

Embodying Change? Homosomatic Hybridity as Transformational Response in LM II/III Crete

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Morfizacja zmiany? Hybrydyczność homosomatyczna jako odpowiedź na transformację późnego okresu minojskiego (LM II/III) na Krecie

Abstract: This contribution approaches human-animal relations in Late Bronze Age Crete through a case study of bull-men. These hybrid creatures that combine human and bull features appear only on seals in the Final Palatial period. An analysis of the modes of hybridity encountered in LBA Crete in relation to the human body serves as a starting point for understanding the role of these bull-men in Minoan cognition. The respective seals are considered regarding their materiality, find spots, and contextual information in order to gain a picture of the societal level they were operating on. Set against our current knowledge of socio-political structures in the Final Palatial period, it is argued that the seals were commissioned and owned by high-ranking social units who selected this new imagery as part of a political strategy during a time of socio-political competition.

Keywords: Late Bronze Age Crete, Aegean seals, human-animal relations, social cognition

Abstrakt: Artykuł omawia relację człowiek-zwierzę w późnej epoce brązu na Krecie na podstawie studium przypadku relacji byk-człowiek. Hybrydowe stworzenia, łączące cechy człowieka i byka, pojawiają się na kreteńskich pieczęciach jedynie w schyłkowym okresie pałacowym. Analiza różnych przedstawień hybryd znanych z kreteńskiej późnej epoki brązu w odniesieniu do ludzkiego ciała posłużyła autorce artykułu jako punkt wyjścia do próby zrozumienia znaczenia ludzi-byków w świecie minojskim. Pieczęcie są analizowane pod kątem surowca, miejsca znalezienia i informacji kontekstowych w celu uzyskania informacji na temat ich funkcjonowania w ówczesnym społeczeństwie. W zestawieniu z naszą obecną wiedzą na temat struktur społeczno-politycznych w schyłkowym okresie pałacowym, przyjmuje się, że pieczęcie były wykonywane na zamówienie przez jednostki o wysokim statusie społecznym, które wybrały ten nowy obraz jako element strategii w czasach rywalizacji społeczno-politycznej.

Słowa kluczowe: Kreta, późna epoka brązu, pieczęcie egejskie, relacje człowiek-zwierzę, poznanie społeczne

Introduction

The material culture of Late Bronze Age Crete teems with representations and depictions of animals. These can be found in three-dimensional objects such as theriomorphic vessels, figurines or jewelry, engraved on seals or stone vessels, or rendered in wall paintings and relief frescoes. The prevalence of animals of the natural world in the visual media has prompted several studies of human-animal relations over the past two decades (Watts 2013; in Aegean archaeology strongly advocated by A. Shapland, cf. Shapland 2010; 2014). In comparison, hybrid or supernatural animals, which have been extensively studied as such (most recently undertaken by Blakolmer 2018; for further instances see indicated bibliography in Wolf 2019), are rather under-

represented in the archaeological literature when it comes to human-animal relations.

This contribution approaches human-(supernatural) animal, or more poignantly human-hybrid, relations in Late Bronze Age Crete through a case study of Late Minoan (LM) II-III A1 (1440/30 – 1370/60, absolute dates after Warren 2010) bull-men seals. The aim is to better understand what kind of individuals or social unit/s were using this specific hybrid iconography during this period and for what reasons. This requires a preliminary discussion of the different modes of hybridity encountered in Late Bronze Age Crete, especially in relation to the human body, in order to approximate the role of hybridity in Minoan human cognition. From this point of departure, several relational factors will be considered: starting from human-bull

relations that, on the next level, serve to recognize significant aspects of human-bull-men relations, which are then regarded in relation to Late Palatial political geography. This serves to assess the hypothesis that the bull-men seals are a possible response to socio-political transformations after the end of the Neopalatial period.

Hybrid bodies in Late Bronze Age Crete

Before turning to the bull-men seals as a case study, it is necessary to consider the different modes of hybridity that occurred in Late Bronze Age Crete. Hybridity is located at the extreme end on a scale of human-animal relations. This scale, introduced by A. Simandiraki-Grimshaw (Simandiraki-Grimshaw 2010: 94), ranges from a non-interactive point of *coexistence*, which is exceeded by a temporally bounded level of *liminality*, followed by a longer-term level of engagement that entails purposeful interaction of humans and animals, to the most condensed form of human-animal relation, *hybridity*: a – potentially – perpetual, corporeal connection. Two forms of human-animal hybridity exist in Bronze Age Crete: heterosomatic and homosomatic hybrids. In the case of heterosomatic hybridity, parts of or complete animals, also simulated animals, are attached to the human body (Simandiraki-Grimshaw 2010: 94-95). Examples for this are the wearing of recognizable animal parts such as hides or bones; or jewelry in the shape of animals, the latter constituting an example of simulated animals.

The wearing of an animal's physical features may have transferred certain characteristics of the live animal to the human body. This could reach from basic features such as color, haptics, and shape over to idealized traits and virtues such as strength or agility. Simulated animals worn on the human body had the potential to turn the body into a somatic scaffold of the natural world: a necklace in the shape of dragonflies, as seen on the goddess in the fresco of Xeste 3, Akrotiri (Doulas 1992: 162 fig. 125), for example, could turn the bearer's bosom into a lush basin (Simandiraki-Grimshaw 2010: 94f.). This heterosomatic form of hybridity is only temporary, as the faunal element is detachable and can be shed, thus ending the appropriation of the animal by the human bearer. It is nevertheless possible to speak

of hybridity, as the donning of a respective animal item has a transformative, agentive force. By putting on a – real or simulated – animal piece of attire, the bearer actively turns him- or herself into a “temporary hybrid” (Simandiraki-Grimshaw 2010: 94) whose somatic and conceptual traits are altered by the transformative force of the animal item. For example, by donning a boar's tusk helmet, a man turns into a warrior (Simandiraki-Grimshaw 2010: 94). This warrior-state is encompassed by the interaction with a specific community whose members share conceptions about their social status, the importance of their craft and behavioral norms. These may differ from other communities that each member may also belong to, such as a family, social class or religious group and to which a member of the warrior community may return to when shedding the helm and thus, temporally, his embodied warrior-identity.

Homosomatic hybridity, on the other hand, encompasses a full-bodied perpetual conjunction of human and animal parts. Unlike heterosomatic hybrids, homosomatic ones are limited to iconography and appear in glyptic, wall paintings, on ivory plaques, mirror handles and other elaborate media. Most often, these creatures are human-animal hybrids such as bird-men and -ladies, bull-men or sphinxes. Others are animal-animal combinations that lack any human constituent: griffins, Minoan dragons and conjoined creatures of two species like a lion-bull (CMS VSIB no. 142). I distinguish three major categories of homosomatic human-animal hybrids: bi-somatic fusions, ambiguous fusions, and poly-somatic fusions.

Bi-somatic fusion denotes a half/half division of human and animal parts. The lower half is usually human (waist to feet) the upper half consists of the foreparts of one quadruped, two same quadrupeds, or two different ones (the latter two can be called tri-somatic; fig. 1). Typical specimens are bi-somatic bull-, goat-, lion- and boar-men; tri-somatic combinations such as double-goat-men, bull-goat-men, lion-goat-men and some unique combinations such as a possible agrimi-lady (CMS II4 no. 136; Wolf 2019: 33-34)

Ambiguous fusions blur the line between human and animal parts. An example of this are bird

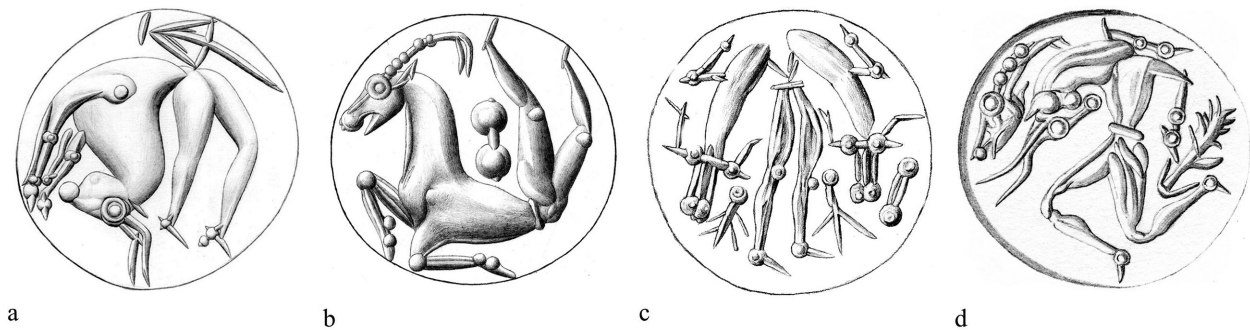


Fig. 1. Variants of bi-somatic fusion on LBA Minoan seals: a. CMS II3 no. 67 (bull-man; Knossos); b. CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 113 (goat-man; Chania); c. CMS VI no. 301 (double-bull-man; Milatos); d. CMS XIII no. 84 (bull-goat-man; Knossos). Courtesy of the CMS archive, Heidelberg

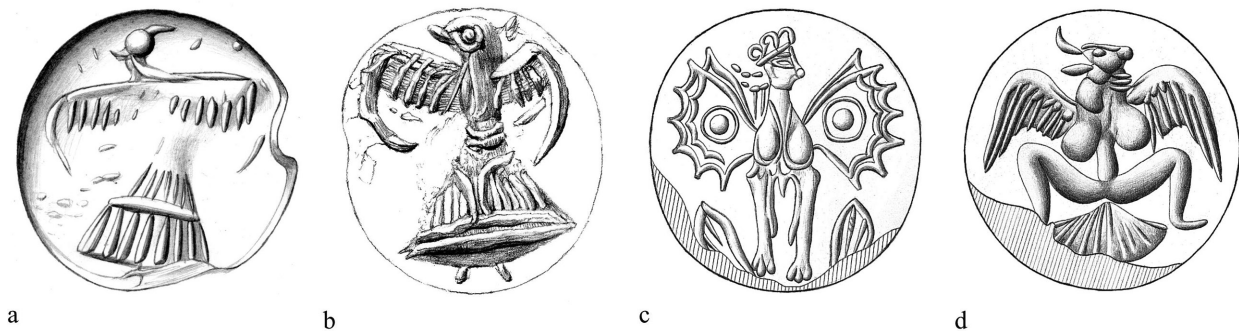


Fig. 2. Ambiguous fusion: a. CMS IX no. 165 (bird-lady, legs missing/not preserved; unknow prov.); b. CMS VI no. 294 (bird-lady, with legs; Crete?); Polysomatic fusion: c. CMS II7 no. 83 (butterfly-lion-lady; Kato Zakros impression); d. CMS II7 no. 145A ("bull-bird-woman"; Kato Zakros impression). Courtesy of the CMS archive, Heidelberg

ladies: It is not always possible to distinguish between a bird's fantail and a skirt (fig. 2 a-b). In some instances, a skirt is easily recognizable as such, in others the ambiguity is very strong. This makes legs/feet that protrude from beneath the ambiguous skirt/ fantail a decisive criterion for the identification of hybrid bird ladies (Anastasiadou 2017).

Poly-somatic fusion includes components of more than one animal combined with human parts (fig. 2 c-d). One example is a creature known through several seal impressions from the palace of Kato Zakros. A human head is mounted atop an amorph human chest that has a pronounced female bosom, but no shoulders. Butterfly wings sprout from the back and lion legs extend from the chest. Therefore, this is a poly-somatic fusion of human, quadruped and insect parts. Another example can be seen in a creature with a bull's head, bird wings and fan-tail, human legs and female bosom.

While heterosomatic hybridity can trigger a direct alteration or shift of the state of a person whose body it is enacted upon, homosomatic hybridity is an irreversible state that does not prompt change but is itself a result of metamorphic process. Human-animal hybridity is perpetuated in homosomatic hybrids – but what was their agentic quality? Lacking the flexibility of heterosomatic hybrids and the temporally bounded effect on the human body, these forms might have been preferable to communicate qualities such as durability and stability. The ability to induce persistence could be part of the reason why the most long-lived hybrid of the Aegean Bronze Age, the griffin, was a homosomatic hybrid and an all-time favorite in elite pictorial media from the Protopalatial, through the Neopalatial and Late Palatial periods on Crete, as well as on the Greek mainland (Dubcova 2019; Blakolmer 2018: 128-132). The following case study discusses a much more

ephemeral occurrence. The case of bull-men in the Late Palatial period shall serve to assess more in-depth the possible role(s) of homosomatic hybrids in Minoan society.

Iconography, materiality, and distribution of bull-men seals

Bull-men appear from the onset of the Late Palatial period on Crete and have no hybrid predecessors in earlier phases. They are composed feet to waist of a male human body often clad in a loincloth and cinched belt. Above the waist the foreparts of a bull including the abdomen, forelegs, chest, neck and head are attached. A number are accompanied by symbols like figure-eight shields, impaled triangles and three-leaved plants. One bull-man is accompanied by a single detached human head. Bi-somatic bull-men display a characteristic torsion of the body at the waist, reminding of tau-rokathapsia scenes that go back to the Neopalatial period and depict men jumping over charging bulls in artistic summersaults (fig. 3). Tri-somatic fusions of double-bull-men or bull-goat-men differ in this regard, owed to the additional animal part that took up extra space on the seal face and was often used to counterweigh an upright instead of roundabout composition (fig. 1 c, d)

Depictions of bull-men are limited to hard stone seals, which begin at Mohs scale 5 (Müller 2007: 12). These include agate, carnelian, hematite and lapis lacedaemonius, the ratio between them being fairly even. The stones were engraved using rotary tools such as the cutting wheel, tubular and solid drills (On technology, see Evelyn 1993: 146-171; Müller 2000). The lentoid is the dominant shape and only complemented by one amygdaloid (CMS X no. 146, which has been considered a possible forgery, see Pini 1981: 149-53) and a mainland cushion seal which is, beyond that, iconographically different from the rest (CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 223, including a dolphin and a difficult to interpret plant element that protrudes from the creature's chest; see Wolf 2019: 40).

The provenance of seals remains a major issue in Aegean Bronze Age glyptic studies due to illicit excavations and trafficking of antiquities. The findspots of approximately 50% of the known seals are

identified with varying degrees of certainty (Krzyżkowska 2005: 10 n. 23), regularly only based on stylistic criteria. Often, the provenance can only be specified as "Crete" or "mainland" and even in these cases doubts may remain. Bull-men prove these statistics: including plausible reported findspots, only 10 of the 20 bull-men seals can be attributed provenances.

The mainland seals will be exempt from this case study, because they are iconographically distinct from the Cretan specimens and need to be understood in context of a different socio-political situation. The seals in question derive from secure mainland contexts: The cushion seal CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 223 was recovered from the acropolis of Midea; CMS V Suppl. 2 no. 112 came from the dromos of grave 62 in Elatia; and CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 159 was found in the necropolis of Voudeni near Patras. The unusual iconography and shape of the first has been mentioned above. The other two secure mainland specimens also differ from the broader bull-men group in that the engraver (or engravers) decided to render the bull head frontally, not in profile as was usual. Additionally, there are barely any blank spots on the seal face. Moreover, the Elatia specimen, like the Midea one, has an engraved dolphin in the center of the composition. The Elatia seal has been dated earlier than its context (LH II-III A1 in a LH IIIB-C context) and the Voudeni specimen is likely also earlier (LH II-III A1 in a LH IIIA-C context). Consequently, they must have been kept as antiques prior to their deposition.

In Crete (fig. 4), only one bull-man has a stratified context that is, moreover, fairly contemporaneous with its date of manufacture: The agate lentoid CMS II3 no. 67 (fig. 1 a), dated to LM IIIA1, was recovered in a LM IIIA-B context in the Knossos Sellopoulo grave 1. Three further seals (CMS VI no. 299; IX no. 144, and XIII no. 84 = fig. 1 d) reportedly also derive from the area of Knossos, but their exact contexts elude us. Single bull-man seals have been reported to the following find spots: a double-bull-man seal to Milatos (ca. 10 km east of Malia, see fig. 1 c), and single bull-men each to Phaiastos, Moni Odigitria (ca. 10 km south of Phaistos) and the Dictaeon cave (CMS III no. 363; V Suppl. 3 no. 150; VI no. 298).

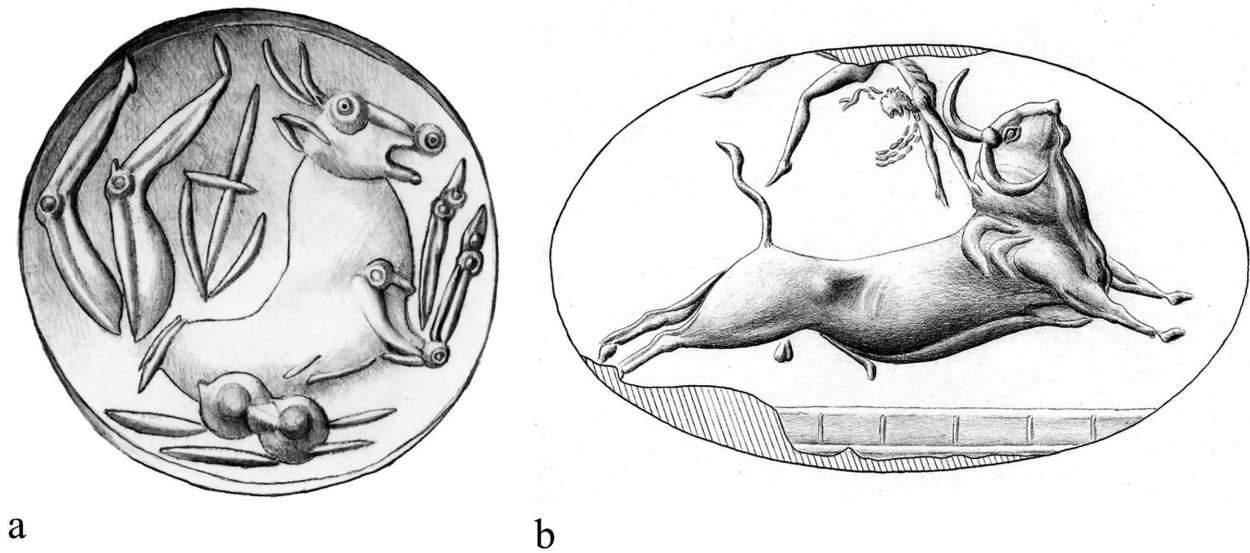


Fig. 3. Comparison of a LM II/III bull-man with a Neopalatial taurokathapsia scene: a. CMS XI no. 251 (lapis lacedaemonius lentoid); b. CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 392 (impression of a metal signet ring). Courtesy of the CMS archive, Heidelberg

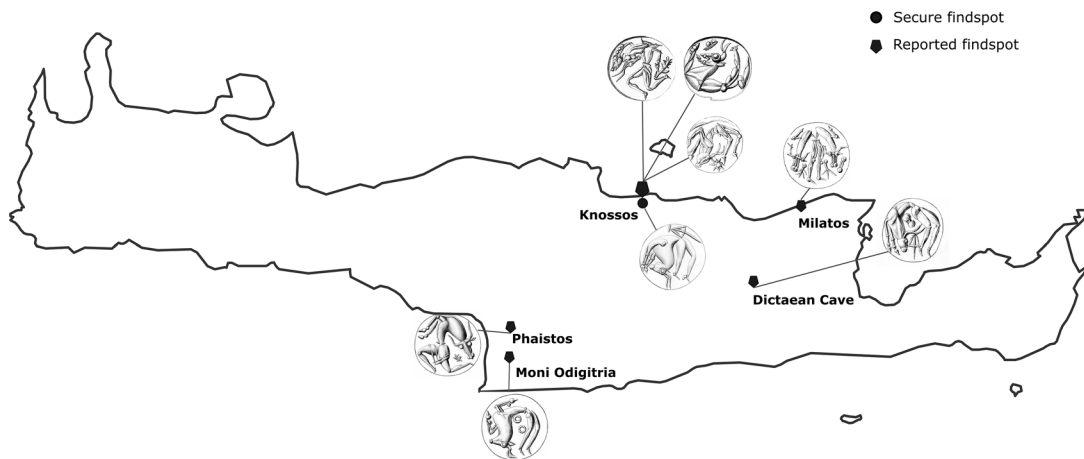


Fig. 4. Cretan bull-men with known and reported findspots: Knossos: CMS XIII no. 84; IX no. 144; VI no. 299; II3 no. 67), Milatos (CMS VI no. 301), Dicte (CMS VI no. 298), Phaistos (CMS III no. 363), Moni Odigitria (CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 150). Drawings of seal faces are courtesy of the CMS archive, Heidelberg

Human-cattle relations in Late Bronze Age Crete

In order to understand the implications of bull-men for and within Late Palatial Cretan society, it is important to consider human-cattle relations in Late Bronze Age Crete. These were manifold and included animal husbandry, agricultural use (ploughing), sacrifice, and bull games (including grappling or leaping). Within Minoan material culture, bulls were regularly featured in clay and bronze figurines, rhyta, seals, wall paintings and gold jew-

elry, to name just a few instances (for examples, see McInerney 2011). The Linear B Knossos Ch tablets even document individual names of oxen – perhaps demonstrating a special relation to these animals –, for example *a₃-wo-ro* (*Aiwołos*), *to-ma-ko* (*Stomargos*) or *wo-no-qo-so* (*Woin-okws*) (Ventris, Chadwick 1956: 105; García Ramón 2011: 229; translates these as “changeful of hue, lustrous, quick-moving”, “noisily prating” and “wine-coloured sea”, cf. also Shapland 2013: 198). Knossos again is the only

Minoan site to have produced frescoes with cattle (Shapland 2010: 120). Due to the abundance of bull iconography at Knossos, it is assumed that this animal played an important role in the palatial ideology (Sikla 2018; see esp. p. 98 fig. 1 for a distribution of wall paintings with bulls from MM III–LM III; also Blakolmer 2018: 108; Bevan 2010: 40–41).

Archaeological evidence demonstrates a variety of human-cattle relationships that range from every-day to extra-ordinary encounters and interactions and can be broken down into two modes of relation (Descola 1996: 89–91): a temporally and spatially dense scheme of interaction, encompassing animal husbandry and agricultural practices; and a temporally and spatially loose scheme of interaction, including sacrifice and bull sports. The first scheme serves long-term aims, especially sustenance, and necessitates permanent interaction. The latter scheme, I would like to suggest, serves more imminent and temporary needs such as the aid or benevolence of a religious entity or an institutional framework for mediating the social status of its participants, as has been contended in the case of bull-leaping events (Shapland 2013: 197). Compellingly, when it comes to depicting these relationships, the extra-ordinary encounters, such as sacrifice and bull games, are selected, whereas everyday domestic scenes are almost entirely neglected.

Bull-leaping scenes are the most frequently depicted type of human-cattle interaction, more specifically, that of elite humans and choice cattle; not placid plough-oxen but vigorous, wild bulls. In bull-leaping, the purported iconographic forerunner of Late Palatial hybrid bull-men, a special human-animal relation is negotiated in a performative act that relocates both the bull and the human leaper in a third space (Counts 2008: 13, adapting Homi K. Bhabha's cultural theory for prehistoric archeology) in which elite identity was formed by differentiation from lower-ranking social units whose human-cattle relation was based on animal husbandry and agricultural use (Shapland 2010: 122–123). Pieces of material culture that render bull-leaping scenes then served to manifest the identity formed and expressed in the ephemeral act itself and to transfer it from the individual participant of the event to the broader, high-ranking social unit (Counts 2008: 12–13).

Bull-men, as full-bodied perpetual conjunctions of the human and animal parts, have the potential to not only signify the self-expression of a restricted high-ranking group as created in the third space of the performative bull-leaping act. Moreover, their homosomatic hybridity, which, as suggested above, assumably communicated durability and stability and could thus serve to corroborate its members' authority and social standing on an extended temporal scale. This was likely paramount to political and social order in the aftermath of the LM IB destruction horizon. At the same time, this iconographic novelty adhered to 'traditional' visual conventions established throughout the preceding Neopalatial period that employed human-cattle relationships as a social tool to signify elite self-definitions (Shapland 2010: 204; Simandiraki-Grimshaw 2010: 100). A question that remains is whether the Late Palatial entities utilizing homosomatic bull-man imagery derived directly from the bull-leaping Neopalatial elite, or whether a new social unit established itself in this period. This question needs to be approached via a consideration of our current understanding of the period's political situation.

Knossos in the Late Palatial period

After the Neopalatial collapse in LM IB (ca. 1520/10 – 1440/30), Knossos remained as the only functioning palace and came to consolidate broad areas of Crete within its political and administrative control in the following phases LM II–LM IIIA2-early (ca. 1440/30 – ca. 1350). The influence of Knossian administration was concentrated in central, western and mid-eastern Crete (Bennet 1985; Bevan 2010; Driessen 2001: 99–103, 111–112; Watrous, Blitzer 1997), thus covering the Cretan findspots of the bull-man seals. This is not to imply a total diffusion of centralized authority throughout the areas under Knossian influence, as varying degrees of political centralization and integration throughout the Late Palatial landscape are to be expected (Bevan 2010: 29–30, 44; Driessen 2001: 99–100, 112, considering "the Knossos kingdom [...] not so much a territorial state as an economic enterprise."). However, the composition of the Knossian administration in terms of social groups remains unclear, as the political geography and administrative systems had become destabilized

and with them, likely, the “elite ideological system that had supported and reinforced” (Preston 2006: 141) these throughout the preceding period.

In the course of the changed political situation after LM IB, several developments took place on the level of material culture, cultural practices, and administration (Driessen, Langohr 2007: 178). The introduction of a new, Greek-based, administrative language with the Linear B tablets furthermore provides evidence for a changed political structure with new state officials headed by a *wanax* (Driessen 2001: 96, 103-107; Driessen, Langohr 2007: 178, 180, 187; Preston 2008: 314); innovations in burial practices including construction and assemblages close to mainland types (Alberti 2006; Driessen 2001: 97 argues for “tombs of officials in the palace administration”; Driessen, Langohr 2007: 186; Preston 2006: 137-138, 141); transformations in the Knossos urban landscape (Hatzaki 2006: 124) as well as a new fresco program including novel elements such as large figure-eight-shield wall paintings that have been associated with mainland influence at Knossos (Immerwahr 1990: 138-141, 163; Preston 2008: 315). Nevertheless, traditional Minoan elements did not cease to exist and were preserved in architectural elements like polythyra, some of which were newly built in the phase (Hatzaki 2006: 121-122; Driessen, Langohr 2007: 181); wall paintings and frescos again took up the Neopalatial traditional bull iconography, and burial offerings continuously included Minoan manufactured pottery and seals. The “old” and the “new” co-existed and intermingled at the palace of Knossos and in elite burial assemblages, suggesting a transformational process rather than a sudden power shift.

It remains an open question whether members of Cretan or mainland social groups were in power at Knossos in the Late Palatial period (the topic is broadly approached in Driessen, Farnoux 1997). The archaeological data give the overall impression of social units attempting to consolidate, or possibly re-consolidate, their authority after the political and social destabilization at the end of the Neopalatial period. This does not necessarily presuppose a mainland origin of these but might attest to an innovative (re-)establishment of a high-ranking group drawing on the dialectics of Minoan as well as mainland elite discourses. Minoan Crete has repeat-

edly proven itself open to cultural stimuli from other areas, for example by importing foreign objects that high-ranking social entities acquired to display their wealth, restricted access, and far reach. Moreover, the imports were most certainly accompanied by immaterial goods – ideas, beliefs and political or social concepts – that are much more elusive in the archaeological record. Hence, the strong mainland influence that permeates Late Palatial Minoan material records cannot unambiguously conclude that mainland people in fact took over at Knossos. A susceptibility in the tradition of Proto- and Neopalatial Crete of implementing foreign elements into own representational discourses could offer another explanation for the “Myceneanization” of Minoan material culture that does not necessarily postulate a direct presence of a non-indigenous, mainland-derived group, but offers the possibility that high-ranking members of society employed these mainland adaptations as part of a political strategy (Driessen, Langohr 2007: 179-180, 185-189; Preston 2008: 311-312).

Within the limits of Aegean glyptic studies, including the happenstance of preservation and constraints of provenance attribution, it is possible to say that – like the many examples of bull-iconography in the Neopalatial era – most bull-men come from Knossos, where the motif was likely developed (Krzyszowska 2005: 208). Taurokathapsia scenes on seals, frescoes and figurines were an important part of the self-definition and power manifestation of the elite in the Neopalatial period, whose exclusive involvement in bull-leaping, amongst other socially significant, restricted activities, set them apart from lower-ranking social units (Shapland 2013: 202-203). Analogously, Late Palatial bull-men seals drew on the same visual vocabulary but appear to have been more adapted to the changed socio-political circumstances in the time after the island-wide LM IB destruction horizon.

In the Late Palatial period, bull-leaping was in all probability no longer practiced (Younger 1976: 137), but the symbolic quality of this human-animal encounter remained within peoples’ minds. Consequently, bull-leaping scenes, now abstracted from the act proper, likely lost their quality as icons referencing to the ritual and thus turned into symbols (following the conceptual division of icon, index and

symbol established by Peirce 1983: 64-67). This could explain two innovations in the glyptic record, one of them being the new convention of rigid “floating” and “diving” bull leapers (Younger 1976; 1995; cf. also Angeli, this volume); the other the homosomatic fusion of bull and leaper to a hybrid bull-man discussed here. Both developments are representationally distant to the real-life act of bull-leaping, which became possible due to their changed social function as conventionalized symbols. Since these images appear in times of political and cultural changes in the Final Palatial period, the possibility should be considered that not direct successors of the Neopalatial elite created this hybrid, but rather a new group that had acquired power. Members of this allegedly new high-ranking social unit may have intentionally created the motif because of its connections to Neopalatial Knossian imagery of power with its vigorous symbolic force while it was “sufficiently different from Neopalatial (administrative/financial/political?) values” (Simandiraki-Grimshaw 2013: 100). Unlike the larger-scale frescos, the seals were more intimately connected to individual wearers, which made them adequate tokens for the self-identification of a restricted group of high-ranking people, likely “indicating more exclusive social practices” (Shapland 2013: 203), as could also be observed in the individualized ostentatious burial customs introduced in this period or the thrive for acquiring and collecting prestige items (Driessen 2001: 97; Preston 2006: 138), that perhaps served to differentiate itself not only from the social units engaging in domestic human-animal relations, but also from other high-ranking units engaging in non-domestic human-cattle relations that featured in other media but invariably lacked the concept of homosomatic hybridity. The bull-men seals could perhaps have been put to emblematic use, signifying a distinct unit within the larger spectrum of elite competitive display.

Conclusion

The study of bull-men seals has revealed an iconographic group rendered in semi-precious stones sharing the concept of homosomatic human-cattle hybridity. Bull-men were perhaps one result of an innovative drive demonstrated by a social unit that aimed to consolidate authority and control in a time

of political and social instability that had resulted from the disruption of the political landscape at the end of LM IB. The motif was likely intentionally developed out of Neopalatial bull-leaping iconography and served as a symbol for the self-definition of a new high-ranking social unit (or one with such aspirations) with strong ties to the palace of Knossos. Members of this group might have deliberately drawn on conventional visual vocabularies recognized in Neopalatial bull-leaping scenes while at the same time marking out new qualities that, on the one hand, conveyed their high-ranking social standing and, on the other, communicated permanence. Bull-men thus combined a retrospective force that relied on traditional visual cues and symbols with a prospective force suggesting durability and stability by virtue of the homosomatic hybrid.

These seals are a case study and as such merely one piece of the greater puzzle. They can only be understood in the context of the extensive changes in material culture and cultural practices that recur on modes of ostentatious elite competitive display in LM II/III. Hopefully, subsequent relational approaches to other archaeological datasets will contribute further to our understanding of this phase of socio-political transformation in the future.

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Morfizacja zmiany?

Hybrydyczność homosomatyczna jako odpowiedź na transformacje późnego okresu minojskiego (LM II/III) na Krecie

Streszczenie

Artykuł omawia procesy transformacyjne zachodzące w społeczeństwie kretańskim w schyłkowym okresie pałacowym na przykładzie wyobrażeń istot hybrydowych, szczególnie byków-ludzi przedstawianych na pieczęciach po raz pierwszy i jedyny w tym okresie. Homosomatyczność hybryd ukazywanych na tych pieczęciach jest uważana za komunikat stabilności w okresie politycznych, społecznych i prawdopodobnie religijnych niepokojów. Wyobrażenia na pieczęciach czerpią z długiej tradycji relacji pomiędzy człowiekiem i bydłem na Krecie Minojskiej, wykorzystywanej już w okresie młodszych pałaców jako narzędzie do zaznaczania elitarnej odrębności. Przedstawienia byków i ludzi tradycyjnie podkreślały wysoki status i tym samym sugerowały ciągłość po niszczycielskich wydarzeniach z końca poprzedniego okresu. Nowy homosomatyczny charakter relacji człowiek-byk przedstawiany na pieczęciach w schyłkowym okresie pałacowym na Krecie miał na celu utrwalenie wysokiej pozycji społecznej (rzekomej bądź rzeczywistej) ich użytkowników i był wykorzystywany jako narzędzie na arenie społeczno-politycznej rywalizacji.

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