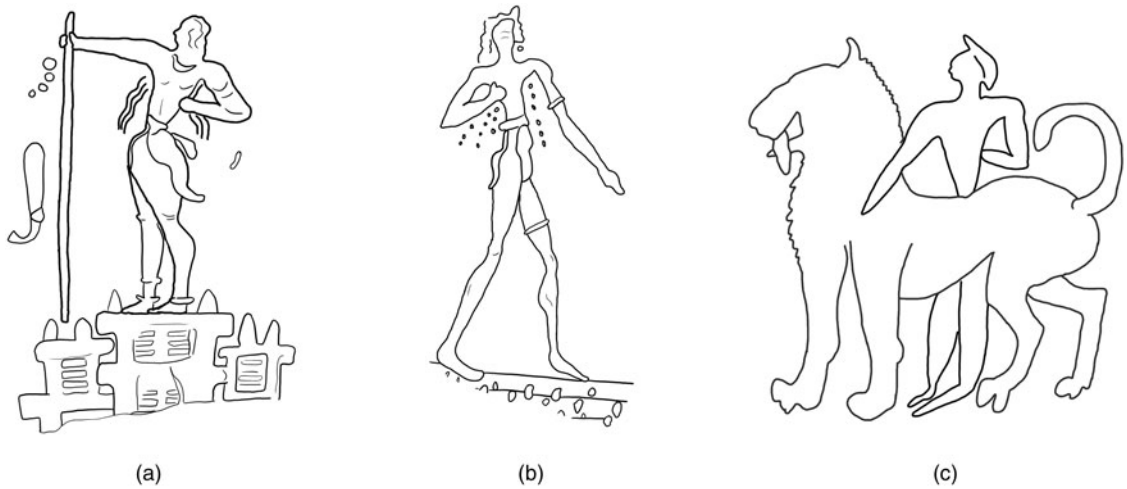


Fig. 9. Figures with one fist at the side of the chest as a complementary gesture: (a) detail of the so-called Master Impression from Chania; (b) detail of gold ring (original image) from Elatia; (c) seal stone (original image) from Knossos. Drawings Ute Günkel-Maschek, after (a) *CMS VS1* no. 142; (b) *CMS VS2* no. 106; (c) *CMS II.3* no. 24.

explained above, Shaw's (2004) careful observations highlight the problems of such reconstruction of the torso fragment into a figure facing to the right, and alongside it the identification of the bent right arm as the complementary one, although so far they seem to have fallen short of restoring the credibility of the Prince of the Lilies as a reliable example of the LM I fist-on-chest gesture.

From this discussion, two points emerge clearly. First is the key role of gesture as one of the defining elements of a figure's presence in a picture. As the formula chosen by the artist to convey the action, the communicative expression, the emotional state or the attitude of a figure, the gesture, along with its combination with the head and body posture, establishes the figure's role within the image, including its relationship to other beings or items (cf. Wedde 1999, 912; Morris 2001, 247–8; Murphy 2018, 14–15). This key role of gesture in the understanding of pictorial representations has also been increasingly recognised in Minoan archaeology in recent years and has been addressed in a variety of approaches. Whilst the Prince of the Lilies, as mentioned above, has largely been kept out of these discussions, it can be fairly said that the majority of the debate surrounding the Prince of the Lilies over the last 45 years has equally been dedicated to his gesture, which rightfully has been seen as a key to the original appearance, and hence significance, of the relief male figure on a wall of the LM I palace at Knossos. However, it is equally clear now that the question of whether the preserved right arm and fist represent the primary fist-on-chest gesture of a left-facing figure or the complementary arm pose of a right-facing figure can neither be solved based on the preserved arm pose alone nor by providing iconographical parallels for it, as both exist in LM I two-dimensional depictions.

This brings us to the second point: the need for an approach which allows us to conclusively answer the question of the figure's original orientation, and with it the question of its gesture. Such an approach can only lead to a convincing result if it succeeds in making sense of the 'male torso with the lily collar' as a product of LM I representational conventions. Iconography as a method makes it possible to uncover patterns and structures that result from the repeated use of representational strategies and can therefore be regarded as conventions prevailing at a particular time. It is reasonable to conclude that these were also realised in the rendering of a single figure created at that time. Consequently, also the surviving features of the 'male torso with the lily collar' can be expected to have been laid out and executed in accordance with the overall scheme of the man with the lily necklace as a figure oriented in one direction or the other, and to thereby reflect the representational conventions of the LM I period. It is therefore by means of iconographic analysis that we should try to identify pertinent evidence and thus

derive the most probable solution. Given the shortcomings of reconstructing the orientation and gesture of the figure from the preserved arm position alone, other conclusive evidence is needed here. This is where the second distinctive feature of the torso fragment comes into play: the ‘lily collar’.

#### THE ‘LILY COLLAR’

Draped across the chest from one shoulder to the other, the ‘lily collar’ has hitherto been overlooked as conclusive evidence for the orientation of the torso and, consequently, for the reconstructions proposed for the figure to which it belonged. The ‘lily collar’ is really a string of *waz*-lilies, a composite flower of lily calyx leaves and a papyrus spray (Evans 1928, 776), which was represented since the advanced Middle Minoan (MM) period. The calyxes of the lilies in the ‘lily collar’ each have a rounded bottom end.

In previous scholarship, consideration has mainly been given to the original colour of the *waz*-lily flowers and their symbolic significance, particularly in connection with the *waz*-lily crown. According to Evans, the *waz*-lilies had originally been ‘attached in separate pieces coloured to represent metal work’, though all that remained was the surface below with their shape printed on it ‘in its original ruddy hue against the faded surface of the rest of the torso’ (Evans 1900/1, 16; 1928, 781). Shaw (2004, 78) suggested that the *waz*-lilies, now flaked off, had been originally added through application of white impasto on the dry, red-painted surface, whereas Niemeier (1987, 76) argued that the flowers had originally been red, with the surrounding skin being of a lighter colour. An inherent question in this discussion is whether the *waz*-lilies are to be considered as ‘natural’ flowers or as beads and whether they form a garland, i.e. a string of ‘natural’ flowers, or a necklace imitating a garland of *waz*-lilies.

Peter Warren (1985, 198) cited the ‘circular garland or necklace of red lilies’ under consideration as a close parallel for Garland 5 in the Fresco of the Garlands from the LM IB North House at Knossos, the imitation of a wreath tied with red lily flowers (not *waz*-lilies) (Fig. 10; Warren 1985, 188, fig. 1). These lilies have no beads between them and seem to represent ‘natural’ flowers. By contrast, the round elements below the lilies and under the papyrus sprays dangling from patterned strings in the centre of each wreath can almost certainly be interpreted as artificial finials of the strings with which the garlands were tied into wreaths and hung onto the wall. Associated with globular beads, the dangling flower heads therefore represent pendants rather than actual flowers. In a similar function as finials, *waz*-lilies appear as pendants at the bottom of the nets attached to the kilts of male figures in the Procession Fresco from Knossos (Evans 1928, 726, fig. 453, suppl. pl. XXVI; 1935, 325, fig. 265; Effinger 1996, 66, ‘Fresko 10’ with fig.).

The garland knotted from bundles of crocus threads draped over the shoulders of the so-called Necklace Bearer in the wall-painting from Xeste 3 at Akrotiri also has no beads between the individual bundles (Fig. 11; Doulas 1999, 138–9, figs 101–2). Warren (1985, 204) and John Younger (1992, 262) saw the object as a string of gold flowers or a gold necklace imitating a garland, respectively. Ray Porter (2000, 623, figs 12–13), by contrast, identified it as a garland made of small bundles of fresh crocus stigmas, each of which had been ‘tied at their narrow ends to form fan-shaped clusters’. Against this background, and in view of the bead-like rounded ends of the lily calyxes, the ‘lily collar’ was most likely intended to represent a necklace of *waz*-lily beads (Evans 1928, 427), rather than a garland of ‘natural’ elements.

Curiously, *waz*-lily beads, i.e. *waz*-lily-shaped ornaments perforated lengthwise along the axis of the flower heads, are not found among the figurative necklace elements known from Late Bronze Age Crete or from the Greek mainland. In her study of Minoan jewellery, Maria Effinger (1996, 32–3) recorded a total of 52 relief beads in the form of lily flowers made of gold or glass paste. The perforation of the lily beads allowed for them to be filed one behind the other in either direction. Cretan examples of lily beads mainly date from the LM III A/B period and have been found at Isopata, Sellopoulou, Archanes, Knossos, Kalyvia, Gournes, Metochi Kalou and



Fig. 10. Garlands 1 to 5 (from left) in the Fresco of the Garlands, North House, Knossos. Drawing Ute Günkel-Maschek, after Warren 1985, 188, fig. 1b.



Fig. 11. The Necklace Bearer from Xeste 3, Akrotiri, Thera. Drawing Ute Günkel-Maschek, after Doumas 1999, fig. 101.

Episkopi. Similar lily beads made of gold foil or glass paste come from mainland tombs dating from the Late Helladic (LH) I and II periods to the LH IIIA/B period, including examples from Mycenae, Dendra, Argos, Nichoria, Prosymna, Thebes, Athens and Volos (Effinger 1996, 33, nos 499, 500; T.J. Papadopoulos and Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2012, 516, pl. CXXXb; Paschalidis 2012, pl. CXXXIXa:7749). None of these beads show a *waz*-lily.

Instead, the *waz*-lily motif was restricted to *pendants*. The perforation of pendants at the lower end of the lily calyx, often a round shape attached to the actual calyx, meant that *waz*-lily pendants were worn upside down rather than filed lengthwise on a string. Effinger recorded a total of 22 *waz*-lily



pendants, with examples made of gold foil, glass paste, ivory or lapis lazuli coming from LM IIIA Knossos, Kalyvia, Episkopi and Praisos<sup>9</sup> and from LH IIA to IIIB mainland tombs and buildings at Mycenae, Menidi, Prosymna, Spata and Dendra (Effinger 1996, 45, nos 728, 729; see also Poursat 1977; Laffineur 2012, pl. IIIA [centre]; Konstantinidi-Syvridi 2012, pl. LXIVb). A female figure wearing a necklace of alternating *waz*-lily and drop-shaped pendants has survived in the form of the so-called Ivory Lady from Prosymna (Konstantinidi-Syvridi 2012, 267, pl. LXIVa). The earliest example, however, is an otherwise unique pendant with a symmetrical arrangement of two *waz*-lilies enclosing a lotus surmounted by an additional *waz* to form an early version of the ‘sacral ivy’-‘papyrus stem’ motif. Made of local faience, the pendant was found in the Temple Repositories at Knossos, suggesting a date in the MM IIIB or early LM IA period (Evans 1921, 498, fig. 356; Effinger 1996, 45–6). According to Evans (1928, 476–7), ‘[t]he suggestion here of the lily is obviously taken from the same Nilotic source as the papyrus’.

Taken together, these precious pieces of jewellery confirm that, after an early, and possibly Egyptian-derived, origin at Knossos, the *waz*-lily had become an item of personal adornment appreciated by elites throughout the Aegean in the middle to late Late Bronze Age. Rendered either in plain red or with the addition of gold foil or white impasto, the *waz*-lilies on the LM I ‘male torso with the lily collar’ thus chronologically stand at the beginning of this motif’s success as precious jewellery – although not quite: whereas the *waz*-lilies on the torso fragment have a similar globular end as *waz*-lily pendants, their arrangement into a necklace of *waz*-lily beads remains without parallel in the material record. The *waz*-lily necklace painted on the relief torso from Knossos therefore either represents an earlier type of beaded necklace for which we have no archaeological comparanda or – and this seems to be the more plausible option – it is a purely artistic product designed to adorn the chest of a male figure with the symbolism associated with the *waz*-lily during the LM I period.

Although the *waz*-lily necklace thus remains without parallel in either case, there is one aspect which does allow for it to be compared iconographically with other necklaces and which is therefore most relevant to the question of the orientation of the torso: the orientation of the *waz*-lily flowers. The flowers open to the left from the spectator’s viewpoint. This means that, in the reconstructions proposed by Evans and Shaw, the flower heads open in the same direction as the gaze and orientation of their wearer (Figs 1, 6), whereas in the reconstructions proposed by Coulomb and Niemeier, the flower heads open towards the back of their wearer (Figs 4, 5). In the latter reconstructions, the artificial garland thus ‘runs’ in the opposite direction to the general forward orientation of the male figure.

This observation may seem trivial at first. However, it can be demonstrated that the orientation of the flowers is by no means random. Since the flowers on the string were to be rendered in profile, the painter of this necklace had two options: they could have oriented the necklace to the left from the spectator’s viewpoint, i.e. with flowers opening to the left, or to the right, i.e. with flowers opening to the right. The fact that they chose to open the flowers to the left is based on an aesthetic, but also practical, understanding of which side of a flower is the side one prefers to look at and how this should be translated into the two-dimensional form of the representation. In the early Late Bronze Age, this translation into two-dimensionality was based on representational conventions, and these can be gauged from other two-dimensional representations of necklaces and garlands that consist of elements with a clear orientation.

#### THE ORIENTATION OF NECKLACES AND GARLANDS IN EARLY LATE BRONZE AGE DEPICTIONS

Depictions of necklaces and garlands from around the same time as the ‘male torso with the lily collar’ at Knossos can be found both in Crete and at Akrotiri on Thera. To start with the latter,

<sup>9</sup> Effinger 1996, 45–6 with further references; see also Bossert 1921, 21, fig. 228c, for gold pendants from Phaistos.

mention has already been made of the figure of the so-called Necklace Bearer wearing a garland of bundles of saffron threads draped over her shoulders in a wall-painting from Xeste 3 (Fig. 11; Doumas 1999, 138–9, figs 101–2). The figure faces right, so the front of the figure is to the right. In each bundle, the saffron threads are held together at one end and fan out from there. The larger side of the fan thus forms the front of the bundle. Joined together in a string of eleven bundles and tied with a knot with a bow, the garland is draped with the fans opening towards the right, i.e. the front of the wearer and the direction of her gaze and movement. In other words, the saffron bundles open towards an imaginary viewer looking at the Necklace Bearer within the same picture plane, who would have seen the front of the bundles, not their backs (Fig. 12).

In another wall-painting from the building's upper floor, the figure of the so-called Seated Goddess wears a necklace consisting of a row of six differently coloured ducks (Fig. 13).<sup>10</sup> Once again, the ducks are facing forward, i.e. in the same direction as the seated female figure. They thus appear to be 'facing' the blue monkey and the girl emptying her bucket, who have stepped in front of the Seated Goddess. If the necklace had been draped the other way round, the ducks would have been 'swimming away' from the painted onlookers, turning their backs on them. It is easy to see that this would not have been the desired impression.

The fact that not only their elements, but the necklaces as a whole had a front side and a back side is also evident from other factors, such as the colouring of beads or their positioning according to a scheme. The former is confirmed by another necklace worn by the same Seated Goddess (Fig. 13), namely the necklace with dragonfly-shaped beads: the necklace as a whole consists of alternating pairs of beads of the same colour, yellow and blue, representing gold and silver.<sup>11</sup> The colour pattern starts with two yellow dragonflies on the left side of the figure (from the spectator's viewpoint), i.e. at the front, while only one yellow dragonfly appears on the right side, i.e. at the back. The full scheme was thus rendered at the front side of the figure, whereas it was acceptable to shorten it for reasons of space at the back side. The same applies to the beads grouped in pairs on the necklace of one of the crocus gatherers in the same wall-painting (Fig. 14; Doumas 1999, 154–5, figs 118–19). The pattern is shown in its entirety on the side of the figure that is to be understood as the front side. The side further away from her interlocutor, on the left from our point of view, is therefore the back side of the frontally represented upper body, the side irrelevant to the interaction between the two figures. Here, on the back, the two-bead pattern of the necklace is again shortened to one bead.

The wall-paintings from Akrotiri thus show in detail a pictorial convention which in the early Late Bronze Age determined the depiction of necklaces and garlands with individual elements aligned or with certain colour schemes or arrangements of beads. The same convention can be observed in Crete. The fragments of wall-painting from Knossos attributed by Evans to the LM I 'Ladies in Blue' include several instances of jewellery with beads that have a direction (Fig. 15a; Evans 1921, 545, fig. 397; Hood 2005, cat. no. 32, pls 20:2, 28:1; Dimopoulou-Rethemiotaki 2005, 304–5, fig.): in the fragment depicting a female, awkwardly twisted (Immerwahr 2005, 173–4), right hand holding a beaded necklace between her fingers and thumb, the necklace at the bottom consists of unidirectional flower-shaped beads in two alternating colours that open away from the hand (Fig. 15a [figure on left]). The figure has been correctly reconstructed as looking to the right. A similarly oriented necklace appears on another fragment from the same group, which belongs to a second woman facing right (Fig. 15a [figure on right]).<sup>12</sup> The bracelets of the same two figures provide further examples of beads with a

<sup>10</sup> Doumas 1999, 162–3, figs 125–6. For duck-shaped beads from Knossos and Aegina, although with a different perforation of the beads and, therefore, a different appearance of the overall necklace when worn, see Effinger 1996, pl. 9b; Sgouritsa 2012, pl. CXXXVIII.

<sup>11</sup> For a copper bead in the shape of a dragonfly from Mochlos see Soles 2012, pl. CXIIIb.

<sup>12</sup> The hand drawn across her chest represents a figure's left hand and was consequently reconstructed as belonging to the other woman 'reaching over to finger the necklace of her neighbour' (Immerwahr 2005, 173; on the reconstruction see Evans 1921, 545, fig. 397). However, given the rendering of the right hand of the figure on the left, it is equally possible that the left hand shown in front of the right figure's chest actually belongs to the same figure, i.e. that it is actually her right hand in the same awkwardly twisted rendering as her neighbour's. A

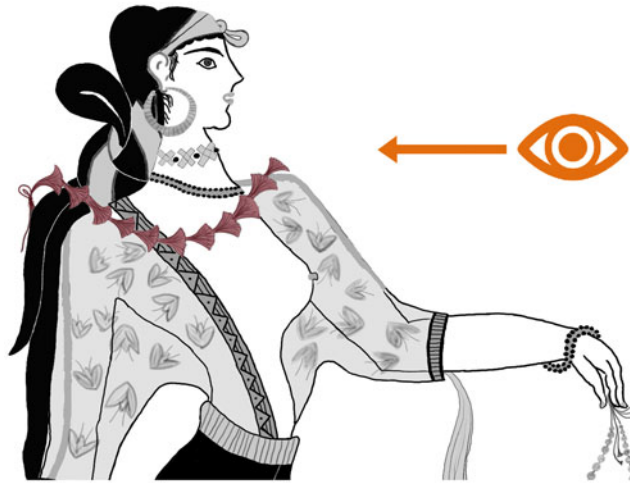


Fig. 12. Detail of the Necklace Bearer in Fig. 11, with eye symbolising a viewer within the picture plane. Drawing Ute Günkel-Maschek, adapted from Fig. 11.

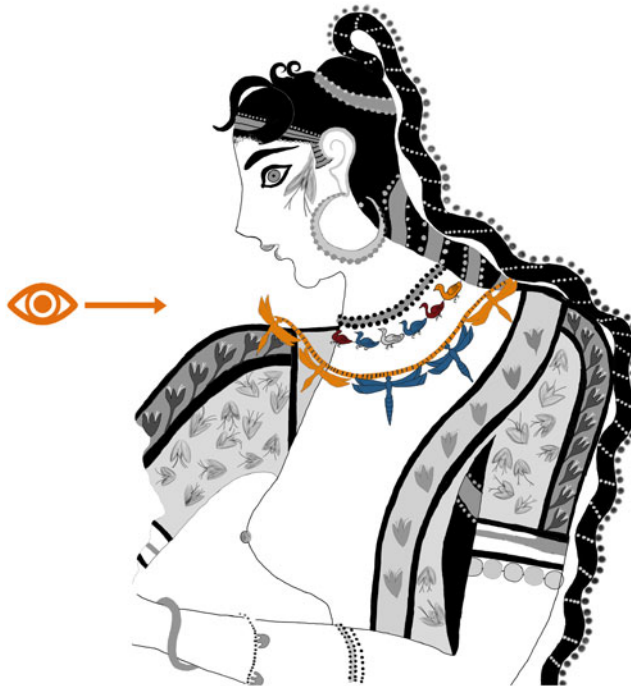


Fig. 13. Seated Goddess from Xeste 3, Akrotiri, Thera, with eye symbolising a viewer within the picture plane. Drawing Ute Günkel-Maschek, after Doumas 1999, 162, fig. 125.

frontal orientation: both consist of papyrus beads in alternating colours, with the sprays opening away from the women wearing them, i.e. towards a potential – imaginary, or depicted and now lost – onlooker facing them within the picture plane (orange eye in Fig. 15a).

In the same painting, the orientation of the jewellery beads towards the viewer looking at the wearer is also confirmed by another pictorial element, namely the women's hair ornaments. Such hair ornaments were naturally placed on the back of the head. They were therefore not

---

very similar rendering of the same hand position can be found in the later depiction of the so-called Mycenaia (Immerwahr 2005, 174).

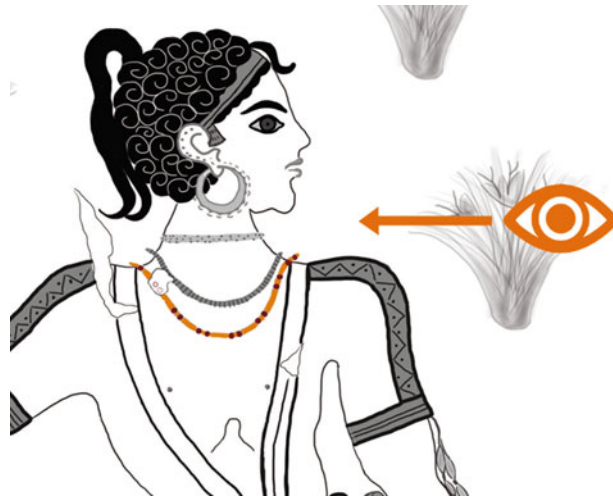


Fig. 14. Crocus Gatherer from Xeste 3, Akrotiri, Thera, with eye symbolising a viewer within the picture plane. Drawing Ute Günkel-Maschek, after Doumas 1999, 154, fig. 118.

visible to an (imaginary or depicted) viewer looking from in front, but presented their ‘nice’ top side to a viewer looking at the wearer from behind (blue eye in Fig. 15a). Accordingly, we find the spray-shaped papyrus beads in the women’s hair ornaments in the opposite direction: for example, on the ‘Lady’ on the right in Fig. 15a, where four beads of a string of beads have been preserved with their fan shapes opening to the left.<sup>13</sup> A second fragment with a female figure in the same style from another area of the palace confirms this orientation of the fan-shaped beads as hair ornament (Fig. 15b; Evans 1928, 681, fig. 431).

The representation of beads, and of necklaces as a whole, with an orientation, i.e. with a front side and a back side, in two-dimensional Minoan representations was thus based on a set of artistic conventions. These, in turn, were based on aesthetic preferences according to which beads in the form of unidirectional figural motifs should be facing a viewer looking at the wearer within the picture plane, whether represented or imagined. In the case of floral motifs on necklaces, this means that the top view of the flower was considered to be its front side, rather than the underside of the calyx. Translated into profile, this means that floral motifs were generally draped in such a way that a viewer looking at the wearer within the picture plane would see the ‘nice’ top of the flower rather than its underside.

One could, of course, argue that real necklaces could be worn more flexibly. Beads in the shape of lily flowers, papyrus flowers, ivy leaves or argonauts from later archaeological contexts could indeed be draped around the neck in either direction.<sup>14</sup> In theory, therefore, there would at least have been the possibility to depict necklaces with the beads facing one way or the other. However, the examples given above clearly show that, in practice, the choice between the two possibilities was always made in favour of the orientation in which the elements of the jewellery (including garlands) opened up to a viewer (within the picture plane) looking at the wearer from the side that the item in question adorned: necklaces, garlands and also bracelets worn on the front of the body to a (represented or imaginary) viewer in front (Figs 12, 13, 15a [viewer symbolised by orange eye]); hair ornaments to a viewer looking from behind (Fig. 15ab [viewer symbolised by blue eye]). There are, to my knowledge, no examples to contradict this iron rule in the surviving images from the early Late Bronze Age Aegean. This leads to the unequivocal conclusion that the orientation of necklaces and garlands in two-dimensional renderings always corresponded to the orientation of the person wearing them.

<sup>13</sup> Evans 1921, 545, fig. 397. Note that the string of beads running in the opposite direction above the one mentioned was not preserved on the original fragments and has been incorrectly restored in the reconstruction on display in the Heraklion Museum (here in line drawing in Fig. 15a).

<sup>14</sup> Dimopoulou-Rethemiotaki 2005, 315–23, figs; see also Effinger 1996 for these and other unidirectional shapes, with further references.

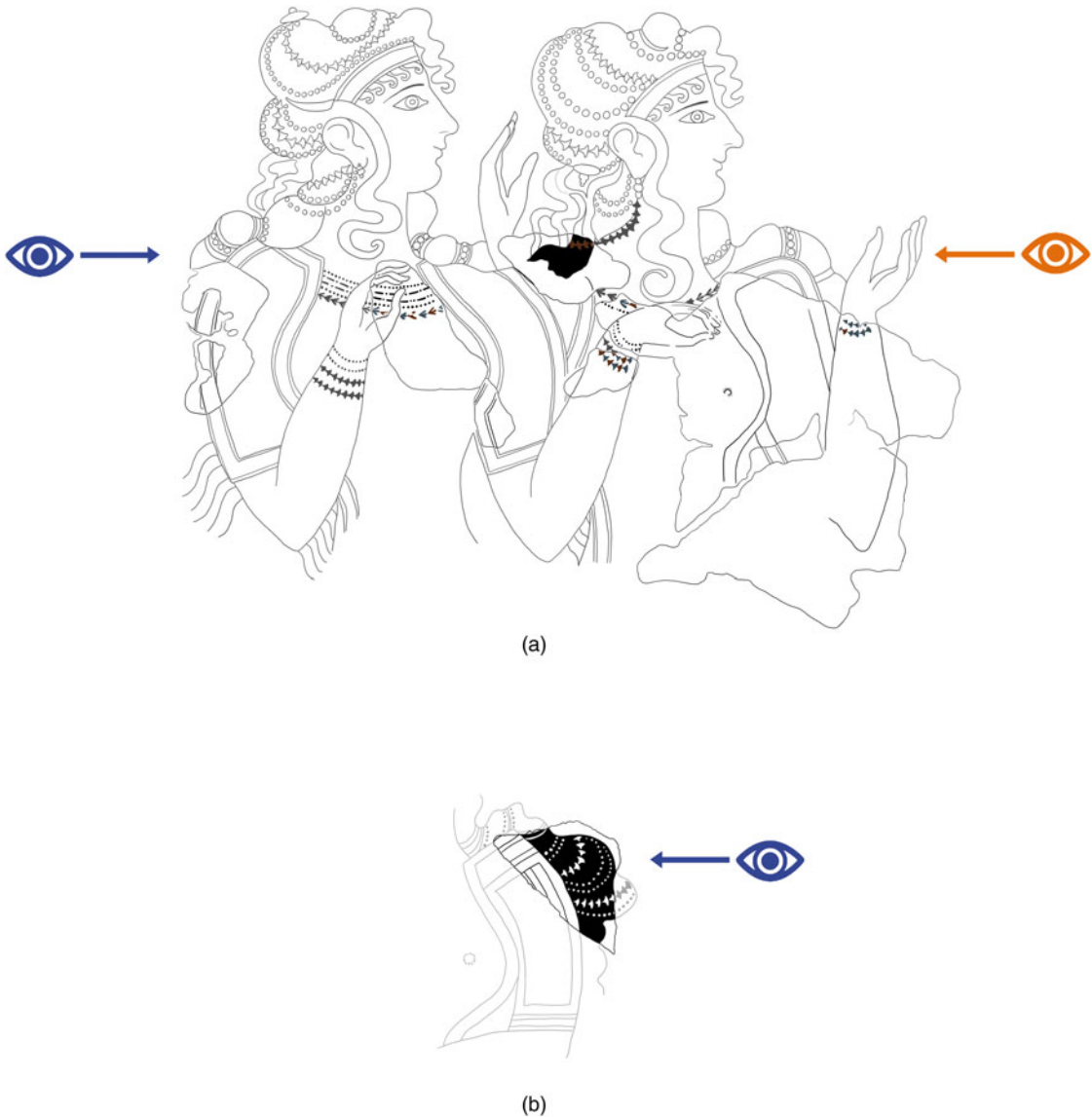


Fig. 15. Detail of (a) the ‘Ladies in Blue’ and (b) another ‘Lady’ from Knossos, with orange eye symbolising a viewer looking from in front, blue eye symbolising a viewer looking from behind within the picture plane. Drawing Ute Günkkel-Maschek, after (a) Evans 1921, 545, fig. 397; Dimopoulou-Rethemiotaki 2005, 304–5, fig.; (b) Evans 1928, 681, fig. 431).

#### THE ORIENTATION AND GESTURE OF THE ‘MAN WITH THE WAZ-LILY NECKLACE’

Having established that the depiction of unidirectional elements of jewellery in two-dimensional representations from early Late Bronze Age Crete and Thera was based on pictorial conventions just as much as the depiction of non-symmetrical arm poses, we are now in the position to safely determine (a) the orientation of the figure to which the ‘male torso with the lily collar’ (Figs 2, 3) once belonged and (b) its original arm pose.

Based on the conventions of the time for depicting necklaces and garlands with unidirectional beads, the opening of the flowers to the left can be taken as a clear indication that the original orientation of the figure to which the torso once belonged was to the left. Consequently, the preserved right arm was folded *in front of* the upper torso, the clenched fist held against the

chest, as in the reconstructions proposed by Evans and Shaw (Figs 1, 6). The other arm was held behind the body, with remains of long black strands of hair visible underneath. By comparison, in the reverse orientation of the figure proposed by Coulomb and Niemeier (Figs 4, 5), the *waz*-lilies present their backsides to a (depicted or imagined) viewer looking frontally at the figure in the picture plane. As we have seen, such a representation would have run against the early Late Bronze Age conventions for creating a formally correct and aesthetically pleasing appearance of the necklace.

The torso can thus be conclusively assigned to a figure which has its fist placed on the chest as the primary arm pose. This excludes all the comparative examples considered so far, in which the complementary arm is bent at the side of the torso (as in Fig. 9). On the ‘male torso with the lily collar’ (Figs 2, 3), the complementary arm is not preserved. Instead, qualifying comparative examples are figures that have the primary arm bent and the fist resting on the chest at the front side of the body. As already indicated, these also exist in the iconography of the LM I period (Fig. 8). A closer look at these figures and how they perform the fist-on-chest gesture can help to develop a clearer idea of the gesture and overall appearance of the male figure to which the ‘male torso with the lily collar’ belonged.

A man holding his fist to his chest appears on an LM I gold ring which was found *in situ* with burial B in chamber tomb IV of the necropolis at Kalapodi in 1997/8 and is now in the Archaeological Museum at Atalanti (Fig. 16; CMS VS3 no. 68; Dakoronia and Dimaki 2004). Despite the mainland find context, the style of the depiction and the shape of the ring are clearly indicative of an LM I original (Pini 2004, 28). The man is standing with his upper body turned almost frontally, his second arm curved down at the other side of his body. He wears a loincloth with a double-hemmed front flap and a double-layered back flap. Long locks of hair, indicated by dots, cascade from his head down the back, where they can be seen under his lowered arm. Each upper arm is decorated with a bracelet. The man is accompanied by a female figure, with whom he forms a couple that is also known from other depictions (CMS VI no. 280; II.7 no. 5; cf. Poole 2020, 130; Kekes 2021, 628). They are framed by two further female figures, each holding the primary hand to the chest. The male figure is considerably taller than the female figures and dominates the scene not only by his posture but also by the space given to him. The depiction of a ‘spike’ motif above links the scene to the LM I cycle of religious depictions, which shared this motif along with other floating symbols (cf. Kyriakidis 2005; Rethemiotakis 2016/17). The meaning of the scene, however, remains elusive.

A man with his fist raised to his chest also appears on the impression of a metal ring from Kato Zakros (Fig. 17; CMS II.7 no. 3). The man stands with both shoulders in an almost frontal view, the second arm lowered behind his body, the hand holding a staff. The staff adds a status object to the man’s appearance, although it does not fulfil the same ‘commanding’ function as if he were holding it in his outstretched hand in front of his body (as, for example, in Fig. 9a). Similar male figures with a staff held at the side of the body as their attribute occur in a seal impression from Kato Zakros (CMS II.7 no. 4), which shows a male figure standing with his back to a vertical structure, and in the Sacred Grove and Dance Fresco from Knossos (Evans 1930, 83, fig. 46). In neither case can the position of the primary arm be determined, except that it was raised.

In the Kato Zakros impression in Fig. 17, however, it is the fist raised to the chest that conveys the primary, communicative meaning of the man with the staff. In front of him is a man prostrating himself, followed by two other men in ‘Syrian’ robes. Again, the man with the fist on his chest and the staff as his attribute emerges as the dominant subject, with another figure showing submission to him and/or the authority he represents.

Men with the same primary gesture appear in two further depictions, which are in some way related to one another. One is the scene on the Silver Battle Krater from Shaft Grave IV at Mycenae (Fig. 18).<sup>15</sup> The other is a scene from a metal ring that has survived on a number of fragmentary sealings from Knossos (Fig. 19; CMS II.8 no. 276). Both depictions feature a man,

<sup>15</sup> Sakellariou 1968; Blakolmer 2007. See also ‘The Unseen Museum: the silver krater of the battle’, online at <[www.namuseum.gr/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Unseen\\_krater.pdf](https://www.namuseum.gr/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Unseen_krater.pdf)> (accessed March 2023).

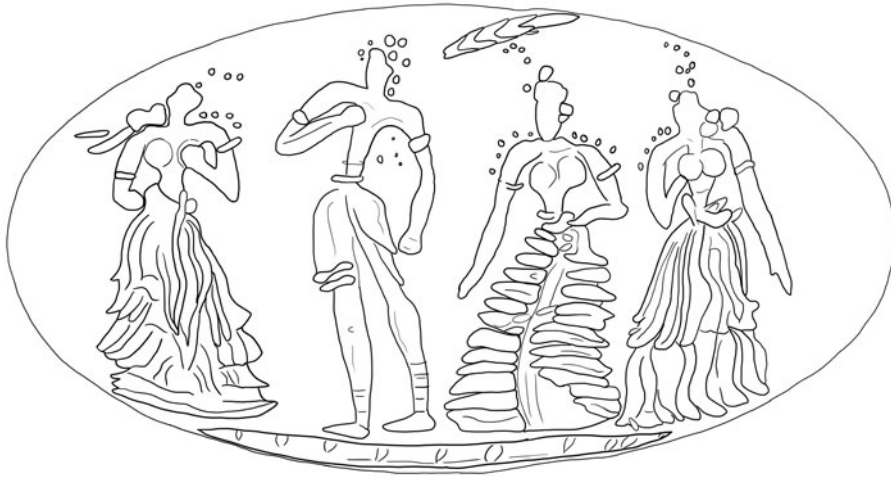


Fig. 16. Gold ring (original image) from Kalapodi. Drawing Ute Günkel-Maschek, after *CMS* VS3 no. 68.

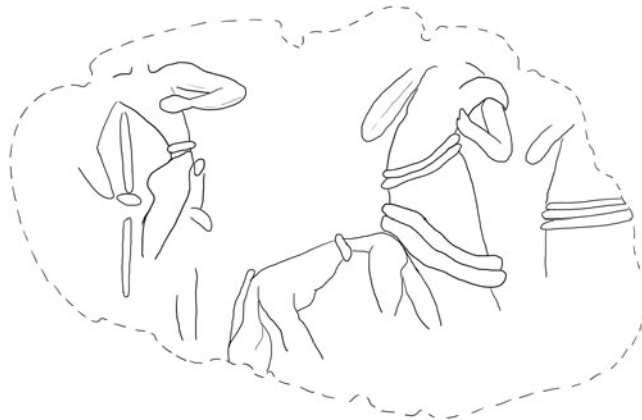


Fig. 17. Impression made from a metal ring, from Kato Zakros. Drawing Ute Günkel-Maschek, after *CMS* II.7 no. 3.

who is following behind a group of warriors with figure-of-eight shields, his fist placed on the chest. On the Silver Battle Krater, the warriors are engaged in battle with another group of warriors, who are distinguished by a different type of shield (Fig. 18). On the seal impression, the warriors form a kind of procession or parade, or even march into battle (Fig. 19).

In both depictions, the man making the gesture in question is unarmed, except for a helmet (not preserved in the clay sealing). The wide stance with legs bent at the knee implies that he is running. Due to this accentuated forward movement, the overall impression of the figure is quite different from the static and imposing posture of the male fist-on-chest gesturers in the first two depictions (Figs 16, 17). Yet, although the man is running, his arms are not in the position typical of running figures that we find, for example, in the Captain of the Blacks Fresco from Knossos and in the miniature friezes from the West House at Akrotiri (Evans 1928, pl. XIII; Doumas 1999, 70, fig. 35, 79, fig. 38). Instead, the clenched fist on the chest conveys a communicative statement, suggesting that this man, far from being ‘last in line’ in the group of warriors with figure-of-eight shields, may in fact have played an important role in the depicted narrative. The warrior scenes on the Silver Battle Krater from Mycenae and on the seal

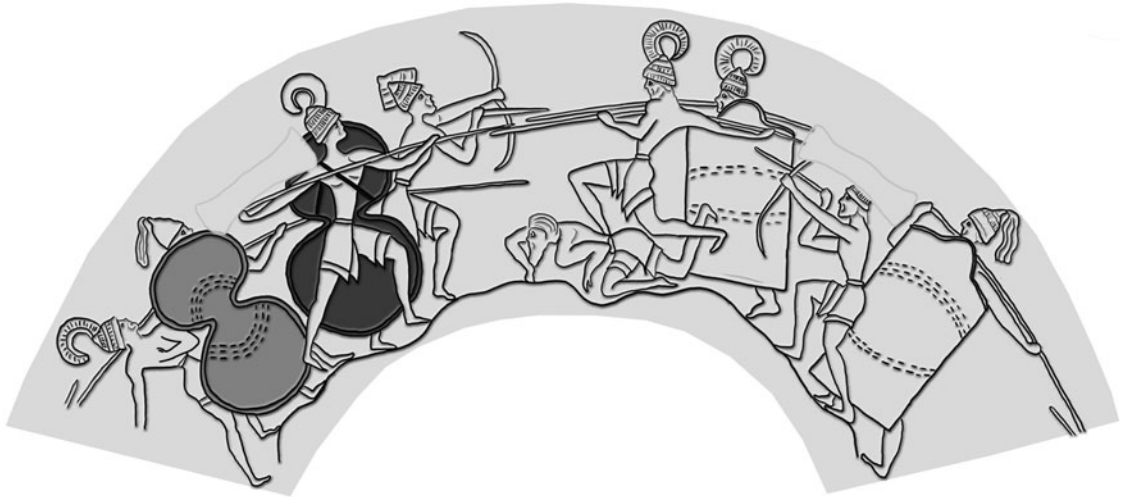


Fig. 18. Silver Battle Krater, Shaft Grave IV, Mycenae. Drawing Ute Günkel-Maschek, after Blakolmer 2007, pl. LVI:1; ‘The Unseen Museum: the silver krater of the battle’, online at <[www.namuseum.gr/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Unseen\\_krater.pdf](http://www.namuseum.gr/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Unseen_krater.pdf)> (accessed March 2023).

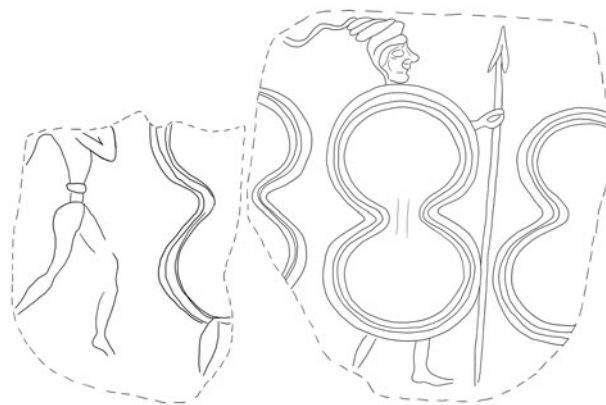


Fig. 19. Impressions made from a metal ring, from Knossos. Drawing Ute Günkel-Maschek, after CMS II.8 no. 276.

impressions from Knossos, for which a possible existence of painted stucco reliefs serving as the prototype has been suggested (Blakolmer 2018, 144–5), thus open up yet another and rather different setting for male fist-on-chest gesturers within the visual narratives appreciated by the early Late Bronze Age palatial elites.

Last but not least, male fist-on-chest gesturers also occurred in two different sorts of multi-figure settings: on votive figurines made of clay or bronze (e.g. Fig. 8*h*), which were placed on display in sanctuaries and shrines, and among the group of ‘spectators’ in the miniature frieze from the south wall of room 5 in the West House at Akrotiri, Thera (Fig. 8*i*). In both contexts, the gesture appears alongside other expressions that are directed towards an external focus – the presumably divine recipient of the votive act and the approaching flotilla, respectively. Particularly noteworthy is the profile rendering of the left-facing ‘spectators’, in which only their right fists are visible in front of their chests, thereby contributing to the impression that the gesture is just one of many communicative expressions towards the focal event.



Men holding the fist to the chest as their primary communicative gesture were thus depicted on different occasions, with the manner and constellations in which they appeared varying considerably. Although this reinforces the notion that the gesture could take on different nuances of meaning in different contexts, the particular depiction of the ‘male torso with the lily collar’, with the frontal chest and the raised and bent right arm, nevertheless helps to pinpoint its formally closest relatives and thus further delineate the symbolic impact of his posture.

The frontal depiction of the upper torso is a choice with tangible consequences: while the profile view was preferred in a case in which the individual gesturer was meant to blend in with the crowd of ‘spectators’ (Fig. 8*i*), the frontal view enlarges the space occupied by the figure and thus its visibility as an individual contributor to the overall composition. Murphy (2018, 16–17) recently explained how the chest in Minoan art fulfilled a significant symbolic role not only as a marker of physical identity, providing information on the gesturer’s gender and age, but as an ‘area bearing strong personal connotations’. By actively placing the fist on the frontally depicted chest as the primary gesture, the figures not only draw attention to their personal identity or the social role they represent, but make this the primary subject of their communicative statement and defining element of their presence in the picture. The clenched fist (as opposed to the flat hand) lends a sense of determination to this intention of personal expression. However, the vigour with which this intention is conveyed also depends heavily on the relationship of the bent arm to the body and its overall posture.

In Figs 16 and 17, the performers of fist-on-chest are standing with their backs pushed through, their upper bodies lifted together with the elbow in front. The flexed arm is raised with the elbow pointing forward, the other arm held down in an expansive curve. These figures thus dominate the surrounding space and distinguish themselves from the other figures in it (cf. Poole 2020, 129–30; Kekes 2021, 628). By comparison, the men appearing behind the shield-bearers in scenes of parade and combat lack this particular sense of distinctiveness (Figs 18, 19). Unlike in the previous examples, the almost vertical upper arms are here attached to the upper torso, resulting in their fist-on-chest gesture being more contained. Although drawing attention to their unarmed, masculine, perhaps even ‘heroic’ appearance, they are not expanding into the space in the same way as the men in Figs 16 and 17, nor are they communicating their role to their fellow warriors. The notion of containedness is taken even a stage further by seated females holding the fist centrally to the chest (Fig. 8*efg*): here, the ‘deferential tilt’ of the heads of the seated female figures is indeed suggestive of subordination, reverence or gratitude (cf. Poole 2020, 102, n. 1, 130; Kekes 2021, 622–4; a similar notion is conveyed by the two framing female figures in Fig. 16).

The interplay of the postures of the arm, the head and the upper body thus determines how the fist-on-chest gesture comes across in each context. In Figs 16 and 17, the imposing, outward-looking emphasis on the personal presence and communicative intention of the male figures, which emerges from their posture and expansive arm position, goes hand in hand with evidence of their specific status, such as their size in one case and the staff as a status object in the other, as well as their placement in relation to the other figures in the same depiction (cf. Morris 2001, 248–9; Poole 2020). By contrast, the warriors in Figs 18 and 19 appear to be on a par with the shield-bearers, whose line they join, the gesture explaining their contribution to the overall narrative. These examples also demonstrate that the subject (e.g. gratitude, respect, salute) of the fist-on-chest gesture remains elusive without an understanding of the depicted narrative. The subtle differences in the representation of the position of the arm within the overall composition nevertheless make it possible to assign the communicative expression either to a figure that dominates the scene or to a figure that blends in with its surroundings on an equal footing.

These insights also help to outline more clearly the original appearance of the man to which the ‘male torso with the lily collar’ belonged. The frontal chest and the angle created by the bent right arm are similar to male figures displaying the expansive posture (Figs 16, 17). The torso thus belonged to a figure standing in a still, upright pose, his gaze ahead, the right arm folded in front of the body with the elbow pointing forward, the forearm and fist drawn diagonally back to the chest (Fig. 20). The left arm would have been held in a downward pose on the other side of the body, perhaps in a similarly expansive curve as on the Kalapodi gold ring (Fig. 16) with the hand clenched in a fist close to the backflap of the loincloth. The loincloth and leg fragments found with the torso possibly belonged to the same figure, though not the plumed lily-crown, for

the reasons given above. Still, the relief ear beneath the lily-crown should alert us to the strong likelihood that, beyond the edge of the beginning relief neck, the head and face of the ‘Man with the *waz*-lily Necklace’ were also executed in painted stucco relief rather than in flat painting.<sup>16</sup>

The image thus reconstructed from the ‘male torso with the lily collar’ is that of a man standing imposingly with his right fist firmly on the frontally depicted chest, the left arm curved down in what would have been the most expansive depiction of a male fist-on-chest gesturer in the context of LM I iconography. The comparative examples for this pose give an idea of his ‘commanding stance’ (Poole 2020, 130) and thus of the superiority that would have radiated from the ‘Man with the *waz*-Lily Necklace’ – either as a single figure<sup>17</sup> or within a multi-figure composition. Even if the specific meaning of the fist-on-chest gesture itself remains elusive, the emphasis thus placed on the chest reinforces the understanding of the chest not as a mere canvas for the fist gesture, but as a constitutive element of it. In this light, the *waz*-lily necklace that so prominently adorns the carefully sculpted male torso once again comes into view and invites us to further explore its possible contribution to the figure’s meaning.

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE *WAZ*-LILY NECKLACE

As early as 1901, Evans described the *waz*-lily necklace as ‘a kind of chain of honour of the same lily pattern [as the crown] round the neck. We seem to have here parts of the actual effigies of Mycenaean kings and princes’ (cited after Bosanquet 1901, 336; Niemeier 1987, 71). About the lily, he wrote a year later that it ‘possessed a special sanctity in the Minōan religion [as] is shown by its appearance on the head of the seated Mother Goddess and in the hand of one of her votaries, on the great signet from Mycenae, as well as by its association with the Priest-Kings of Knossos’ (Evans 1902/3, 128). By the time of his 1928 publication, Evans (1928, 792) had reached the opinion that the *waz*-lily necklace ‘may well have stood for the highest of Minoan “orders”. The lily ... was pre-eminently the sacred flower.’ Its combination ‘with the upper part of the papyrus symbol or *waz* [intensified] the religious value of the symbol’ (Evans 1928, 473).

Since then, the lily necklace has been variously described as an *insignium* (Burrows 1907, 19; Shaw 2004, 82; N. Marinatos 2007, esp. 271), an ‘*Ordenskette*’ (Karo 1930, 179) or even a necklace with the significance ‘Land of Crete’, by analogy with Egyptian necklaces and crowns (S. Marinatos 1951, 110–11). And it has been suggested that such *insignium* in the shape of the *waz*-lily could be bestowed upon special people or one single person to confer legitimacy to a newly acquired religious and/or secular status (Shaw 2004, 82) or to designate its wearer as a god, ruler or man of highest social status (N. Marinatos 2007, 271). Unlike the lily-crown, which is most closely related to crowns with a lily or papyrus-shaped topper found mainly on the heads of sphinxes and priestesses and therefore cannot be regarded as reliable evidence that male figures were crowned with exactly such a headdress, the *waz*-lily necklace was unquestionably chosen to adorn the chest of a male figure. As we have previously seen, the growing appreciation of the hybrid flower and its symbolism as a personal item worn on the body is well reflected from the LM I period onward by its popularity as a jewellery ornament. It is hence worthwhile to survey the available evidence for further information on its particular usage.

From around the same time as the previously mentioned faience pendant from the Temple Repositories, *waz*-lilies appeared in textile decoration: an MM IIIB/LM IA fragment of painted plaster from the North-West Fresco Heap at Knossos depicts a series of white *waz*-lily flower heads with blue papyrus sprays on a red band (Evans 1930, 130, fig. 85; Hood 2005, 58–60, cat. no. 3). The miniature depiction represents an embroidery design and thus an emblematic use of the motif on what may have been a female figure’s dress. Also as a textile design, now with a

<sup>16</sup> Coulomb 1979, 34–5; Blakolmer 2006, 15; for a stucco relief head from Knossos, see Blakolmer 2006, 23, fig. 6.

<sup>17</sup> In this case, an interesting parallel is offered by a carved ivory tusk from chamber tomb 55 at Mycenae, which depicts a man standing between two recumbent goats, next to an Egyptian-style column with a ‘palmette orientale’ at its top and a bird with spread wings above; see Poursat 1977, 94–5, cat. no. 301/2916, pls XXX, XXXI.



Fig. 20. Reconstruction of the 'Man with the *waz*-Lily Necklace' from Knossos. Drawing Ute Günkel-Maschek, with insets from Figs 1 and 3.

double-*waz*, *waz*-lilies appear in the diamond fields of a net pattern in an LM I wall-painting from the 'villa' at Epano Zakros.<sup>18</sup> Here, the red flowers spring from rosettes that mark the intersections of the net. Red 'lily-chains' were also part of the design.

Interestingly, actual depictions of *waz*-lilies as growing plants were confined to pottery decoration. Depicted from the LM IA period onwards (e.g. Niemeier 1985, 54–6, fig. 16), and

<sup>18</sup> Shaw and Chapin 2016, 107–8, fig. 4:2. For a bronze plaque featuring a similar depiction of a double-*waz*-lily, see Niemeier 1985, 54–5, fig. 16:4.

perhaps ‘inspired by the art of goldsmithing and toreutics’ (Niemeier 1985, 56 [my translation]), it seems that the flower was here ‘naturalised’ to fit in with the preferred floral design of this medium. An LM II ritual jug from the Unexplored Mansion at Knossos shows a ‘lily-chain’ with *waz*-topping together with ‘horns of consecration’ and a figure-of-eight shield (Warren 1985, 197–8, fig. 7). In the LM IIIA period, the *waz* tops an upright ‘lily-chain’ on one of the short ends of a larnax from Knossos (Morgan 1987, 185–6, fig. 9). Overall, it can be noted that, while the chronologically latest examples date from the LM IIIA1 period, in terms of stylistic similarity, the *waz*-lilies in the necklace possess their closest parallels in the pottery decoration of the LM I period.<sup>19</sup>

In other media, and quite unlike the red and white lilies known from Minoan landscape depictions, *waz*-lilies did not appear as growing plants, nor were they depicted as part of MM III to LM I natural landscapes. The only counterexample is a Minoan-style wall-painting from Avaris depicting *waz*-lilies against a red background, each consisting of a large yellow and blue papyrus flower inside a white lily-flower calyx supported by blue leafy stems (Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 57–8, fig. 12). According to Bietak and Marinatos (1995, 57), it ‘may have belonged to one of the hunting or acrobatic scenes with a similar background’. However, as there is no comparable evidence from early Late Bronze Age Crete, the inclusion of the *waz*-lily in the landscape at Avaris should rather be seen as an adaptation to the Egyptian environment of the wall-painting.<sup>20</sup>

Further depictions in metal repoussé, jewellery, and wall- and vase-painting extend the use of the *waz*-lily as primarily an ornamental element. The rim of a bronze basin from the so-called ‘Treasury’ outside the north-west angle of the palace, which depicts ‘*waz*-lilies with beaded terminations below and flowing plumes above’, was cited by Evans (1928, 779) as a parallel for the *waz*-lily topping the lily crown of his Priest-King. Elsewhere, *waz*-lily pendants dangling from a string of spherical beads were depicted on an LM IB jug from Kato Zakros (Niemeier 1985, 54–5, fig. 16:15) and on a gold plate from Shaft Grave III at Mycenae.<sup>21</sup> These depictions are reminiscent of the festoons between the posts of the stern cabins, or *ikria*, in the wall-paintings from room 4 of the West House at Akrotiri (Fig. 21; Doumas 1999, 86–91, figs 49–56 and 94–5, figs 59–62). Some of the festoons have pendants in the shape of *waz*-lilies, others in the shape of ‘sacral ivy’-‘papyrus stem’ motifs, triple-petals or rosettes. It is interesting to note the similarity between these festoons with *waz*-lily-shaped pendants and the later *waz*-lily pendants used as items of body adornment, referred to above. Indeed, one of the preserved stern cabins in the miniature frieze from the south wall of room 5 of the same West House shows how the cabins on the ships could themselves be designed in a way so that the festoons would have run across the upper body of the person sitting in them (Fig. 22a). The cabins, like the textile designs and later pendants, thus clearly demonstrate an appreciation and use of the *waz*-lily motif as body ornament in the broadest sense, showing that its symbolism had as much personal significance as it qualified as a symbolic marker within ceremonial settings.

The *waz*-lily decoration of the ship cabins illustrates this even further. The same motif also decorates the post-heads not only of some of the *ikria* in the wall-painting from room 4 (Fig. 21; Doumas 1999, 86–91, 93, figs 49–53, 55, 56, 58), but, most importantly, also of the stern cabin of the most lavishly decorated ship in the miniature frieze from room 5 (Fig. 22b; Doumas 1999,

<sup>19</sup> Niemeier 1985, 53–5, fig. 16. *Contra* Haysom (2018, 268), who refers to the lily chart, Niemeier (1985, 59, fig. 18), for LM II/III A1 parallels of what he considers lilies with ‘stamens joined in a spray’. However, while this view has predecessors in earlier scholarship (Möbius 1933, 2; Müller 1915b, 297–8; Furumark 1972, 148–9, 160), the chart contains no lily depictions qualifying for comparison.

<sup>20</sup> Similarly, a hunting scene on an Aegean(-style) wooden pyxis from Saqqara, Egypt, dating from the time of Amenophis IV, includes the depiction of a papyrus stem with palm-leaves between two inward-curved petals; see Bossert 1921, 28 and fig. 86; Morgan 1988, 52, fig. 41; Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 57. This composition, again without close parallels in the Aegean, would appear to be the result of a similar adaptation of Aegean motifs to Egyptian taste.

<sup>21</sup> Müller 1915b, 297–8, fig. 18; Karo 1930, pl. XXI:23; Evans 1928, 777, fig. 505A. For individual gold cut-outs in the form of *waz*-lily flowers dangling from a ribbed tube from the same tomb see Karo 1930, pl. XXVII:79.

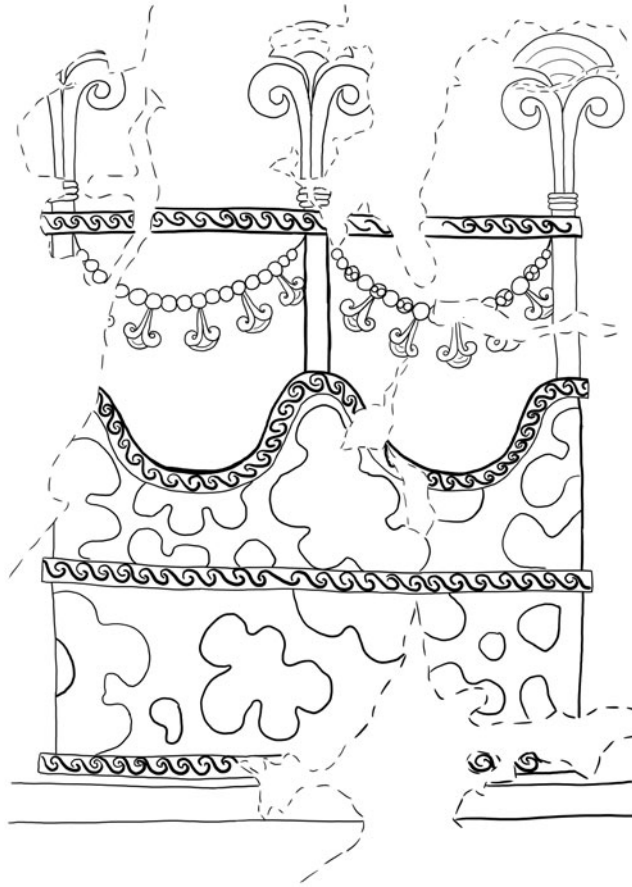


Fig. 21. Detail of wall-painting depicting stern cabin (*ikrion*) with *waz*-lily decoration, from the south wall of room 4, West House, Akrotiri. Drawing Ute Günkel-Maschek, after Dumas 1999, 91, fig. 56.

68–70, 74–6, figs 35–7; cf. Morgan 1988, 23, 137–42; N. Marinatos 2007, 273). Here, the symbolic decoration marks the importance of the occupant of this *ikrion* above all the others, who, if at all, have a helmet on one of their posts. The same ship is also distinguished by the lion and star decoration on the hull, the festoons and triple-petal pendants hanging between the prow, the top of the mast and the *ikrion*, and the pair of butterflies sitting at the top of the mast. It also has more butterfly and star motifs decorating the prow than any of the other ships, although some of them share the same symbolism. The flagship with the *ikrion* crowned with *waz*-lilies therefore must have carried the most important person in the flotilla (see also N. Marinatos 2007, 273).

The flotilla is shown returning to or approaching a palatial building. Despite its coastal location, the identification of this building is suggested by the motifs that decorate its façade: while double-horns have been found in various places, on Crete the so-called half-rosettes depicted above the large opening or gate have only been found as real architectural friezes in the palace at Knossos (Günkel-Maschek 2020, 339–434 with references). The miniature frieze on the south wall of room 5 thus depicts the festive return or arrival of a flotilla carrying an important male person to a building displaying the same symbolism as the palace at Knossos, where it is mostly female protagonists who greet them from the rooftops. Whether this event was based on a mythological narrative explaining the arrival of the man in the *waz*-lily cabin or whether it was a one-off or repeated ceremonial event during which a person of honour was transported, or returned, to the building in his specially decorated cabin shall be left for another discussion.

What matters here is that, in this composition, which is contemporary with the ‘Man with the *waz*-Lily Necklace’ in the Knossos stucco relief, the *waz*-lily serves to distinguish the occupant of the flagship from the occupants of the cabins on the other ships. They may all have been the leading



Fig. 22. Details of miniature frieze depicting (a) a stern cabin with festoon and (b) the stern cabin of the flagship with *waz*-lily decoration, from the south wall of room 5, West House, Akrotiri. Drawing Ute Günkel-Maschek, after (a) Doumas 1999, 73, fig. 36; (b) Doumas 1999, 75, fig. 37.

military commanders on their own ships, presiding over the warriors seated under the central awnings on each ship. The occupant of the *waz*-lily cabin, however, outranked them all, with the *waz*-lilies specifically adorning the appearance of *his cabin* rather than the appearance of the ship as a whole. The *waz*-lily thus served not only to symbolise the special status of this male figure, but also the conceptual framework in which this figure was more special than all the others. The *waz*-lily therefore was imbued with a symbolism that made it suitable for such use in the LM I period.

It remains, of course, impossible to dig deeper into this symbolism without the aid of written evidence. However, the festive aspect implied by the repeated use of the *waz*-lily on festoons, not only in the wall-paintings, but also on metalworks and painted vases, its frequent – and in fact original – use as a means of body ornamentation, first through textile design, subsequently, and overwhelmingly, as pendants deposited with the dead, as well as its later suitability for larnax decoration indeed point in the direction of the *waz*-lily bearing connotations of (re)birth, fertility, flourishing and afterlife, which it drew from being a combination of the Minoan lily and the Egyptian papyrus, as recently argued by Helen Hughes-Brock (2014, 106). While the *waz*-lily pendants evidently enjoyed increasing popularity in funerary contexts to ensure rebirth and prosperity in the afterlife from the end of the LM I period onwards, the earlier use of the flower suggests that it may have referred to similar notions in the context of, presumably annual, festive celebrations, in which the (re)appearance of a male protagonist was a key feature.

#### THE RELIEF MAN WITH THE *WAZ*-LILY NECKLACE AT KNOSSOS

With its detailed examination, for the first time, of the two distinctive features of the ‘male torso with the lily collar’ – the fist-on-chest gesture of the right arm and the chain of *waz*-lilies – this paper provides a new iconographically grounded framework for the reconstruction, categorisation and interpretation of the life-size relief male figure commonly known as the Prince of the Lilies, Lily Prince or Priest-King. Based on the orientation of the *waz*-lily necklace, the bent right arm with the fist against the chest can be established as the primary arm pose of the original figure, confirming the gesture as originally identified by Evans and his team. Thorough comparison of this arm pose and its subtle nuances with other LM I figures that perform the fist-on-chest gesture then made it possible to identify the closest parallels for the ‘male torso with the lily

collar' and to reconstruct the appearance of the male figure to which it once belonged: a man standing in an upright, imposing and self-confident posture, with his right fist on his chest defining his appearance through a communicative statement that brings his own identity to the fore (Fig. 20). In view of pertinent comparanda for this expansive, outward-facing posture (Figs 16, 17), this communicative statement is made from a position of superiority which the man possessed by virtue of his role and which he represented in the Knossian wall relief either as a solitary figure or in relation to other figures in a more complex composition.

One aspect of this superiority is specified by the *waz*-lily necklace that adorns his chest. This allows the 'Man with the *waz*-Lily Necklace' to be tentatively identified as the key figure in annual festivities celebrating his (re-)appearance. The depiction of this figure on one of the walls of the LM I period palace at Knossos suggests that these festivities were anchored in the palace's festive calendar and celebrated there – an aspect that may have been reflected contemporaneously in narrative depictions such as the miniature frieze from the West House at Akrotiri. Indeed, the figure's life-size relief depiction even places it on the same level of significance as the bull motifs that were so central to the decorative programme of the palace and its external representation, which means that the 'Man with the *waz*-Lily Necklace' was just as important to the religious and ceremonial understanding of the Minoan centre during the LM I period.

It is therefore tempting to assume that we have here the image of a figure – presumably a deity – on whose annual (re)appearance the continuation or renewal of the Knossian ruling class, possibly even of the ruling king, depended. If so, the depiction of the 'Man with the *waz*-Lily Necklace' symbolised the foundations of continuous ruling order at Knossos, without itself depicting its representatives or holders of authority. The *waz*-lily symbolises the aspect of renewal, presumably inspired by the Egyptian concept of (re)birth, fertility and flourishing, which could also explain the thriving use of the motif in funerary contexts after the end of LM I, both on Crete and on the Helladic mainland.

The 'Man with the *waz*-Lily Necklace' did not survive the end of the LM I period, but ended up in the fill that supported a new floor, and with it quite literally a new era of the palace at Knossos and of Minoan culture as a whole. However, the fortunate rediscovery of his torso allowed him to reappear once more, his fist placed firmly on the chest, as a representative of Crete's prehistoric past.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper presents one of the results of a post-doctoral research project on the depictions of gestures in Middle and Late Minoan Crete, which was carried out by the author at the University of Heidelberg with funding from the German Research Foundation (DFG). Special thanks are due to the two anonymous reviewers for their most helpful comments and suggestions.

[ute.guenkel@uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:ute.guenkel@uni-heidelberg.de)

#### REFERENCES

- Bietak, M. and Marinatos, N. 1995. 'The Minoan wall paintings from Avaris', *Egypt and the Levant* 5, 49–62.
- Bietak, M., Marinatos, N. and Palyvou, C. 2007. *Taureador Scenes in Tell el-Dab'a (Avaris) and Knossos* (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Denkschriften der Gesamtakademie 43, Untersuchungen der Zweigstelle Kairo des Österreichischen Archäologischen Institutes 27; Vienna).
- Blakolmer, F. 2006. 'The Minoan stucco relief: a palatial art form in context', in E. Tampakaki and A. Kaloutsakis (eds), *Πεπραγμένα Θ' Διεθνούς Κρητολογικού Συνεδρίου, Ελούντα, 1–6 Οκτωβρίου 2001. Α3: Προϊστορική Περίοδος, Τέχνη και Λατρεία* (Heraklion), 9–25.
- Blakolmer, F. 2007. 'The silver battle krater from Shaft Grave IV at Mycenae: evidence of fighting "heroes" on Minoan palace walls at Knossos?', in S.P. Morris and R. Laffineur (eds), *Epos:*

- Reconsidering Greek Epic and Aegean Bronze Age Archaeology. Proceedings of the 11th International Aegean Conference, Los Angeles, UCLA – The J. Paul Getty Villa, 20–23 April 2006* (*Aegaeum* 28; Liège and Austin, TX), 213–24.
- Blakolmer, F. 2018. “Sculpted with the paint-brush”? On the interrelation of relief art and painting in Minoan Crete and Thera’, in A.G. Vlachopoulos (ed.), *ΧΡΩΣΤΗΡΕΣ – Paintbrushes: Wall-Painting and Vase-Painting of the 2nd Millennium BC in Dialogue* (Ioannina), 142–51.
- Boardman, J. 1963. *On the Knossos Tablets: The Date of the Knossos Tablets* (Oxford).
- Bosanquet, R.C. 1901. ‘Archaeology in Greece, 1900–1901’, *JHS* 21, 334–52.
- Bossert, H.T. 1921. *Alt Kreta: Kunst und Kunstgewerbe im ägäischen Kulturkreise* (Berlin).
- Burrows, R.M. 1907. *The Discoveries in Crete and their Bearing on the History of Ancient Civilisation* (London).
- Coulomb, J. 1979. ‘Le “Prince aux lis” de Knossos reconsidéré’, *BCH* 103, 29–50.
- Coulomb, J. 1981. ‘Les boxeurs minoens’, *BCH* 105, 27–40.
- Coulomb, J. 1985. ‘Le boxeur de Knossos au fleurs de lis’, in Th. Detorakis (ed.), *Πεπραγμένα του Ε’ Διεθνούς Κρητολογικού Συνεδρίου, Άγιος Νικόλαος, 25 Σεπτεμβρίου – 1 Οκτωβρίου 1981, Α’* (Heraklion), 67–76.
- Dakoronia, Ph. and Dimaki, S. 2004. ‘Kalapódi’, in I. Pini (ed.), *Kleinere griechische Sammlungen. Supplementum 3. Neufunde aus Griechenland und der westlichen Türkei* (*Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel* V Suppl. 3, 1; Mainz), 141–2.
- Dimopoulou-Rethemiotaki, N. 2005. *The Archaeological Museum of Herakleion* (Athens).
- Doumas, C. 1999. *The Wall-Paintings of Thera*, 2nd edn (Athens).
- Effinger, M. 1996. *Minoischer Schmuck* (*BAR-IS* 646; Oxford).
- Evans, A.J. 1900/1. ‘The palace of Knossos: provisional report of the excavations for the year 1901’, *BSA* 7, 1–120.
- Evans, A.J. 1902/3. ‘The palace of Knossos: provisional report for the year 1903’, *BSA* 9, 1–153.
- Evans, A.J. 1903/4. ‘The palace of Knossos’, *BSA* 10, 1–62.
- Evans, A.J. 1921. *The Palace of Minos at Knossos*, vol. 1 (London).
- Evans, A.J. 1928. *The Palace of Minos at Knossos*, vol. 2 (London).
- Evans, A.J. 1930. *The Palace of Minos at Knossos*, vol. 3 (London).
- Evans, A.J. 1935. *The Palace of Minos at Knossos*, vol. 4 (London).
- Furumark, A. 1972. *Mycenaean Pottery* (Stockholm).
- Günkel-Maschek, U. 2020. *Minoische Bild-Räume: Neue Untersuchungen zu den Wandbildern des spätbronzezeitlichen Palastes von Knossos* (Heidelberg) (available online <<https://doi.org/10.17885/heiup.497>> accessed February 2024).
- Hallager, B.P. and Hallager, E. 1995. ‘The Knossian bull – political propaganda in Neo-Palatial Crete?’, in R. Laffineur and W.-D. Niemeier (eds), *Politeia: Society and State in the Aegean Bronze Age. Proceedings of the 5th International Aegean Conference, University of Heidelberg, Archäologisches Institut, 10–13 April 1994* (*Aegaeum* 12; Liège and Austin, TX), 547–56.
- Haysom, M. 2018. ‘The find contexts of Knossian relief wall paintings: some ramifications’, in J. Becker, J. Jungfleisch and C. von Rüdén (eds), *Tracing Technoscapes: The Production of Bronze Age Wall Paintings in the Eastern Mediterranean* (Leiden), 253–78.
- Hood, S. 2005. ‘Dating the Knossos frescoes’, in L. Morgan (ed.), *Aegean Wall Painting: A Tribute to Mark Cameron* (*BSA Studies* 13; London), 45–81.
- Hood, S. and Taylor, W. 1981. *The Bronze Age Palace at Knossos: Plan and Sections* (*BSA Supp. Vol. 13*; London).
- Hughes-Brock, H. 2014. ‘The waz-lily and the priest’s axe: can relief-beads tell us something?’, in Y. Galanakis, T. Wilkinson and J. Bennet (eds), *Αθύρματα: Critical Essays on the Archaeology of the Eastern Mediterranean in Honour of E. Susan Sherratt* (Oxford), 105–16.
- Immerwahr, S.A. 2005. ‘Left or right? A study of hands and feet’, in L. Morgan (ed.), *Aegean Wall Painting: A Tribute to Mark Cameron* (*BSA Studies* 13; London), 173–83.
- Kaiser, B. 1976. *Untersuchungen zum minoischen Relief* (Bonn).
- Karo, G. 1930. *Die Schachtgräber von Mykenai* (Munich).
- Kekes, C.G. 2021. “Ομιλούντα σώματα: μια προσέγγιση των αιγυπτιακών και των αιγαιακών τελετουργικών χειρονομιών της Εποχής του Χαλκού” (PhD thesis, University of the Aegean) (available online <[www.didaktorika.gr/eadd/handle/10442/50670](http://www.didaktorika.gr/eadd/handle/10442/50670)> accessed February 2024).
- Konstantinidi-Syvridi, E. 2012. ‘A fashion model of Mycenaean times: the ivory lady from Prosymna’, in Nosch and Laffineur 2012, 265–70.
- Kyriakidis, E. 2005. ‘Unidentified floating objects on Minoan seals’, *AJA* 109, 137–54.
- Laffineur, R. 2012. ‘For a kosmology of the Aegean Bronze Age’, in Nosch and Laffineur 2012, 3–21.
- Macdonald, C.F. 2002. ‘The Neopalatial palaces of Knossos’, in J. Driessen, I. Schoep and R. Laffineur (eds), *Monuments of Minos: Rethinking the Minoan Palaces. Proceedings of the International Workshop ‘Crete of the Hundred Palaces?’ Held at the Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, 14–15 December 2001* (*Aegaeum* 23; Liège), 35–54.
- Macdonald, C.F. 2005. *Knossos* (London).
- Marinatos, N. 2007. ‘The lily crown and sacred kingship in Minoan Crete’, in Ph.P. Betancourt, M.C. Nelson and H. Williams (eds), *Krinoi kai Limenes: Studies in Honor of Joseph and Maria Shaw* (Philadelphia, PA), 271–6.
- Marinatos, S. 1951. “Numerous years of joyful life” from Mycenae’, *BSA* 46, 102–16.
- Möbius, M. 1933. ‘Pflanzenbilder der minoischen Kunst in botanischer Betrachtung’, *JdI* 48, 1–39.
- Momigliano, N. and Hood, S. 1994. ‘Excavations of 1987 on the south front of the palace at Knossos’, *BSA* 89, 103–50.
- Morgan, L. 1987. ‘A Minoan larnax from Knossos’, *BSA* 82, 171–200.
- Morgan, L. 1988. *The Miniature Wall Paintings of Thera: A Study in Aegean Culture and Iconography* (New York).
- Morris, C. 2001. ‘The language of gesture in Minoan religion’, in R. Laffineur and R. Hägg (eds),



- Potnia: Deities and Religion in the Aegean Bronze Age. Proceedings of the 8th International Aegean Conference, Göteborg University, 12–15 April 2000 (Aegaeum 22; Liège), 245–51.*
- Müller, K. 1915a. *Der Polos, die griechische Götterkrone* (Berlin).
- Müller, K. 1915b. 'Frühmykenische Reliefs aus Kreta und vom griechischen Festland', *JdI* 30, 242–336.
- Murphy, C. 2018. 'No mouths, just hands: a review of the Minoan "fist on chest" gestures', in E. Gavrilaki (ed.), *Πεπραγμένα ΙΑ' Διεθνούς Κρητολογικού Συνεδρίου, Ρέθυμνο, 21–27 Οκτωβρίου 2011 (Rethymno)*, 9–23.
- Myres, J.L. 1902/3. 'Excavations at Palaikastro II: the sanctuary site at Petsofa', *BSA* 9, 356–87.
- Niemeier, W.-D. 1985. *Die Palastkeramik von Knossos: Stil, Chronologie und historischer Kontext* (Berlin).
- Niemeier, W.-D. 1987. 'Das Stuckrelief des "Prinzen mit der Federkrone" aus Knossos und minoische Götterdarstellungen', *AM* 102, 65–98.
- Niemeier, W.-D. 1988. 'The "priest king" fresco from Knossos: a new reconstruction and interpretation', in E.B. French and K.A. Wardle (eds), *Problems in Greek Prehistory: Papers Presented at the Centenary Conference of the British School of Archaeology at Athens, Manchester, April 1986* (Bristol), 235–44.
- Nosch, M.-L. and Laffineur, R. (eds) 2012. *Kosmos: Jewellery, Adornment and Textiles in the Aegean Bronze Age. Proceedings of the 13th International Aegean Conference, University of Copenhagen, Danish National Research Foundation's Centre for Textile Research, 21–26 April 2010* (Aegaeum 33; Leuven and Liège).
- Palmer, L.R. 1963. *On the Knossos Tablets: The Find-Places of the Knossos Tablets* (Oxford).
- Papadopoulou, J.K. 2005. 'Inventing the Minoans: archaeology, modernity and the quest for European identity', *JMA* 18.1, 87–149.
- Papadopoulou, T.J. and Kontorli-Papadopoulou, L. 2012. 'Specific types of jewellery from Late Bronze Age tombs in western Greece as evidence for social differentiation', in Nosch and Laffineur 2012, 515–22.
- Paschalidis, C. 2012. 'Reflections of eternal beauty: the unpublished context of a wealthy female burial from Koukaki, Athens and the occurrence of mirrors in Mycenaean tombs', in Nosch and Laffineur 2012, 547–57.
- Pini, I. 2004. 'Einleitung', in I. Pini (ed.), *Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel, vol. 5, Kleinere griechische Sammlungen, Suppl. 3, Neufunde aus Griechenland und der westlichen Türkei* (Mainz), 1–41.
- Poole, S.E. 2020. *A Consideration of Gender Roles and Relations in the Aegean Bronze Age Interpreted from Gestures and Proxemics in Art* (Oxford).
- Porter, R. 2000. 'The flora of the Theran wall paintings: living plants and motifs – sea lily, crocus, iris and ivy', in S. Sherratt (ed.), *The Wall Paintings of Thera: Proceedings of the First International Symposium, Petros M. Nomikos Conference Centre, Thera, Hellas, 30 August–4 September 1997*, vol. 2 (Athens), 603–30.
- Poursat, J.-C. 1977. *Catalogue des ivoires mycéniens du Musée National d'Athènes* (Athens).
- Rethemiotakis, G. 2016/17. 'The "divine couple" ring from Poros and the origins of the Minoan calendar', *AM* 131/132, 1–29.
- Sakellariou, A. 1968. 'Un cratère d'argent avec scène de bataille provenant de la IV<sup>ème</sup> tombe de Mycènes', in *Atti e Memorie del 1<sup>o</sup> Congresso Internazionale di Micenologia (Incunabula Graeca 25; Rome)*, 262–5.
- Sapouna-Sakellarakis, E. 1995. *Die bronzenen Menschenfiguren auf Kreta und in der Ägäis* (Stuttgart).
- Sgouritsa, N. 2012. 'Remarks on jewels from the Mycenaean settlement and cemetery at Lazarides on eastern Aegina', in Nosch and Laffineur 2012, 539–45.
- Shaw, M.C. 2004. 'The "priest-king" fresco from Knossos: man, woman, priest, king, or someone else?', in A.P. Chapin (ed.), *Χάρτις: Essays in Honor of Sara A. Immerwahr (Hesperia Suppl. 33; Princeton, NJ)*, 65–84.
- Shaw, M.C. and Chapin, A.P. (eds) 2016. *Woven Threads: Patterned Textiles of the Aegean Bronze Age* (Ancient Textiles Series 22; Oxford and Philadelphia, PA).
- Shaw, M.C. and Mellink, M. 1995. 'Bull leaping frescoes at Knossos and their influence on the Tell El-Dab'a murals', *Egypt and the Levant* 5, 91–120.
- Sherratt, S. 2000. *Arthur Evans, Knossos and the Priest-King* (Oxford).
- Soles, J.S. 2012. 'The symbolism of certain Minoan/Mycenaean beads from Mochlos', in Nosch and Laffineur 2012, 457–61.
- Verlinden, C. 1984. *Les statuettes anthropomorphes crétoises en bronze et en plomb, du III<sup>e</sup> millénaire du VII<sup>e</sup> siècle av. J.C.* (Providence, RI).
- Warren, P. 1985. 'The fresco of the garlands from Knossos', in P. Darcque and J.-C. Poursat (eds), *L'iconographie minoenne. Actes de la table ronde d'Athènes (21–22 avril 1983) (BCH Suppl. 11; Athens)*, 187–208.
- Wedde, M. 1999. 'Talking hands: a study of Minoan and Mycenaean ritual gesture – some preliminary notes', in Ph.P. Betancourt, V. Karageorghis, R. Laffineur and W.-D. Niemeier (eds), *Meletemata: Studies in Aegean Archaeology Presented to Malcolm H. Wiener as He Enters His 65th Year*, vol. 3 (Aegaeum 20; Liège and Austin, TX), 911–20.
- Weingarten, J. 1994. 'Seal-use and administration in the south-west basement area at Knossos', *BSA* 89, 151–6.
- Younger, J.G. 1992. 'Representations of Minoan-Mycenaean jewelry', in R. Laffineur and J.L. Crowley (eds), *IKON. Aegean Bronze Age Iconography: Shaping a Methodology. 4th International Aegean Conference, University of Tasmania, Hobart, 6–9 April 1992 (Aegaeum 8; Liège)*, 257–93.

**Τα κρίνα του πρίγκιπα. Ο προσανατολισμός και η χειρονομία του «ανδρικού κορμού με το περιδέραιο των κρίνων» από την Κνωσό**

Με την αποκατάσταση του Πρίγκιπα των Κρίνων (γνωστού επίσης ως Βασιλιά-Ιερέα) από μια ομάδα θραυσμάτων ζωγραφισμένου ανάγλυφου γύψου που βρέθηκαν στο ανάκτορο της Κνωσού, ο Arthur Evans και οι Gilliérons δημιούργησαν όχι μόνο μια από τις πιο διάσημες εικόνες του πρώιμου Υστερομινωικού παρελθόντος της Κρήτης, αλλά και την πιο αμφιλεγόμενη. Αντιμετωπίζοντας μια συζήτηση που διεξάγεται τα τελευταία σαράντα πέντε χρόνια, η παρούσα εργασία εξετάζει το ζήτημα του προσανατολισμού και της χειρονομίας της μορφής, την οποία ορισμένοι μελετητές θα ήθελαν να δουν ως έναν πυγμάχο ή θεότητα που κοιτάζει προς τα δεξιά με το αριστερό του χέρι τεντωμένο προς τα εμπρός και το δεξί λυγισμένο στο πλάι, αντί για τον γνωστό άνδρα που βαδίζει προς τα αριστερά με τη δεξιά γροθιά στο στήθος. Εστιάζοντας στο βασικό ανάγλυφο θράυσμα που περιγράφεται από τον Evans ως «ανδρικός κορμός με περιδέραιο κρίνων», η σύγκριση του προσανατολισμού του ομώνυμου κοσμήματος με σύγχρονες απεικονίσεις περιδέραιων επιβεβαιώνει περίτρανα τον αριστερό προσανατολισμό της μορφής στην οποία ανήκε κάποτε ο κορμός. Η εικονογραφική ανάλυση της χειρονομίας της δεξιάς γροθιάς στο στήθος και των συμφραζόμενων συσχετισμών του κρινοπάπυρου, επιτρέπουν στον «άνδρα με το περιδέραιο κρινοπάπυρου» να ανακτήσει την κεντρική του θέση στη μινωική θρησκευτική εικονογραφία καθώς και στη μνημειακή ανάγλυφη διακόσμηση του Υστερομινωικού Ι ανακτόρου της Κνωσού.

Μετάφραση: Στέλιος Ιερεμίας