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**CULT, CONTEXT AND COPPER:
A CYPRIOT PERSPECTIVE
ON THE UNEXPLORED MANSION AT KNOSSOS***

The Minoan Unexplored Mansion (MUM) at Knossos was excavated between 1968 and 1977, and published in 1984 (Popham et al. 1984). It was constructed in LMIA, occupied in LMII, and destroyed later in the same period (Popham 1984: 2-3). Although there has been disagreement with regard to its specific function, scholars are in general agreement about its intended general function as an annex to the "Little Palace" (Hitchcock and Preziosi 1997; Graham 1975; Poblome and Dumon 1987-88). It is regular in outline, a feature common to other annexes, but otherwise uncommon in Minoan building (Popham 1984: 99; Hitchcock and Preziosi 1997). It was carefully planned and constructed, as indicated by a lavish use of gypsum and the presence of many "mason's marks". The dominant feature of the building is a central Pillar Hall [H] measuring 5.65 x 8.65 m. A stairway opens off the northwest corner of this hall, and doorways in the southwest and northeast corners lead to a U-shaped corridor encircling three sides of the hall. This corridor gives access to a row of four rooms on the north and a row of three shallower rooms and another stairway on the south. It was connected to the "Little Palace" by a bridge.

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With regard to the specific function of the MUM, the conflicting interpretations of the building are noted in a 1997 paper (Hitchcock and Prezi-osi 1997). These interpretations were based on the finds, which suggested an industrial use of the building to the Catlings and a ritual, symbolic, or social use of the building to Popham. The industrial purpose was indicated by metal working remains, which included a bellows nozzle, crucibles, whetstones and a number of bronze objects including two spearheads, a broken double axe, scrap metal, casting trimmings, and metal droplets (cf. Catling and Catling 1984: 203-221). A full 10.5% of the material was workshop equipment and only 25% of the finished objects were usable, further indicating metallurgical activity (ibid. 204). The largest number of metal objects and fragmentary pieces came from room M, conveniently located in the southwest corner adjacent to the stairway to the upper floor and opposite the pillar hall (H) where a large number of objects were also found (ibid. 205).

The metal working debris stood in contrast to the "large number of finely decorated vases, especially kylikes, cups and jugs", and a Palace Style amphora (H 181). In addition, an LMII goddess statuette (H 53) (Higgins 1984: 198) was associated with an assortment of decorated, ceremonial vessels. Among these were two rhyta, one of stone (H 19a) another of clay (H 179), a large flat alabastron (H 180), and at least six decorated pyxides (H10 and fragments) (cf. Popham 1984: 151-186). Popham (1984: 21) believed that these assemblages indicated "a living room for occupants of considerable standing" and "a domestic shrine". In addition, he (ibid.: 262) believed that the metalworking debris was related to activities that would have gone on near the mansion instead of in it.

In contrast, the Catlings (1984: 203-221) believed that metalworking was taking place on the premises and they interpreted the MUM as a bronze smith's workshop (ibid. 207-208). They (Catling and Catling 1984: 206) attributed the absence of ingots and heavy equipment in the MUM to looting or removal before the fire that damaged the building. They (ibid.) believed that a small furnace in the Pillar Hall pointed to that room as a focus for metallurgical work, but with additional activities taking place elsewhere in the building. Thus, the issue of whether the building was secular or religious was unresolved in the archaeological report, although Popham (1984: 262, n. 14) indicated the possibility that the shrine could be connected with metalworking noting a similar relationship at Kition (Cyprus).

While Popham did not pursue this line of inquiry, I believe that his observation merits elaboration. Rather than privilege one category of evidence over the other, I propose that both categories of evidence, ritual and industrial, may be viewed as complimentary when placed within a broader eastern Mediterranean trans-cultural context. I also propose that the relationship between the ceremonial objects and the metallurgical material might be regarded as ritually significant, regardless of whether metallurgy took place in or near the MUM.

This broader east Mediterranean context includes LBA Cyprus, and the Canaanite and Philistine cultures of the southern Levant. Examining these relationships from this broader perspective enables a reconciliation of competing interpretations. A close connection between religion and metallurgy has been accepted for numerous sites in this region. This connection is based on a variety of contextual relationships familiar to those who work in Cyprus and the Levant. These relationships include bronze statuettes associated with ingots, votive ingots, votive tools, moulds and other work related objects, representations of ingots on ceremonial paraphernalia, the placement of items connected with metallurgy in a religious context, and metallurgical installations located in close spatial proximity to ceremonial structures. These things have been detailed in the work of Catling, (1964), Knapp (1986), and Blakely (Westover) (1998).

The idea behind making these connections is that the contextual relationship between a metallurgical workshop, ceremonial structures, and the iconography of metallurgy may directly sanctify metallurgical activity (Knapp 1986: 116). The purpose of such sanctification served to embody divine control over the production of metal and/or metal objects under the auspices of a regulating authority (cf. Knapp 1986: 66-67). A relationship between ritual and metallurgy in particular and industrial activity in general has been termed "sacred economy" (Burdajewicz 1990: 67). A political dimension is also part of this sanctified and sanctioned relationship, insofar as social status and prestige may be attached to the acquisition, control, and distribution of metallic items (e.g. Westover 1998; Knapp 1986; Cline 1999). M. Shaw (1990: 250) has suggested that the metal working activity in the MUM might have been at the service of Mycenaean overlords. Combining metallurgical activity with religious ritual may have served to legitimize such a connection.

The most notable examples of these relationships were found on LBA Cyprus. At Kition, metallurgical installations were found within the temple precinct (Karageorghis *et al.* 1985). Bronze slag found in the area of the 12th c. sanctuary of Aphrodite at Kouklia-*Palaepaphos* and foundation legends linked to the invention of copper working indicate a functional and ideological link with Kition (cf. Maier 1975a: 78, n. 1). At Athienou, more than 10,000 votive juglets were found in a hilltop sanctuary that also contained evidence of metallurgy in the form of slag and scrap metal (Dothan and Ben Tor 1983).

The relationship between cult and metallurgy is also attested at Enkomi in the Shrine of the Ingot God and in the Temple of the Horned God. These shrines are both named for statuettes that are symbolically linked to metallurgy at or near the end of the Bronze Age (Courtois 1982; Dikaios 1969; Knapp 1986; O'Bryhim 1996; Webb 1999). The Ingot God, whose modern name is suggested by its base in the shape of an ingot, may have been connected with the acquisition and distribution of metal after workshops from the end of the 13th c. BCE were sealed. In contrast, the Horned God may have been connected with the crafting of bronze objects, such as those found in his temple in the form of miniature and regular sized tools (cf. Dikaios 1962: 36-37; 1971: 528). The segmentation of religious ritual in the respective domains of these deities may have mirrored the segmentation of work life as found in increasing specialization of and control over the lives of individuals. Such segmentation may suggest the dispersal and mystification of power rather than factionalism (as proposed by Webb 1999).

This survey of the east Mediterranean may be extended by touching on the relationship between cult and metallurgy in the southern Levant, which is attested from an early period. At the MBII (19th c. BCE) hilltop Canaanite sanctuary at Nahariya on the northern coast of Israel, Moshe Dothan (1956) discovered features connected with metallurgy and oil production. The general layout of the sanctuary included a courtyard and a rectangular hall (M. Dothan 1981). A vessel from the floor of the earliest building contained scraps of silver and bronze. Other remains included a thick deposit (2 m) of feasting debris in the hall and a circular tumulus in the courtyard containing cultic debris. This debris included metal figurines, metal objects, molds, beads, and many pottery vessels (M. Dothan 1981: 76). The molds were for a horned female deity and votive weapons, thus

suggesting that metallurgy occurred at the site (M. Dothan 1981: 77, 80). Dothan (1956) also discovered metal scraps placed on the platform of offerings (*bamali*) of the sanctuary.

Building 350, dating to the 11th/early 10th c. BCE at the Philistine site of Tel Miqne-Ekron in Israel, is a megaroid style structure. It includes a rectangular hall with columnar supports, a hearth and a row of three rectangular rooms, and is entered by a corner doorway (cf. T. Dothan 1990: 29). The building contained several platforms for placing offerings and cult objects. An iron knife with ivory handle and an iron "ingot" was found on a platform in the southernmost rear side chamber (C). Several other bronze objects came from elsewhere in the room (T. Dothan 1990: 30-31; 1995: 49; Gitin and Dothan 1987: 204-205). Similarly well known is the site of Timna in the Negev, where evidence of metal casting in the 14th c. BCE and later was found in a temple of Hathor and elsewhere on the site.¹

Without going into specific details, Burdajewicz (1990: 64-65) has noted the close relationship between workshops, storage, and cult spaces in Minoan buildings. He (*ibid.*) extends these observations to include a relationship between cult and metallurgy among the Mycenaeans. This relationship is hinted at by the Linear B phrase "temple bronze" (*ka-ko na-wi-jo*) (Hiller 1979, cited in Knapp 1986: 49) and in the phrase "smiths of the mistress" (*po-ti-ni-ja-we-jo ka-ke-we*) (Ventriss and Chadwick 1956: 253-254, Jn01). Schallin (1997) has detailed the relationship between metallurgical remains and cult places and elite buildings in the Cyclades at Phylakopi (Melos), Ayia Irini (Kea), and Akrotiri (Thera). At Phylakopi, these include bronze figurines such as the "Smiting God" and pieces of slag both in and around the sanctuary (*ibid.*: 149-150).

At Kea, two crucibles were found in what may have been an extra-urban sanctuary at the hilltop site of Troullos. In House A, a "villa" with many Minoan design features (Hitchcock 1998), a piece of a copper ingot, a crucible and crucible fragments, and pieces of slag were found in the west wing devoted to storage and in rooms connected with the court (cf. Schallin 1997: 146-148). A complex of rooms (A7-10) with a platform (A8) asso-

¹ For an overview of Timna and a full bibliography see Rothenberg (1993). Nahariya, Tel Miqne-Ekron, and Timna simply provide a chronological and cultural sample of sites in the region where the relationship between cult and metallurgy is widely attested. For a more complete assessment, see Westover (1998).

ciated with House A, but bearing a resemblance to Mycenaean (Phylakopi and Mycenae) and Philistine (Tel Qasile and Tel Mikne-Ekron) cult areas,² contained a fragment of a copper ox-hide ingot and a crucible.

In the temple at Ayia Irini, a miniature crucible is reported from the MBA level of the cella, room 3, and parts of larger crucibles and tuyères are reported from LBA contexts (Caskey 1981: 132; Schallin 1997: 148). Caskey (1981: 133) believed that these and other metallurgical remains found on the site were connected to rituals celebrating the “fiery forces of earth”, the “magic of metal”, and the common practice of dedicating objects connected with one’s profession. Looking at these remains from a larger cast Mediterranean perspective re-enforces the close relationship between cult and metallurgy. Schallin (1997) reached a similar conclusion, although she does not believe enough material was found in the Cyclades to indicate metallurgical activity. The melting of small amounts of copper to make cult objects or tools remains a possibility.

All of these examples suggest a close relationship between metallurgy and ritual activity that existed throughout the eastern Mediterranean, spanning the Middle Bronze Age to the Iron Age. I suggest that the relationship between cult and ceremonial paraphernalia and industrial debris in the Minoan Unexplored Mansion should be read or understood from the perspective of other east Mediterranean cultures, cultures that had a well documented contact with the Aegean. Rather than proposing a direct influence, I am suggesting that contact through trade and gift-exchange, a similar coastal environment, and a similar economy and level of technology contributed to a loose network of similar beliefs manifested in regionally distinct practices.

I would like to also briefly touch on what I believe the relationship between the development of social authority and industry in Minoan Crete can tell us about the construction of similar authorities on Cyprus. Before such architectural associations are found on Cyprus, they are attested on Crete as in the MUM. Although we may understand the function of the MUM through an examination of the Cypriot evidence, the inspiration for these practices on Cyprus may have come from both Crete and the Levant. Other evidence from Crete and the Aegean also supports these linkages.

² Negbi (1988) and Gilmour (1993) give differing viewpoints on the similarity between Mycenaean and Philistine cult places, and primary references.

Betancourt (1998) has suggested that it was the development of a metallurgical industry on Crete that served as the impetus for the metal-poor Minoans to accelerate contacts with the Near East prior to the construction of the Minoan "Palaces". The establishment of the organizational structure that was required for running this industry and controlling access to bronze and copper might have contributed to the emergence of religious and political authority. This authority was subsequently manifested in monumental architecture in the form of the Minoan "Palaces" and palatial buildings (cf. Schoep, this conference) and through increased participation in international trade networks. Other aspects of such trade are found in a wide variety of examples. These include references in the Mari archives to Cretan traders (Heltzer 1989), the adoption of Near Eastern granulation technique in the production of early Minoan jewelry, Minoan pottery in Egypt and the Levant (Watrous 1998: 20-21; Niemeier and Niemeier 1998: 93-96), the spread of Minoan fresco painting to the Levant in the Middle Bronze Age as at Tel Kabri (Niemeier and Niemeier 1998; Niemeier 1991; 1995), hints of a trade in perishable items such as "Spanish vetch" from Crete or Thera at Tel Nami (Israel) (Kislev et al. 1993), Egyptian wall paintings replicating Minoan fabric patterns (cf. Barber 1991: 338-351), and the relationship between Minoan Linear A and Cypro-Minoan scripts (Dikaios 1963; Palaima 1989: esp. 41, n. 27).

Based on this wide array of contacts it is reasonable to suggest that the idea of "palatiality" accompanied metals and other items that arrived in Crete from the Near East, and that this idea was executed in a local architectural idiom (cf. Hitchcock 1999). The sudden appearance of monumentality on Crete may be explained by the specific act of constructing the monument. The organization of labor required to construct a monumental building implies the existence of social hierarchy to manage the undertaking. Thus, the process of building was a process of social-change through which authority emerged and cultural identity was modified (cf. Thomas 1996: 146). Within this palatial system, access to metal became part of an exclusive symbolism restricted to elites, thus re-enforcing their status (cf. *ibid.*: 151-156). This hypothesis regarding the symbolic role of bronze in Minoan civilization is strengthened by the later context of copper and bronze caches on Crete. In an architectural context, copper and bronze were found in or near the storage areas and pillar crypts of "Palaces" and palatial buildings at Haghia Triada, Kato Zakro, Knossos, and Tylissos.

The location of metallurgical installations and pottery kilns occurs in or in proximity to monumental buildings as at Kato Zakro and Phaistos.

It might not be coincidental that at Phaistos, the majority of its rooms seem to have been devoted to ceremonial functions. This is indicated by the placement of Minoan pier-and-door partition halls in both the northwest and east wings, lustral basins and their paths of access taking up the south half of the west wing, and halls with gypsum benches also located in the west wing (Hitchcock 2000). A kiln was housed within the *temenos* walls of the east court at Phaistos, and although its date and connection to metallurgy is not entirely clear, an industrial purpose may be assumed (cf. Pernier and Banti: 1951: 213-217; Alexiou 1964: 216, cited in M. Shaw 1990; Tomasello 1996). In addition, its relationship to the building might be compared to Kition where Knapp (1986: 48) has drawn attention to direct communication that existed between *Temenos A* and workshop 12. Recently, Watrous (1998: 27, n. 46) has suggested that the toponym Phaistos may be linked to Hephaistos, a god of craftsmanship.

As in 19th c. Crete, the 13th c. BCE on Cyprus was marked by the sudden appearance of monumental ashlar buildings that were administrative in purpose, at Kalavassos-*Ayios Dhimitreos*, Maroni-*Vournes*, and Alassa-*Palaeotaverna*.³ These sites are located on or near the coast and seem to have been connected with the regulation and distribution of copper and other commodities such as olive oil. As in Crete, their construction may be linked to the emergence of central authorities that were concerned with acquisition, redistribution and trade. But rather than being concerned with the acquisition of copper from abroad, they seem to have been concerned with the export of copper, redistribution of olive oil and the acquisition of Aegean pottery and its transshipment to the southern Levant. Their seemingly sudden emergence in the 13th c. BCE may have been stimulated by the destruction of the "Palace" at Knossos (whether in the late 14th or early 13th centuries BCE). This cataclysmic and terrible event may have opened new opportunities and markets for foreign exchange on Cyprus. The recent catastrophic destruction of the World Trade Center in New York illustrates all too well the role that major financial and commercial centers play in global and regional economies, and in the maintenance of stability.

³ For recent overviews of these sites see Herscher (1995, 1998) and the *Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus*.

This paper has briefly examined the relationship of ritual, metallurgy and the emergence of authority in Crete, Cyprus and the Levant, and has argued that material residues of the past can be linked to social practices connected with ritual practices and political development. Although the particulars may differ, a general pattern may be inferred from a general set of recurring relationships between metallurgy, cult installations and monumentality. This general pattern may be placed into greater focus by locating Crete, Cyprus and the Levantine coast in a shared Mediterranean cultural network with shared Mediterranean values, as argued by Horden and Purcell (2000). I conclude by suggesting that there is still much to be learned about all of these cultures by studying them in relationship to each other.

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