

## THE MYCENAEAN 'WARRIOR GODDESS' REVISITED\*

### Introduction

In 1984, I surveyed the archaeological evidence for the existence of a Mycenaean 'Warrior Goddess' known at that time.<sup>1</sup> The case for a warrior goddess rests on two premises: first, that it might be possible to trace the origins of the historical Athena back into the prehistoric period, and second, that an iconography of important women bearing weapons and wearing a figure-eight shield could represent such a divinity.<sup>2</sup> In this paper, I would like to assess developments of the last 14 years and bring the goddess up to date.

A brief recapitulation of the evidence is in order, the majority of which comes from LH IIIB contexts in the so-called Cult Center at Mycenae. This material includes a painted plaque found by C. Tsountas in the back room of a probable shrine (Pl. XLVIa).<sup>3</sup> The plaque shows a central white skinned female figure wearing a figure-eight shield and possibly a boar's tusk helmet, and brandishing a sword. Flanking this figure are a Minoan incurved base and a pair of antithetic women in flounced ritual robes; the one on the left preserves a yellow headdress.<sup>4</sup> Stylistically, the plaque may date to LH IIIA, thus predating the building in which it was found.

Room 31 on a lower terrace of the Cult Center contained a fresco painted on the wall and one side of a bench built against a corner of the room (Pl. XLVIb).<sup>5</sup> On the wall over the top of the bench are two confronting women, nearly life-sized, within an architectural framework. The one on the left wears an unusual paneled robe and holds a large sword

\* I am grateful to R. Laffineur for the invitation to speak at this conference, and to J.G. Younger for reading and commenting on a draft of this paper. The following book appeared too late to be considered here: D. DANIELIDOU, *Η οκτώσχημη άσπιδα στο Αιγαίο της 2ης π. Χ. χιλιετίας* (Ακαδημία Αθηνών Κέντρον Ερεύνης Αρχαιότητος) Monograph Series 5, 1998). Abbreviations: NMA = National Archaeological Museum, Athens; HM = Heraklion Museum.

1 P. REHAK, "New Observations on the Mycenaean 'Warrior Goddess,'" *AA* (1984) 535-45; hereafter *Warrior Goddess*.

2 M.P. NILSSON, "Die Anfänge der Göttin Athena," *Det.K.Danske Videnskabernes Selskab. Hist.-filol. Med.* IV 7 (1921); *MMR*<sup>2</sup> 485-501; NILSSON, *GrRel.* I<sup>3</sup> 345-49; C. CHRISTOS, *Potnia Theron* (1968). On the identification of deities in Aegean art, see C. RENFREW, *The Archaeology of Cult (BSA Suppl.* 18, 1985) 22-24. In historical times, other goddesses were sometimes represented with weapons, e.g., Aphrodite. See J. FLEMBERG, *Venus armata. Studien zur bewaffneten Aphrodite in der griechisch-römischen Kunst (ActaAth* 8<sup>o</sup>, 10, 1991); ID., "Eine Neue Aphrodite mit dem Schwert," *OpAth* 20 (1994) 244-45.

3 *Warrior Goddess* 535-38, 537, Figs 1, 2. Add: K. DEMAKOPOULOU (ed.), *The Mycenaean World. Five Centuries of Early Greek Culture* (1988) 189 no. 163 and col. Fig.; S. IMMERWAHR, *Aegean Painting in the Bronze Age* (1990) 191-92, My no. 7; L. KONTORLI-PAPADOPOULOU, *Aegean Frescoes of Religious Character (SIMA* 117, 1996) 242, Pl. 101.

4 Similar headgear is worn by a woman at Pylos and a woman in the fresco from room 31 in the Mycenaean Cult Center. The earliest example is worn by the faience "Snake Goddess" from Knossos (MM III).

5 *Warrior Goddess* 539-41, 539, Fig. 3. Add: *LIMC* 2.1 (1981) 957, no. 1, Pl. 702 Athena 1; N. MARINATOS, "The Fresco from Room 31 at Mycenae: Problems of Method and Interpretation," in K. WARDLE and E. FRENCH (eds), *Problems in Greek Prehistory* (1988) 245-51. IMMERWAHR (*supra* n. 3) 191, My no. 6; P. REHAK, "Tradition and Innovation in the Fresco from Room 31 in the Cult Center at Mycenae," in *EIKΩN* 39-61; KONTORLI-PAPADOPOULOU (*supra* n. 3) 240, Pls 96, 97; C. SHELMEARDINE, "Review of Aegean Prehistory VI: The Palatial Bronze Age of the Southern and Central Greek Mainland," *AJA* 101 (1997) 571-73, 572, Fig. 11. E. CLINE, *Sailing the Wine-Dark Sea (BAR-IS* 591, 1994) 39, suggests that the small red and black figures in the fresco represent the "Red Land and the Black Land" of Egypt, though it is unclear why personifications of Egypt would be worshipping the Mycenaean goddess. Faience plaques of Amenhotep III, concentrated mainly in the Cult Center, support the notion of an Egyptian connection with Mycenae: E. CLINE, "An Unpublished Amenhotep III Faience Plaque from Mycenae," *JAOS* 110.2 (1990) 200-12, but see comments by P. REHAK, "Interconnections between the Aegean and the Orient in the Second Millennium B.C.," *AJA* 101 (1997) 401.

whose point rests on the groundline. The one on the right wears a flounced robe and holds a spear or scepter either of which can be a symbol of authority.<sup>6</sup> The upper portions of both bodies in the fresco are missing. Two diminutive nude male figures, one red and the other black, appear to float between the women, but they face and extend their arms toward the woman with the sword, making her the focus of the scene. At a lower level, a smaller woman with a headdress extends handfuls of grain toward the depiction of a shrine or altar painted on the side of the bench; before her in the near plane a lion is rampant.<sup>7</sup>

In fill within the Cult Center, fragments of another wall fresco were discovered that show the head and shoulders of a woman who wears a boar's tusk helmet and carries a griffin in her arms (Pl. XLVIc).<sup>8</sup> Since the animal turns its head back to look at the anthropomorphic figure, we must assume that it is a living creature, and the woman a Mistress of Animals (potnia theron).

Also from the south slope of the citadel comes a well-known gold ring, probably of LM II manufacture, from the so-called Akropolis Treasure found near the Ramp House.<sup>9</sup> The scene on the ring is a pastiche of elements including a group of women with flowers in a landscape, a floating Minoan double axe, a row of six disembodied feline heads, and a diminutive figure wearing a figure-eight shield and holding a lance rather than a sword, all set below astral symbols. Although the sex of the shielded figure is not apparent, the resemblance between it and the woman on the painted plaque suggest that they represent the same individual. Another asexual shielded figure in heraldic pose wielding two swords occurs on a lentoid sealstone of unknown provenience.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, two figure-eight shield frescoes were found in the Southwest Building near the Cult Center at Mycenae, one frieze with smaller and the other with larger shields.<sup>11</sup> In both cases suspension straps are indicated to suggest that the shields are hanging against a wall and overlapping a continuous horizontal spiral frieze, not worn by anthropomorphic figures. Other compositions from the same area depict women, including the so-called "Mykenaiia." Fragments of a third shield frieze, from the area of the Prehistoric Cemetery outside the Cult Center, have recently been reconstructed on paper.<sup>12</sup> Similar frescoes decorated the palaces at Thebes and Tiryns,<sup>13</sup> and all the mainland examples seem to be following the lead of Knossos which has the earliest (LM II),<sup>14</sup> but the concentration of shield images at Mycenae is noteworthy.

The iconography of these representations suggests some interesting links with other scenes in Aegean art, and may allow us to expand the corpus of warlike female figures to include other depictions of important women. Several new additions can be suggested. A fresco fragment from Thebes (Pl. XLVI d) shows the head of a white-skinned (female) figure

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- 6 Cf. the pose of the "Mother on the Mountain" sealings from Knossos: *PM* II 2 809, Fig. 528; III 463, Fig. 323.
- 7 The mistaken suggestion that the flanking animal was a griffin (MARINATOS, *supra* n. 5) is corrected by REHAK in *Eikon* (*supra* n. 5) 54-57, but has been repeated by SHELMERDINE (*supra* n. 5) 572.
- 8 *Warrior Goddess* 541-42, 540, Fig. 4. Add: IMMERWAHR (*supra* n. 3) 192, My no. 9; KONTORLI-PAPADOPOULOU (*supra* n. 3) 239, Pl. 95.
- 9 *CMS* I no. 17; S. MARINATOS and M. HIRMER, *Crete and Mycenae* (1960) Pl. 207, below; *Warrior Goddess* 542, 541, Fig. 5. Add: *LIMC* 2.1 (1981) 957 Athena no. 2, plates 702; W.D. NIEMEIER, "Cult Scenes on Gold Rings from the Argolid," in R. HÄGG and G.C. NORDQUIST (eds), *Celebrations of Death and Divinity in the Bronze Age Argolid* (1990) 167-68, 167, Fig. 1.
- 10 *CMS* VII no. 158: *Warrior Goddess* 542-43, 543, Fig. 6.
- 11 *AR* 17 (1971) 11, 10, Fig. 16; *BCH* 95 (1971) 869, Fig. 137; I. KRITSELE-PROVIDI, *Τοιχογραφίες του θρησκευτικού κέντρου των Μυκηθών* (1982) 54-63, Pls 12-18; IMMERWAHR (*supra* n. 3) 193, My nos. 14, 15.
- 12 A. MAYER, "Wallpaintings from the Area of the Prehistoric Cemetery, Mycenae," *BSA* 85 (1990) 213-23; KONTORLI-PAPADOPOULOU (*supra* n. 3) 224, Pl. 104.
- 13 Tiryns: IMMERWAHR (*supra* n. 3) 203 Ti no. 10 (LH III A/B); Thebes: H. REUSCH, "Ein Schildfresko aus Theben (Bootien)," *AA* (1953) 16; IMMERWAHR (*supra* n. 3) 201, Th no. 5 (LH III A).
- 14 *PM* III Pl. XXIII; IMMERWAHR (*supra* n. 3) 177, Kn no. 33. The Knossos frieze was discussed by K. KRATTENMAKER at the annual meeting of the AIA in Washington DC in December 1998: "The Shield Fresco in the Palace of Knossos Reconsidered." (abstract forthcoming in *AJA* 103 [1999]).

wearing a boars' tusk helmet and standing at a window who is similar in general appearance to the helmeted figure on the unstratified fresco fragment from the Cult Center (Pl. XLVIc).<sup>15</sup> The pose of the woman with griffin on the Mycenae fresco can also be compared with the depiction of a woman on a cushion seal from a LH IIIA:1 context at Tiryns (Pl. XLVIe).<sup>16</sup> On the Tiryns seal, however, no shield is present, and the woman does not appear to be wearing a helmet.

Nevertheless, several representations of Aegean divinities share iconographic elements. The woman with sword in the painting from room 31 wears the same costume as the enthroned woman with a chalice on the gold ring from the Tiryns Treasure,<sup>17</sup> who faces a file of genii carrying libation vessels.<sup>18</sup> The Tiryns goddess may be the same divinity as the woman seated on a tripartite platform flanked by genii and griffins on an unpublished sealing from Thebes,<sup>19</sup> and the platform and griffin recur in the painting of the Thera goddess from Xeste 3 at Akrotiri.<sup>20</sup> We cannot be sure at this point whether all of these important women represent aspects of a single divinity or individual divinities who share some iconographic features with other figures of power.

Three of the elements that recur in depictions of armed women have received renewed attention in recent years: the boar's tusk helmet, swords, and figure-eight shields. It is worthwhile to examine these in turn.

### Helmet

C. Morris has pointed out that the boar's tusk helmet functions on multiple levels, and is not defined simply by its martial associations.<sup>21</sup> Since the tusks were obtained in hunting, and perhaps dozens were needed to embellish a single helmet, the helmets advertized prowess in the hunt as well as in war. The meat of the slaughtered boar had an important social function, celebrated in the communal feast. One's first boar hunt may have been part of a rite of passage that signalled the establishment of adult identity, as it was in the case of Odysseus: his first boar almost cost him his life and marked him with the scar by which he is recognized by his family when he returns to Ithaca.<sup>22</sup> One important piece of Bronze Age evidence is that the boar-hunting frescoes from Tiryns included white (female) hands holding spears, suggesting that women may have participated in Mycenaean hunting expeditions, and thus in the acquisition of the tusks for helmets.<sup>23</sup> Stylistically similar fresco fragments of a boar hunt from Orchomenos do not preserve any women, but the huntsmen carry spears and wear boars' tusk helmets.<sup>24</sup>

15 L. MORGAN, *The Miniature Wall Paintings of Thera* (1988) Fig. 156. Women appear at windows on some of the Tanagra larnakes: *AR* 16 (1970) 17 Fig. 27.

16 *CMS* V Suppl. 1B no. 429.

17 *CMS* I no. 179; MARINATOS and HIRMER (*supra* n. 9) Pl. 207, above; *Warrior Goddess* 540 and n. 28. For recent discussion of the ring, see R. HÄGG, "The Role of Libations in Mycenaean Ceremony and Cult," in HÄGG and NORDQUIST (*supra* n. 9) 177-84.

18 On genii, see P. REHAK, "The 'Genius' in Late Bronze Age Aegean Glyptic: The Later Evolution of a Cult Figure," *CMS Beiheft* 5 (1995) 215-31.

19 REHAK (*supra* n. 18) 231, no. 74.

20 C. DOUMAS, *The Wall Paintings of Thera* (1992) Pls 125-26.

21 C.E. MORRIS, "In Pursuit of the White Tusked Boar. Aspects of Hunting in Mycenaean Society," in HÄGG and NORDQUIST (*supra* n. 9) 149-55; A. VARVARIGHOS, *Τό ὀδοντόφρακτον μυκηναϊκό κράνος* (1981). MORGAN (*supra* n. 15) 109-15, surveys the evidence for helmets.

22 HOMER, *Odyssey* 19.428-477; N. FELSON-RUBIN and W.M. SALE, "Meleager and Odysseus: A Structural and Cultural Study of the Greek Hunting and Maturation Myth," *Arethusa* 16 (1983) 137-72.

23 J. ANDERSON, "Huntresses and the Goddess of the Hunt at Tiryns," *AJA* 87 (1983) 224 (abstract); noted in *Warrior Goddess* 538; ANDERSON, *Hunting in the Ancient World* (1985) 12-14. Cf. the role of Atalanta at the Kalydonian boar hunt and the subsequent quarrel over the division of the spoils.

24 *AR* 21 (1975) 19 and Fig. 33; T. SPYROPOULOS, "Το ανάκτορον του Μινύου εις τον βοιωτικόν Ορχομενόν," *AAA* 7 (1974) 313-23.

The boar hunt should not be considered exclusively a Mycenaean motif, however. A boar spearhead engraved on both sides with a handsome frontal boar's head was found in the MM IIIA shrine at Anemospilia near Knossos, and a charging boar appears on a stone relief vase fragment from Palaikastro.<sup>25</sup> The LM II-III A Lasithi dagger shows a boar hunt in progress on one side and confronting bulls on the other.<sup>26</sup> Among the ritual equipment in room Delta 17 at Akrotiri was a boar head rhyton of terracotta, found nestled in the feet of an upturned tripod offering table.<sup>27</sup> Even Ayia Irini on the island of Kea has produced plaques for such a helmet, and an engraved stone slab from the site shows an individual wearing a zoned helmet.<sup>28</sup> In Mycenaean times, zoned helmets, some perhaps plated with boars' tusks, may have been exchanged with other cultures of the eastern Mediterranean; one of these zoned helmets appears on a pictorial papyrus found at Amarna.<sup>29</sup>

### Sword

Another iconographic element whose associations have expanded recently is the sword. Archaeologists have usually assumed that the sword is a male attribute,<sup>30</sup> and when they are found in women's graves, deliberate attempts have sometimes been made to dissociate the weapons from their owners based on our own biases and preconceptions.<sup>31</sup> The many decorated blades from Aegean contexts indicates that some swords and daggers had a symbolic value as symbols of rank and status, as well as practical use.<sup>32</sup> We might recall in this context of the ceremonial state sword that was used at Queen Elizabeth's coronation in 1952.<sup>33</sup> Although the gender of some shielded figures with swords in Aegean art is in doubt, as noted earlier, there is at least one undisputed Minoan example of a woman carrying a sword, on a cushion seal found in a LM I A context at Knossos (Pl. XLVif).<sup>34</sup>

The woman, shown in profile, holds a sword with a round pommel in one hand and another object in the other hand which A. Evans interpreted as a "ritual sprinkler."<sup>35</sup> She appears to wear her hair gathered in a large bun at the nape of the neck, and over her skirt engraved lines delineate a triangular overgarment or mantle draped diagonally and tied at the shoulder.

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- 25 Spearhead: J. and E. SAKELLARAKIS, *Archanes* (1991) 151 Fig. 130; *National Geographic* 159.2 (Feb. 1981) 206 col. Fig. J. and E. SAKELLARAKIS, *Archanes. Minoan Crete in a New Light* (1997) 596-99, Figs 621-22. Relief vase: HM 993: *PM* I, 676, Fig. 496; B. KAISER, *Untersuchungen zum minoischen Relief* (1976) 22 Palaikastro no. 1, Fig. 21; P. REHAK, "The Ritual Destruction of Minoan Art?," *Archaeological News* 19 (1994) 1-6.
- 26 C. LONG, "The Lasithi Dagger," *AJA* 82 (1978) 35-46.
- 27 *AR* 20 (1974) 30, 31 Fig. 58; S. MARINATOS, *Thera* VII (1976) Pls 17 β, 57 a.
- 28 J.L. CASKEY, "Excavations in Keos, 1964-1965," *Hesperia* 35 (1966) 375, Pl. 90 b.
- 29 L. SCHOFIELD and R.B. PARKINSON, "Of Helmets and Heretics: A Possible Egyptian Representation of Mycenaean Warriors on a Papyrus from El-Amarna," *BSA* 89 (1994) 157-70 and col. frontispiece. The figures are probably not Mycenaean warriors, however, since they wear Egyptian kilts.
- 30 K. BERGGREN, "Why Embroider Pottery?," *JPR* 7 (1993) 8-25. She also reidentifies Capestrano "warrior" as woman holding sword: BERGGREN, "The Capestrano Warrior and the Numana Head," *OpRom* 18 (1990) 23-36.
- 31 G. MYLONAS, *Ο ταφικός κύκλος Β' των Μυκηνών* (1973). In grave Delta, west body 60, the final interment, was possibly a woman who had a gold sword hilt (no. 277) at her left shoulder. But on p. 82, Mylonas waffles and says that the sword was found 40 cm. above floor level, and was not in situ. Similarly, when it was discovered in 1945, grave Theta contained the body of a woman (Θ 63) at least 35 years old with unusually wide shoulders and good muscularity. In *Mycenae and the Mycenaean Age* (1966), MYLONAS says that this grave was found in 1946 and contained a bronze sword; later (*op.cit.*, 1973) he called the sword a "machairidion" (little knife). The sword is now lost. I thank J.G. Younger for these references, and O. Dickinson for discussion of these burials.
- 32 I. KILIAN-DIRLMEIER, "Remarks on the Non-military Functions of Swords in the Mycenaean Argolid," in HÄGG and NORDQUIST (*supra* n. 9) 157-61.
- 33 H.D.W. SITWELL, *The Crown Jewels and Other Regalia in the Tower of London* (1953) Pls 9, VIII.
- 34 HM 1279: *CMS* II 3 no. 16; *Warrior Goddess* 543 and Fig. 7.
- 35 *PM* II 2 793.

Several enigmatic details on the cushion can now be convincingly explained in light of new evidence from the frescoes discovered in Xeste 3 at Akrotiri on Thera. The program of the building includes a procession of several mature women<sup>36</sup> who near their hair gathered in snoods like the later Greek *sakkos*.<sup>37</sup> They also wear a triangular fleecy red or yellow mantle draped and tied over one shoulder. Both in the fresco and on the sealstone, the women are shown with a large breast, suggesting that they represent mature women. These frescoed women have some connection with ritual activity: one wears a crocus blossom over one ear like the goddess painted on another wall,<sup>38</sup> and several of the women hold baskets like those of the youthful crocus-gatherers who attend the divinity.<sup>39</sup>

The sword and "ritual sprinkler" on the Knossos seal also have a parallel in the paintings of Xeste 3. A frieze from ground floor room 4 shows blue monkeys in a rocky landscape with crocus, swallows, and nests.<sup>40</sup> At least two monkeys hold golden lyres; another wields a golden sword and a fourth grasps a scabbard with an attached baldric and a golden plume at its tip (Pl. XLVIIa).<sup>41</sup> The detailed rendering of the implements in the fresco allows us to identify the "sprinkler" on the sealstone as another plumed sheath.

The repetition of these elements on the sealstone and in the Thera fresco calls into question R. Koehl's interpretation of the same objects on the stone relief Chieftain's Cup from Ayia Triadha (Pl. XLVIIb) as the male gifts exclusive to a homosexual rite of passage.<sup>42</sup> The recurrence of these supposedly "male" items of warfare and status in the hands of both women and blue monkeys suggests that the sword, like the boar's tusk helmet, is a multivalent symbol with a wide range of potential meanings.

We should also note that Type A swords were discovered among the votive objects of bronze and precious metals stored in the Arkalochori Cave on Crete.<sup>43</sup> Several double axes in the cave were inscribed in Linear A to "i-da-ma-te," which G. Owens has recently connected with a Minoan goddess worshipped on Mt. Ida, perhaps ancestral to the later Greek Demeter.<sup>44</sup> During the period of possible Mycenaean occupation on Crete (LM II-IIIa), swords were also dedicated in the sanctuary at Kato Syme Viannou.<sup>45</sup> In later times, an epithet of Demeter in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter identifies her as "goddess of the golden sword" (line 3), a title also applied to Artemis.<sup>46</sup>

36 DOUMAS (*supra* n. 20) Pls 131-34.

37 For the meaning of the *sakkos* in later times, see H. BRANDENBURG, *Studien zur Mitra* (1966); D.C. KURTZ and J. BOARDMAN, "Booners," *Greek Vases in the J. Paul Getty Museum (Occasional Papers on Antiquities* 2, 1986) 35-70, esp. 50-56. B.S. RIDGWAY illustrates several different styles of snood in *The Severe Style in Greek Sculpture* (1970) Pl. 67 (the Giustiniani stele in the Staatliche Museen, Berlin), Pl. 68 (a relief with two women from Thessaly in the Louvre), and Pl. 71 (the flautist on the Ludovisi Throne in the Terme Museum Collection, Rome, housed since 1996 in the Palazzo Altemps).

38 DOUMAS (*supra* n. 20) Pls 125-26.

39 DOUMAS (*supra* n. 20) Pls 122-30.

40 DOUMAS (*supra* n. 20) Pls 95-99.

41 Originally S. MARINATOS misinterpreted the sheath and baldric as the representation of a snake: *Thera* VII (1976) 27; corrected in DOUMAS (*supra* n. 20) 128. For the reconstruction presented here, see P. REHAK, "The Monkey Frieze from Xeste 3, Room 4: Reconstruction and Interpretation," forthcoming in the *Festschrift for Malcolm Wiener*.

42 MARINATOS and HIRMER (*supra* n. 9) Pls 100, 102; R. KOEHL, "The Chieftain Cup and a Minoan Rite of Passage," *JHS* 106 (1986) 99-110.

43 N.K. SANDARS, "The First Aegean Swords and their Ancestry," *AJA* 65 (1961) 17-29; E.P. BLEGEN, *AJA* 39 (1935) 134-36; S. MARINATOS, *Praktika* 1935, 212-20; A.B. KNAPP, J.D. MUHLY, and P. MUHLY, "To Hoard is Human," *RDAC* 1988, 251.

44 G.A. OWENS, "New Evidence for Minoan 'Demeter'," *Kadmos* 35 (1996) 172-75.

45 A. LEMBESI, "Η συνέχεια της κρητομυκηναϊκής λατρείας. Επιβιώσεις και αναβιώσεις," *ArchEph* (1981) 1-24, esp. 15, Pl. 2 β, γ.

46 HERODOTOS 8.77.

## Shield

Finally, the iconographic evidence for the figure-eight shield keeps increasing as a result of excavations and chance finds. The figure-eight shield has been considered both a practical item and a symbolic device. Our earliest depiction of the figure-eight shield seems to occur on a three sided prism of MM IB-II date from Crete: the shield appears above the back of two mating goats (Pl. XLVIIc).<sup>47</sup> Representations of the figure-eight shield only become common during the Neopalatial period on Crete, when it seems already to have acquired a symbolic value, for example as bosses on a faience cup from the Knossos Temple Repositories (MM III)<sup>48</sup> or as jewelry pendants in a tomb at Poros-Heraklion.<sup>49</sup> A repeating frieze of suspended shields occurs on a pair of LM IA Minoan jugs exported to Akrotiri, where they were found in a room in Xeste 3.<sup>50</sup> The Cult Basement at Knossos near the Stratigraphic Museum included a cup rhyton with shields and a possible gorgoneion, as well as a miniature amphora decorated with a frieze of shields.<sup>51</sup> An important addition to these examples is the unpublished LM IA jug with shields from a chamber tomb at Poros (Heraklion), now on public view in the Heraklion Museum.<sup>52</sup> Shields are a common element in the Alternating Style of LM IB pottery, and Minoan vessel shapes with shield friezes began to be copied by mainland potters in LH IIA, continuing into LH IIIA.<sup>53</sup> The repetitious pattern of shields on most pots indicates that the loops at the top of the shields are suspension straps, not the heads of individuals wearing the shields, and the lack of arms or legs protruding from behind the shields confirms this view.<sup>54</sup>

Recently, N. Marinatos has argued that on Crete the shield is a symbol of hunting ritual and the seasonal renewal of nature, not of a Minoan goddess.<sup>55</sup> While the aetiology of sacrifice often derives from hunting,<sup>56</sup> the figure-eight shield occurs only once among Minoan representations of hunting and fighting, on a cushion seal of unknown provenience (possibly Crete) (Pl. XLVIIId)<sup>57</sup> whose scene is closely related to that on the Lion Hunt dagger from Mycenae. The figure-eight shield, moreover, must have been cumbersome and heavy, since it was suspended by a strap or telamon around the neck, and would have banged against the shins as one walked. It would have been most effective as a defensive barrier behind which individuals could take cover (as on the Mycenae Lion Hunt dagger), but difficult to use in the active pursuit of any swift animal. Thus it is unlikely that the shield was primarily associated with hunting.

In addition, the dappled depiction of the shield on pottery confirms that it was made of bull's hide. It is doubtful that the Minoans allowed bulls to exist in a fertile state, and in most societies only a relatively small number of bulls is maintained in proportion to the number of cows. For much of the year, however, bulls may have been allowed relative freedom in pastures and on grazing lands, as they were in the western United States during the 19th century.

47 HM 1298: CMS II 2 no. 306.

48 P. REHAK, "Minoan Vessels with Figure-Eight Shields. Antecedents to the Knossos Throneroom Alabastra," *OpAth* 19 (1992) 115-24. esp. 116, 117, Fig. 3.

49 P. MUHLY, *Μινωικός λαξευτός τάφος στον Πόρο Ηρακλείου* (1992) 90-91 nos. 243-45, Pl. 28, nos. 243-45.

50 AR 27 (1981) 38 and Fig. 67; *Praktika* 1979, Pl. 159 α; A. PAPAGIANNONOPOULOU, "Xeste 3, Akrotiri, Thera: The Pottery," in C. MORRIS (ed.), *Klados. Essays in Honour of J.N. Coldstream* (BICS Suppl. 63, 1995) 209-15.

51 P. WARREN in AR 27 (1981) 84 Fig. 34 (cup rhyton), 84 Fig. 35 (amphora).

52 Autopsis, January 1999. P. WARREN, "Shield and Goddess in Minoan Crete and the Aegean," forthcoming in the Proceedings of the 1996 Cretological Congress. I am grateful to the author for allowing me to read a copy of his paper in advance of its publication.

53 E.g., the well known stirrup jar with shields from a tomb at Khalkis Trypa: P.A. MOUNTJOY, "Regional Mycenaean Pottery," *BSA* 85 (1990) 245-70, esp. 248 and Fig. 3.

54 Pace T. SMALL, "A Possible Shield Goddess from Crete," *Kadmos* 5 (1966) 103-107.

55 N. MARINATOS, *Minoan Sacrificial Ritual. Cult Practice and Symbolism* (1986) 52-58.

56 E.g., W. BURKERT, *Homo Necans. The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth* (1983) Part I.

57 CMS IX no. 7D. The seal is listed among gemmae dubitandae, but is probably genuine.

The capture of the bull by netting it is an important topos of Neopalatial art centered around Knossos, recorded on stone relief vases, relief frescoes, and on the gold Vapheio cups.<sup>58</sup> Only once do we see the actual hunting of a bull, on an ivory pyxis from Katsamba,<sup>59</sup> although glyptic art shows some bulls or cows struck by arrows or spears.<sup>60</sup> The capture of the bull presumably served as the prelude to bull-leaping, in which athletic young men and women evidently took part.<sup>61</sup> Interestingly, there are no Neopalatial illustrations of bull sacrifice – our earliest occurs on the Ayia Triadha sarcophagus of Final Palatial date (LM IIIA)<sup>62</sup> – but it seems reasonable to hypothesize a connection between the bull sports and the eventual use of the hides to make the shields.

Since the shield is large, each must represent the hide of at least one bovid,<sup>63</sup> and the manufacture of the shield can therefore be considered a statement of power or wealth. Although the killing of a bull would furnish only a single hide, it has been estimated that the meat of a single animal could feed several hundred feasters.<sup>64</sup> If each hide represents the sacrifice of an animal, the repeated depictions of shields could refer symbolically to the munificence of sacrifices, as well as the power of the ruler who could equip his or her soldiers with shields made from the hides.

These wider iconographic associations for the figure-eight shield may help explain problematic objects like the bronze axe head from Vorou, engraved on one side with a figure-eight shield flanked by "sacral robes" pierced by swords, and on the other by a central robe/sword framed by probable quivers (Pl. XLVIIe).<sup>65</sup> Similar quivers appear as a repeating pattern on fresco fragments from Knossos which probably represent decorated textiles worn by important women in the palace murals (Pl. XLVIIIa).<sup>66</sup> Although it is not always easy to distinguish among Neopalatial textiles, the "sacral robe" might represent the garment of oriental origin worn by elite men on some Neopalatial seals, rather than another type of clothing.<sup>67</sup>

The gold cult ring from the Vapheio tholos, surely of Minoan Neopalatial manufacture, shows a central female figure flanked by a man at a tree on one side and by a profile shield on the other, to which is attached a "sacral robe" with the protruding pommel of a sword (Pl. XLVIIIb).<sup>68</sup> The male in this scene wears the codpiece and leggings of an athletic bull-leaper.

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- 58 NMA 1758, 1759: H.G. BUCHHOLZ and V. KARAGEORGHIS, *Prehistoric Greece and Cyprus* (1973) 87-88 nos. 1104-1105, Pls 1104-1105; E. DAVIS, *The Vapheio Cups and Aegean Gold and Silver Ware* (1977) 1-50, 256-58 nos. 103-104; B. and E. HALLAGER, "The Knossian Bull – Political Propaganda in Neo-Palatial Crete?," in *Politeia* 547-56; A. XENAKI-SAKELLARIOU, "Αναζήτηση του εργαστηρίου των χρυσών κυπέλλων του Βαφειού," *ArchEph* (1991) 45-64.
- 59 S. HOOD, *The Arts in Prehistoric Greece* (1978) 121-22, 122, Fig. 11 A, B. Even though the scene shows a hunt with spears, one figure somersaults over the horns as in bull-leaping; a similar motif occurs on the Boxer Rhyton from Ayia Triada.
- 60 E.g., *CMS V Suppl.* 1A nos. 153, 154; IX no. 119.
- 61 J.G. YOUNGER, "Bronze Age Representations of Aegean Bull-Games, III," in *Politeia* 507-45, with earlier references.
- 62 MARINATOS and HIRMER (*supra* n. 9) col. Pl. XXVIII; C. LONG, *The Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus* (SIMA 41, 1974) 61-71.
- 63 Homeric shields were sometimes made of multiple layers of hide, and that of Ajax had seven layers of hide, reinforced with bronze. See H. BORCHHARDT, *Frühe griechische Schildformen*, *Archaeologia Homerica* E 1 (1977); H. VAN WEES, "The Homeric Way of War: The *Iliad* and the Hoplite Phalanx (I, II)," *Greece and Rome* 41 (1994) 1-18, 131-55.
- 64 For the bull sacrifice in the Pylos paintings and the bull as the contribution of the *wanax*, see L. McCALLUM, *Decorative Program in the Mycenaean Palace of Pylos: The Megaron Frescoes* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania 1987) *passim*.
- 65 BUCHHOLZ and KARAGEORGHIS (*supra* n. 58) 59 no. 719, 277, Figs 719 a, b; C. VERLINDEN, "Nouvelle interprétation du décor incisé sur une double hache en bronze supposée provenir de Voros," in P. DARCQUE and J.C. POURSAT (eds), *L'Iconographie minoenne* (BCH Suppl. 11, 1985) 135-49.
- 66 Fragments from the Northwest Fresco Heap: *PM* III 39 Fig. 23. Because of the attached straps, these objects are unlikely to be auloi, as some have suggested.
- 67 Examples collected by J.G. YOUNGER, "The Iconography of Rulership: A Conspectus," in P. REHAK (ed.), *The Role of the Ruler in the Prehistoric Aegean*, *Aegaeum* 11 (1995) 162-64.
- 68 NMA 1801: *CMS* I no. 219. For recent discussion, see NIEMEIER (*supra* n. 9) 169 and Fig. 3.

A similar robe/sword appears on an ivory plaque from Grave Circle B at Mycenae in the context of a scene of bull-capture or bull-leaping (Pl. XLVIIIc),<sup>69</sup> making explicit the connections among the symbols of sacral robe, sword, shield, and bull. If we assume that bull-leaping during the Neopalatial period was an elite sport, then the "sacral robe" and sword may be the insignia that were awarded after the completion of a successful encounter with the bull, with a shield eventually made of its hide.

The robe and sword continue as indicators of status even after the LM I B destructions on Crete; we subsequently see men with these accoutrements in several Knossos paintings: the Campstool Fresco,<sup>70</sup> Palanquin Fresco,<sup>71</sup> and a chariot procession where a robed figure leads a tethered bull behind his chariot.<sup>72</sup> The image of the robed figure driving a chariot is a motif which certainly goes back to Neopalatial times, since it appears on a seal from the Vapheio tholos.<sup>73</sup> Although there are too many of these robed figures in the Neopalatial and Final Palatial periods for them all to be kings, they may be male members of the ruling elite, forming a counterpart to the many images of important women.<sup>74</sup>

These symbolic associations of the figure-eight shield in Neopalatial Crete have sometimes been obscured by our continuing focus on a relatively small number of representations of the shield in mainland art, mostly of LH I-IIA date. As a type of defensive armament, the shield appears seven times: in human combats on a gold cushion seal<sup>75</sup> and a cornelian amygdaloid,<sup>76</sup> both from SG III which contained the bodies of presumed women and children; the famous Lion-Hunt niello dagger from SG IV,<sup>77</sup> the silver battle krater also from SG IV,<sup>78</sup> and a seal with a lion-hunting scene from the Vapheio tholos.<sup>79</sup> A stela from SG V shows a man in a chariot driving over the (unfinished) figure of a man wearing a figure-eight shield.<sup>80</sup> One of its latest attestations is on a LH IIIB:2 krater fragment from Tiryns which shows a pair of soldiers, one wearing a tower shield and the other a figure-eight shield (Pl. XLVIIIId).<sup>81</sup>

From Mycenae come several symbolic representations of shields, including a silver shield-shaped rhyton<sup>82</sup> and a sword with a raised midrib of shields in a repeating pattern, both from SG IV.<sup>83</sup> Thus Mycenae's fascination with shield iconography begins early and continues late (e.g., the shield frescoes discussed at the beginning of this paper).

The tower shield, by contrast, appears to have had a different symbolic value, restricted to scenes of fighting and hunting. On the Lion Hunt dagger and silver Battle Krater, mentioned above, the tower shield and figure-eight shield appear together. The krater, however, shows one file of warriors with figure-eight shields fighting a file of men wearing

69 MYLONAS (*supra* n. 31) 23, Pl. 11 α; DEMAKOPOULOU (*supra* n. 3) 200-201, no. 176 and col. Fig.

70 IMMERWAHR (*supra* n. 3) 176, Kn no. 26.

71 IMMERWAHR (*supra* n. 3) 175-76, Kn no. 25.

72 IMMERWAHR (*supra* n. 3) 94, Fig. 27, 175-76, Kn no. 25.

73 NMA 1770: CMS I no. 229.

74 P. REHAK, "The Aegean Priest on CMS I.223," *Kadmos* 33 (1994) 76-84.

75 NMA 35: CMS I no. 11.

76 NMA 116: CMS I no. 12.

77 CM Pl. XXXV (center), XXXVI; BUCHHOLZ and KARAGEORGHIS (*supra* n. 58) 56 no. 682, 273, Pl. 682.

78 DAVIS (*supra* n. 58) 227-29 no. 86, Figs 176-78; A. SAKELLARIOU, "Un cratère d'argent avec scène de bataille provenant de la IVe tombe de Mycènes," in *Congresso di Micenologia I* (1967) 262-65, Pls I-IV; SAKELLARIOU, "Un cratère d'argent avec scène de bataille provenant de la IVe tombe de l'acropole de Mycènes," *AntK* 17 (1974) 3-20, Pls 1-2, Figs 1-2.

79 NMA 1783: CMS I no. 228.

80 G. KARO, *Die Schachtgräber von Mykenai* (1930/33) 168, no. 1427, Pl. VII; MARINATOS and HIRMER (*supra* n. 9) Pl. 146; J.G. YOUNGER, "The Stelai of Mycenae Grave Circles A and B," *TEXNH* 229-39.

81 AR 26 (1980) 29 and Fig. 51.

82 NMA 608 a, b: DAVIS (*supra* n. 58) 230-33 no. 88, Figs 181-84; A. SAKELLARIOU, "Νέα μορφή παλαιών αντικειμένων του Εθνικού Αρχαιολογικού Μουσείου," *ArchEph* (1957) 1-4, Pl. A.

83 BUCHHOLZ and KARAGEORGHIS (*supra* n. 58) 56-57, no. 686, Pl. 686; KILIAN-DIRLMEIER (*supra* n. 32) 157-58, suggests that the midrib would have precluded using the sword as a weapon; its use, therefore, must have been symbolic.



tower shields, as if the shield types indicate ethnicity or political affiliation. The dagger instead shows a single group of men where both types of shield are present. On the silver Siege Rhyton from SG IV, some human figures wear tower shields but the handle of the vessel is flanked by a pair of gilded figure-eight shield bosses.<sup>84</sup> Only the tower shield is worn by a man on another gold ring from SG IV at Mycenae, the so-called Battle in the Glen.<sup>85</sup> Files of men wearing tower shields appear on a stone relief vase fragment from Epidauros<sup>86</sup> and the Miniature Fresco from the West House at Thera, where we even see the tower shields of the figures who have been drowned in an attempted landing by sea.<sup>87</sup>

At this point in time, there is no reason to think that the shielded men in the Miniature Fresco are necessarily Mycenaean: they could be Minoan or Cycladic islanders.<sup>88</sup> The Epidauros relief vessel fragment, however, can only be Minoan, and I believe that both the figure-eight and towers shields are likely to be of Cretan origin.<sup>89</sup>

Several representations suggest that figure-eight shields could be dedicated in sanctuaries or at shrines both on Crete and on the mainland. The Vapheio ring, mentioned above, suggests a cultic setting. And on a gold ring of probable mainland manufacture from chamber tomb 91 at Mycenae, a profile shield hangs within a small shrine.<sup>90</sup> A LM II jug from the Unexplored Mansion at Knossos has a design which includes horns of consecration set on a low platform flanked by garlands of lily blossoms and a large figure-eight shield.<sup>91</sup>

This evidence suggests that in Neo- and Final Palatial Crete the figure-eight shield was largely symbolic, and was connected primarily with Knossos – the one Cretan palace where we also have extensive depictions of bull-leaping and the representation of robed men. As Mycenaean contacts with Crete increased during the Shaft Grave era, the mainlanders borrowed both the symbolic and the practical uses of the shield. I have noted elsewhere that Aegean iconography appears to have been set by the time of the LM IB destructions.<sup>92</sup> Interestingly, the figure-eight shield continues to be represented at a time when many other iconographic topoi that had characterized Minoan society drop out. The survival of the shield must mean that Mycenaean society, like Minoan, had some use for it, and the many representations of shields at Mycenae in ivory, semiprecious materials, and in painting confirm this.

During LM II-III A, a period of possible Mycenaean occupation of Crete, the symbolic use of the shield continues in the Knossos area. From the Knossos palace comes a series of stone alabaster decorated with relief shield bosses;<sup>93</sup> a small steatite alabastron with shield bosses was found in Sellopoulo tomb 2 nearby.<sup>94</sup> Two examples similar to those from the Knossos palace, found in chamber tombs at Mycenae, are probably also of Cretan origin and may represent spolia.<sup>95</sup>

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- 84 NMA 477/504: DAVIS (*supra* n. 58) 227-30, no. 87, Figs 179-80; MARINATOS and HIRMER (*supra* n. 9) Pl. 174 for good detail.
- 85 NMA 241: CMS I no. 15.
- 86 KAISER (*supra* n. 25) 30 Epidauros I, Fig. 27.
- 87 DOUMAS (*supra* n. 20) Pl. 28: shielded warriors on land; Pl. 29: two shields floating in the water in the landing scene.
- 88 MORGAN (*supra* n. 15) 107-109, 118-20.
- 89 D. EVELY, "The Neo-palatial Minoan Warrior: Fact or Fiction?," in D. EVELY, I.S. LEMOS, and S. SHERRATT (eds), *Minotaur and Centaur. Studies in the Archaeology of Crete and Euboea Presented to Mervyn Popham* (BAR-IS 638, 1996) 59-69, esp. 63.
- 90 NMA 3179: CMS I no. 126; MARINATOS and HIRMER (*supra* n. 9) Pl. 206, second row, right. NIEMEIER (*supra* n. 9) 169 and Fig. 4, correctly identifies the ring as a Mycenaean creation.
- 91 M.R. POPHAM, *The Minoan Unexplored Mansion* (BSA Suppl. 17, 1984) 170, Pl. 60 a, 153.8.
- 92 P. REHAK, "Aegean Art before and after the LM I B Cretan Destructions," *TEXNH* 61-63, esp. 61-62, Pl. 20 b.
- 93 R. HÄGG, "The Last Ceremony in the Throne Room at Knossos," *OpAth* 17 (1988) 99-105; REHAK (*supra* n. 48).
- 94 *AR* (1958) Pl. 2 d.
- 95 A. XENAKI-SAKELLARIOU, *Οι θαλαμωτοί τάφοι των Μυκηνών. Ανασκαφής Χρ. Τσουντα (1887-1898)* (1985) 157, Λ 2769, Pl. 56, no. 2769; 250, no. Λ 3163, Pl. 121 no. 3163. See the paper by O. KRZYSZKOWSKA, this volume.

A high status individual, presumed to be a woman, was buried in tholos A at Archanes in LM IIIA:1/2.<sup>96</sup> This is the time when Mycenaean state formation was occurring throughout the Aegean, and mainlanders were almost surely present at Knossos. The funerary equipment of the Archanes woman included five gold cult rings (one a Neopalatial heirloom related stylistically to the Vapheio ring), a lentoid of bronze and one of cornelian, as well an ivory footstool decorated with figure-eight shields and helmeted warriors heads<sup>97</sup> and a set of bronze vessels. Four of the gold rings show designs of figure-eight shields, one of which includes "sacral robes" (Pl. XLVIIIe) in a design which recalls some of the elements on the Vapheio ring.<sup>98</sup> Sealings from the Knossos palace approximately contemporary with the burial have related motifs of shields and "sacral robes,"<sup>99</sup> and a gold cult ring from a contemporary burial at Kalyvia carries a repeating design of shields.<sup>100</sup>

The rank of the woman in Archanes tholos A is further emphasized by the sacrifice of a horse, whose body was dismembered for inclusion in the tomb, and by the bull's skull with truncated horns which was immured in the blocking wall between the main room of the tholos and the side chamber.<sup>101</sup> Her large collection of seals and rings suggests that she was connected with the administration of Knossos at the time, while her burial at Archanes may indicate that she was also associated with the the peak sanctuary on Mt. Juktas nearby.<sup>102</sup> Thus the tomb and its contents bring together many of the symbols presently under discussion.

## Conclusion

The increasing number of figure-eight shield representations on Crete both in the Neopalatial and Final Palatial period strengthens the notion that the Mycenaean Warrior Goddess was originally a Minoan divinity, perhaps a goddess connected with the palace at Knossos. Both cultures may have found it useful to try to visualize such a divinity, because her attributes reflected concerns with status and elite power displays, as well as with warfare. We now have a better understanding of how the symbols connected with her cult: shield, sword, helmet, and robe, functioned on a wide range of levels with a variety of possible meanings during the Late Bronze Age in the Aegean.

Paul REHAK

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- 96 J. SAKELLARAKIS, "Das Kuppelgrab A von Archanes und das kretisch-mykenische Tieropferritual," *PZ* 45 (1970) 135-219; *AR* 12 (1966) 22; *ArchDelt* 1966 B2 443-46; *BCH* 90 (1966) 928-29; J. and E. SAKELLARAKIS, *Archanes* (*supra* n. 25 [1991]) 72-84; J. and E. SAKELLARAKIS, *Archanes* (*supra* n. 25 [1997]) 158-68. The contents of the burial are discussed *passim*. I know of no report on the skeletal material, but the burial is assumed to be that of a woman because of the absence of weapons.
- 97 J. SAKELLARAKIS, "Mycenaean Footstools," in G. HERRMANN (ed.), *The Furniture of Western Asia, Ancient and Traditional* (1996) 105-10; J. and E. SAKELLARAKIS, *Archanes* (*supra* n. 25 [1997]) 721-29.
- 98 HM no. 990. For illustrations, see *AR* 12 (1966) 22, Fig. 40; *BCH* 90 (1966) 930 Fig. 4: gold ring with bezel divided lengthwise by engraved line; three shields alternating with two sacral robes on each side in a mirror-image pattern; J. and E. SAKELLARAKIS, *Archanes* (*supra* n. 25 [1997]) 654-61, Figs 721, 725-28.
- 99 HM 664, from the Archives Deposit: three robes framed by a pair of figure-eight shields above a running spiral dado: *PM* IV 2 608, Fig. 597 A.k. Cf a sealing with three figure-eight shields from the Queen's Megaron: *PM* IV 2 602, C5.
- 100 HM 48: *CMS* II 3 no. 113.
- 101 P. REHAK, "The Use and Destruction of Minoan Stone Bull's Head Rhyta," in *Politeia* 435-60.
- 102 A figure-eight shield bead, pierced horizontally for suspension, was found at Ano Archanes: *ArchDelt* 1973 B2 572, Pl. 542 d.

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Pl. XLVIa Mycenae painted plaque (after *Warrior Goddess*, Fig. 2).  
 Pl. XLVIb Room 31 fresco (photo author).  
 Pl. XLVIc Fresco of woman with griffin (after *Warrior Goddess*, Fig. 4).  
 Pl. XLVI d Thebes painting (author, after MORGAN [*supra* n. 15] Fig. 156).  
 Pl. XLVI e Tiryns cushion seal (after REHAK in *EIKΩN supra* n. 5] Pl. XIXc).  
 Pl. XLVI f Knossos cushion seal (author, after *CMS* II 3 no. 16).  
 Pl. XLVII a Thera monkey frieze (author's reconstruction).  
 Pl. XLVII b Chieftain cup (after MARINATOS and HIRMER [*supra* n. 9] Pl. 100).  
 Pl. XLVII c Cretan seal with goats (author, after *CMS* II 2 no. 306).  
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 Pl. XLVIII b Vapheio ring (after *CMS* I no. 219).  
 Pl. XLVIII c Ivory plaque (author, after DEMAKOPOULOU [*supra* n. 3] 200 col. Fig. of no. 176).  
 Pl. XLVIII d Tiryns krater fragment (author, after *AR* 26 [1980] 29 Fig. 51).  
 Pl. XLVIII e Archanes ring (author, after *AR* 12 [1966] 22 Fig. 40).

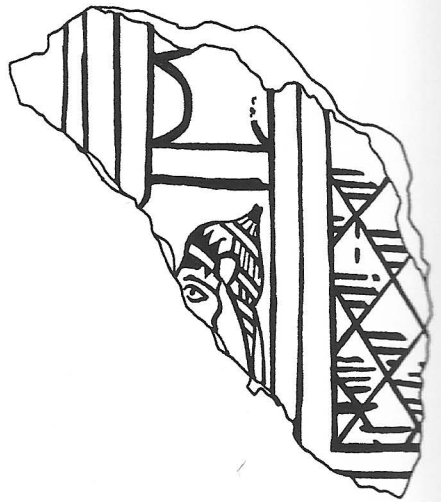
## DISCUSSION

- P. Warren:** I think it may be possible to develop even a little further the symbolic character which you ascribed to the figure-eight shield. You may know the paper I gave at the 8th Cretological Congress (Irakleion 1996), the last one, was precisely on this point, the figure-eight shield goddess with a new piece, a very important jug from one of the Poros tombs. The tomb itself is unpublished but Antonis Vassilakis and Iannis Tzedakis allowed me to use that vessel from it. It has a representation of four figure-eight shields on it with an arrangement at the top which I tried to argue was a stylized way of representing a female head with hair, and that the shield, in other words, stands as a symbol of the divinity, of the goddess - rather than just being symbolic in general terms. It actually - like other aniconic elements and other elements - stands as a vehicle for possession by the divinity. That would seem to contrast rather interestingly with your exposition of its mainland function, where clearly it was, amongst other things, used as a shield. In Crete it goes much more towards being a representation of a vehicle for possession, like the column and the tree and other materials in Minoan religion.
- P. Rehak:** I was aware of Peter's paper at the Cretological but I wasn't there, and I forebore with great difficulty in asking you for a copy of your paper. I shall now. I'd love to see the vessel, first of all, but it sounds like we are basically in agreement about this. Of course I have made extensive use in the argument of the vessel you excavated at Knossos. One thing I did want to mention, which I didn't have time to in the paper, is that I've been cataloguing the figure-eight shield representations, and already I have been able to put together well over 300. Something that I find alarming is that we always seem to discuss the same eight or ten representations, especially those in the Shaft Graves material. I think it important that we look at all the representations. [Addendum: I was able to view this vessel in Heraklion in January, 1998, and the "heads" above the shields seem to me to be rosettes from which the shields are suspended, as in the fresco friezes. Because no arms or legs are visible protruding from behind the shields, I'm reluctant to accept these as representations of anthropomorphic figures. The rosettes, however, are certainly rendered with great prominence].
- L. Godart:** Juste un mot pour dire à Peter Warren que les nouvelles tablettes de Thèbes nous permettent d'aller exactement dans le sens de ton interprétation. Par exemple, là nous avons des animaux sacrés qui collent parfaitement avec ce que tu as dit, et qui donc nous permettent d'affirmer que sur le continent également à l'époque de la fin de l'Helladique Récent IIIB nous avons une situation telle que tu viens de la décrire.
- J. Crouwel:** A further point about the figure-eight shield and its symbolic meaning: you sometimes see it together with the sacred robe. What is the connection between the two?
- P. Rehak:** I was trying to make a connection between the idea that the bull sports are connected with the eventual killing of the animal, and that this is perhaps an elite activity that people are using as a way of testing themselves or proving themselves. This may be such a specialized activity that we only have the elite taking part in it. Some of these individuals who actually complete the bull-leaping process then have gone through some sort of *rite de passage*, and have qualified in some sense as the members of the elite, in which case they would then be given special garments and also the swords as a mark of status.
- T.G. Palaima:** Paul, this is a question: I think you mentioned at the beginning the name of the goddess Athena, so are you identifying this warrior-goddess with the later goddess Athena? That brings up the question of whether you see any localization of this divinity? Then there is the further question of what you do with the reference in the Knossos tablet V52, to a-ta-na po-ti-ni-ja. If you are going to bring in Athena into this question, you have to worry about that particular tablet which becomes even more complicated because it comes from the Room of the Chariot Tablets, but in having the advantage of looking at Jan Driessen's proofs for his forthcoming volume, I noticed that he has pinacological reasons for wanting to exclude V52 from the RCT.
- P. Rehak:** Actually I am glad you brought that up although I was trying to sidestep this issue. I think it would be tempting to try to associate a-ta-na with Athena, but from my limited knowledge of Linear B I think it is probably something like a place name. It is not the name of Athena. I've been cautious in what I've written about the shields in trying to say that I think this divinity

incorporates some of the functions that we later associate with Athena, but I wouldn't try to make an exact one-to-one correspondance. Even with the religious names and what we know about ritual for the Bronze Age there do seem to be tremendous changes that take place over the centuries as we go through the Dark Age and into the historical period.



a



d



b



e



c



f

