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ADORNMENT, RITUAL AND IDENTITY: INSCRIBED MINOAN JEWELLERY

by Josephine Verduci and Brent Davis

Classics and Archaeology, University of Melbourne

In this paper, we re-examine inscribed items of Minoan jewellery in the light of the increasing number of studies on ancient eastern Mediterranean jewellery and its meanings. We reach a fourfold conclusion. First: as these objects, with one exception, are clearly associated with adult females, while the exception (a ring) cannot be affiliated with a particular gender or age, inscribed Minoan jewellery seems so far to lie mostly outside the purview of men. Second: these objects were almost certainly used to construct and broadcast the elite identity (and perhaps authority) of the people who wore them. Third: the objects may also have served as apotropaic amulets and/or symbols of rites of passage for their wearers, thus expressing certain rituals associated with the lives of the people who wore them. Fourth: inscribed items of Minoan jewellery may have played an active role in linking elite Minoan (and particularly elite Minoan female*) identity and authority to the divine.*

INTRODUCTION

Minoan funerary contexts have produced a few items of jewellery bearing Linear A inscriptions (Table 1), objects that (sometimes along with their contexts) still remain little understood. The objects have been studied, to be sure (Alexiou and Brice 1972, 1976; Olivier, Godart and Laffineur 1981; Godart and Olivier 1982; Olivier 1982): they have been described and photographed, their inscriptions have been transliterated, and suggestions have been made as to how they may have been used; other questions, however, remain virtually unaddressed. Inscribed jewellery, for example, must have been accessible only to a very narrow segment of Minoan society; so to what sorts of individuals might these objects have belonged? Who might their intended audience have been? And what might these objects have *meant* to their wearers, and to the wearers' audience? As far as possible, interpretations should be informed by the objects' contexts: were the objects votive and never intended for use? Or were they personal items – abandoned, misplaced, or concealed and forgotten?

Unfortunately, a certain degree of bias against contextual studies and interpretations of jewellery and its meanings in ancient Aegean societies has persisted until recent years, despite the significance of jewellery as a category of personal adornment.[1] This bias is now being addressed, with many recent studies (*e.g.* those in Nosch and Laffineur 2012) providing important insights into the *symbolic* meanings of jewellery, and the ways in which such symbols were used to signify identity, ethnic boundaries and ritual practices, as well as the social and cultic arenas in which these symbols occurred. Clearly, metal jewellery – particularly gold and silver jewellery – had an intrinsic value, but it could serve also as a symbol of prestige or authority. To the viewer of the object, the overall effect of the rare, lustrous metal, together with its craftsmanship, its decoration, (perhaps) its inscription, and its use in adorning the body, would all have served to help define the identity of the individual wearing it.

Objects of beauty and rarity such as inscribed jewellery not only demonstrated access to limited resources, craftsmanship and esoteric knowledge, but also symbolised the growing status of Aegean and Cypriot elites. In this paper, we argue for the multivocal nature of inscribed Minoan

[1] This view of jewellery as a pointless object of study is exemplified by Ridgeway's comment (1987, 402 n. 18) in reference to the dedication of jewellery in Archaic Greece: 'the objects *per se* do not tell us much about their owners'.

Table 1 Concordance of inscribed Minoan jewellery.

Object	Description	Date	Excavation	Inscription	Findspot	Mus. no.
ARKH Zf 9	Silver hairpin	‡Late Minoan I	Sakellarakis and Sakellaraki 1997, I.169–79, 332–3	Olivier 2010, 189	Phourni, Tholos B complex, pillar room	HM unk.
CR(?) Zf 1	Gold hairpin	*Late Minoan IA		Olivier, Godart and Laffineur 1981; Godart and Olivier 1982, 146	Unknown; reputedly Knossos area	A. Nik. M. 9675
KN Zf 13	Gold ring	†Middle Minoan III –Late Minoan I	Forsdyke 1926–7, 264–9	Olivier 1982; Godart and Olivier 1982, 152	Mavrospilio, Tomb IXe	HM 530
KN Zf 31	Silver hairpin	†Late Minoan IA	Forsdyke 1926–7, 264–9	Alexiou and Brice 1972; Godart and Olivier 1982, 154	Mavrospilio, Tomb IXb	HM 540
PL Zf 1	Silver hairpin	‡Late Minoan I	Xanthoudides 1924, 109–10	Alexiou and Brice 1976; Godart and Olivier 1982, 161	Platanos, near Tholos A	HM 498

Object codes are those assigned by Godart and Olivier (1982). Dates are those given in Godart and Olivier 1982:
* : date generally accepted;
† : date based on style and provisionally accepted;
‡ : date provisionally proposed.

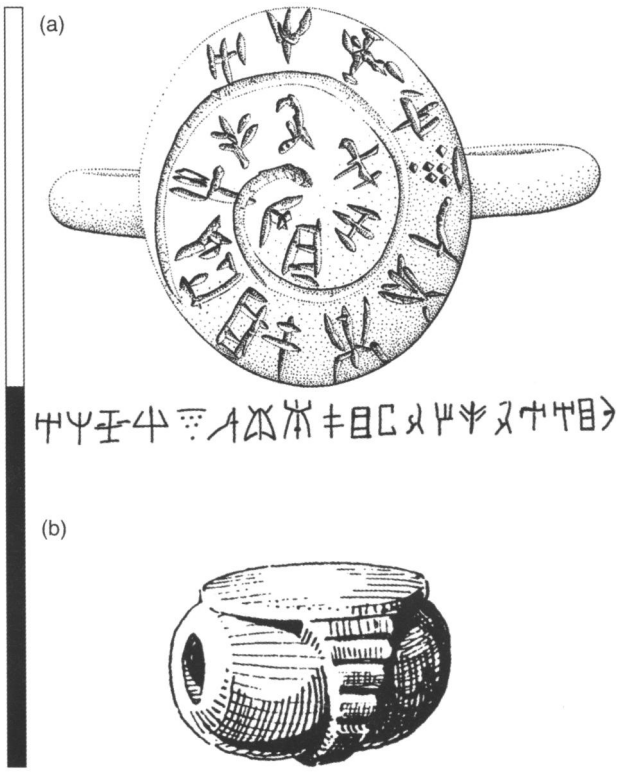

Fig. 1. (a) Gold ring **KN Zf 13**. After Godart and Olivier 1982, 153; (b) gold bead Mavrospilio IX E.4. After Forsdyke 1926–7, 287 fig. 39.

jewellery – that these objects were highly personal artefacts; that their inscriptions were likewise of a personal (or at least a *personalised*) nature; and that these items were associated with identity construction, as well as with amuletic and ritual behaviour linked to gendered (and perhaps age-related) asymmetry.

THE OBJECTS AND THEIR CONTEXTS

Gold ring **KN Zf 13**[2] (Fig. 1*a*), the only known Minoan ring with a Linear A inscription, was found in Tomb IXe at Mavrospilio (Fig. 2).[3] Co-finds include another gold ring with a plain bezel, as well as several gold beads, including one designed to appear as if the bead is encircled by a gold finger ring (Fig. 1*b*).[4] A bronze knife was found nearby, as well as carnelian and faience beads, an empty larnax

[2] Objects referred to in bold type are catalogued in Table 1.

[3] Forsdyke 1926–7, 264–9; Godart and Olivier 1982, 152–3; Platon and Pini 1984, no. 38. Mavrospilio cemetery consists of chamber-tombs and shaft-graves excavated into the side of a steep gully in the slope north-west of the palace. At the top of the gully is a cave from which an intermittent spring flows; thus here, a ritually significant spot is associated with the source of a spring, as at Kato Syme. The cemetery was excavated in 1926 by Forsdyke on behalf of the British School. Tomb IX is the largest chamber-tomb in the group, consisting of a central chamber connected to four side-chambers by short corridors. Chambers B and E had collapsed in antiquity – evidently in Late Minoan I or shortly afterwards, as (unlike the other chambers) they contained nothing later than Late Minoan I. The gold ring is dated to Middle Minoan III – Late Minoan I on stylistic grounds (Platon and Pini 1984, no. 38).

[4] Other Minoan gold rings from more or less contemporary contexts at Knossos include one example from Mavrospilio Tomb VIIb (Pini 2010, no. 3), and another from Ailias Tomb 7 (Pini 2010, no. 2).

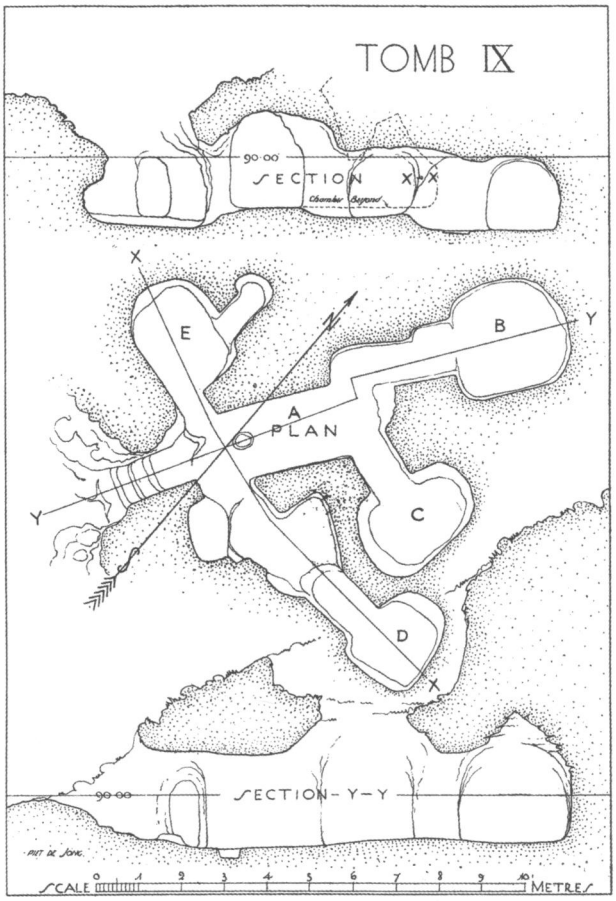

Fig. 2. Mavrospilio Tomb IX. After Forsdyke 1926–7, 265 fig. 19.

and Late Minoan I pottery. The inscribed ring is of cast gold, with a convex disk-shaped bezel; the complete and undamaged inscription of 19 signs is shallow and is designed to be read on the bezel itself rather than in an impression (as explained later in this article). The inscription spirals clockwise from the edge of the disk inward to its centre, in the same way as the inscription on the Phaistos disk.[5] In fact, the discovery of this ring in a secure context long after the Phaistos disk was found remains one of the best pieces of evidence for the authenticity of the latter object.[6]

Silver hairpin **KN Zf 31** (Fig. 3) was found in Mavrospilio Tomb IXb (Fig. 2); thus this pin and gold ring **KN Zf 13** come from two chambers of the same tomb. The hairpin has been assigned to Late Minoan IA on stylistic grounds and also on the basis of associated pottery (Alexiou and Brice 1972, 113, 116; 1976, 19). The pin consists of a silver rod over 16 cm in length with an oval section and one hooked end (Forsdyke 1926–7, 267 fig. 38; Alexiou and Brice 1972, 113–24, pls. I–II). It is embossed with crocus blossoms on one side and engraved with Linear A signs with a sharp tool on the other. The decorative motif and the purpose of the hairpin itself suggest that its intended owner was a mature female (Day 2011, 337–79). Though the beginning and end of the inscription are illegible, the remainder contains no fewer than 40 signs, making this one of the longest known inscriptions in Linear A. Co-finds such as steatite sealstones, amethyst and glass beads, a piece of gold foil and a vessel decorated in ivy leaves (Alexiou and Brice 1972, 116) suggest an elite identity for the deceased.

[5] For general discussions of the Phaistos disk, see Duhoux 1977; Hooker 1979; Godart 1995.

[6] An even better piece of evidence for the authenticity of the Phaistos Disk is the discovery of one of its signs on a sealing from Phaistos in 1955 (Hnila 2010, 64). We are grateful to John Younger for bringing this evidence to our attention.

Fig. 3. Silver hairpin **KN Zf 31**. After Forsdyke 1926–7, 285 fig. 38, and Godart and Olivier 1982, 154–5.

Fig. 4. Silver hairpin **ARKH Zf 9**. After Sakellarakis and Sakellaraki 1997, I.333 fig. 296.

Silver hairpin **ARKH Zf 9** (Fig. 4) comes from the pillar room of the Tholos B complex at Phourni (Fig. 5) near Archanes (Sakellarakis and Sakellaraki 1997, I.169–79, 332–3, fig. 296; Olivier 2010, 189); like the Mavrospilio pin, it consists of a rod with a hooked end, though the hook on the Archanes pin is relatively straight rather than rounded. There was once a second storey above the pillar room that evidently served as a tomb, as human remains had fallen through into the pillar room, presumably along with the pin; thus the pin most likely originates from a burial. The pin might be dated on stylistic grounds to Late Minoan I by comparison to the Mavrospilio pin, though it could be older, as the pillar room contained a mixed Middle Minoan I – Late Minoan I context. Its inscription, which is complete and undamaged, contains nine signs in Linear A, making this the shortest of the inscriptions on Minoan jewellery.

Silver hairpin **PL Zf 1** (Fig. 6) comes from the vicinity of Tholos A at Platanos (Fig. 7) in the Mesara (Xanthoudides 1924, 109–10; Alexiou and Brice 1976, 20).[7] This pin has been dated to

[7] The Platanos cemetery was excavated by Xanthoudides in 1914–15 (Xanthoudides 1924). He does not record the hairpin's findspot, but its workmanship and epigraphy are distinctively Late Minoan, so it could not have come

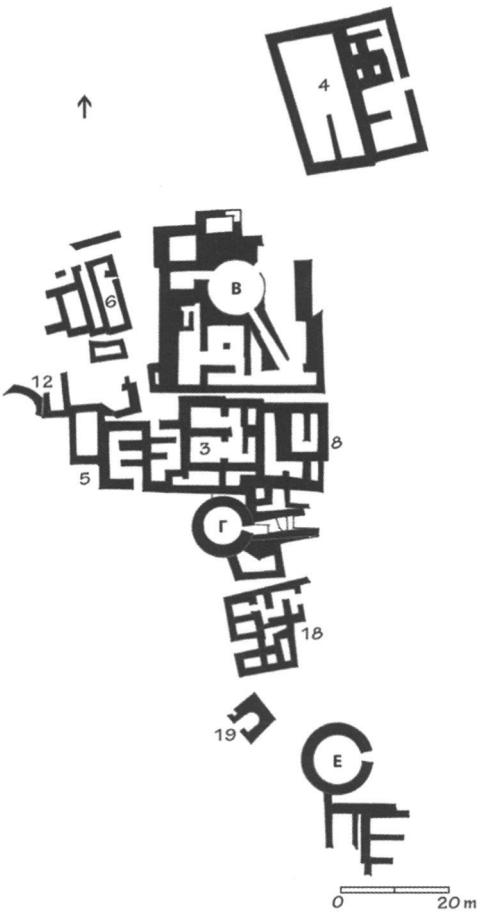

Fig. 5. Phourni cemetery; the pillar room is immediately south of Tholos B. After McEnroe 2010, 33 fig. 4.2.

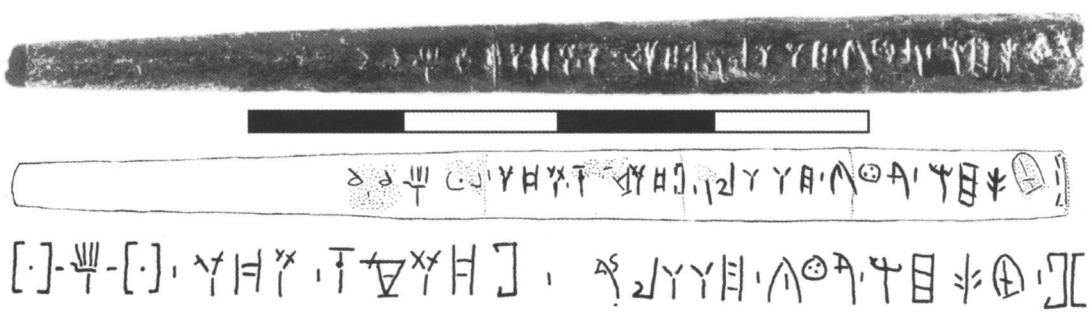

Fig. 6. Silver hairpin **PL Zf 1**. After Godart and Olivier 1982, 161.

Late Minoan IA on stylistic grounds, and also by comparison to the Mavrospilio pin. The Platanos pin is formed of two joined pieces, has a lentoid section and measures 7 cm long and 0.5 cm wide at its widest point. The pin is slightly curved and does not end in a hook, although its length (less than

from Tholos A itself, which went out of use after Middle Minoan II. Instead, the pin appears to have been part of a group of pins 'found outside the tholoi', evidently in a Neopalatial burial (Xanthoudides 1924, 109; Alexiou and Brice 1976, 19–20). Late Minoan pottery found in House Tomb Alpha shows that at least some parts of the cemetery were still in use in the Neopalatial period.

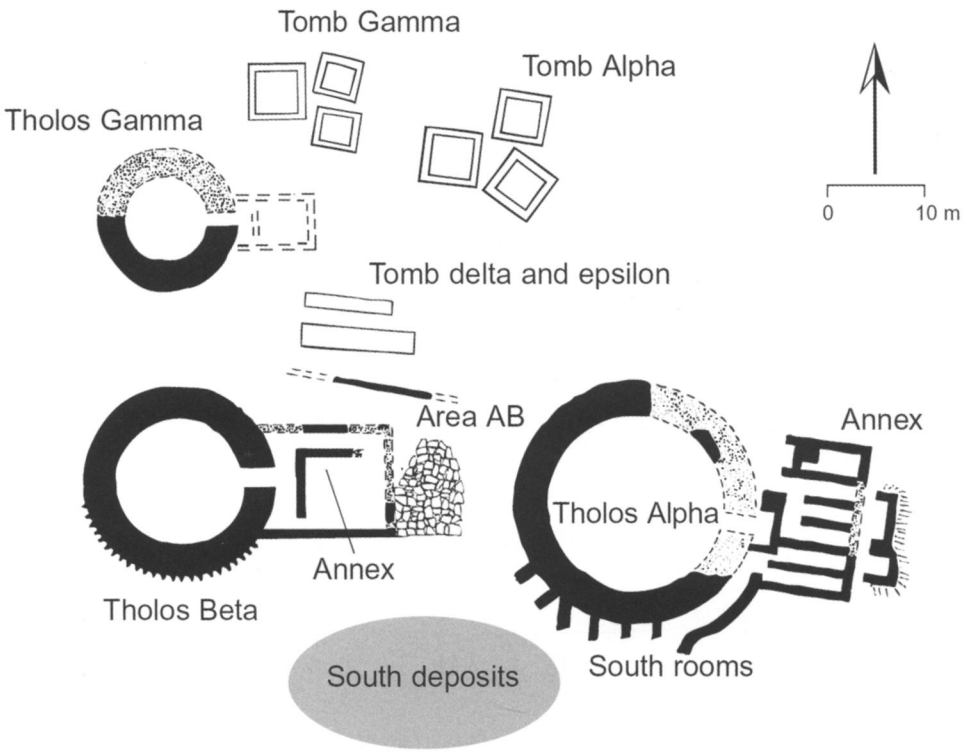

Fig. 7. Platanos cemetery. After Legarra Herrero 2011, 64 fig. 3.3.

half that of the Mavrospilio pin) suggests that it may have been broken and the end polished in antiquity, as is the case with other broken metal objects of Minoan origin (Alexiou and Brice 1976, 19). That the Linear A inscription is truncated at the wider end also suggests that a section of the pin is missing. The surviving portion of the inscription contains 23 signs.

Cast-gold hairpin **Cr(?) Zf 1** (Fig. 8) was acquired on the Western European antiquities market in 1980; its provenance before that is unknown. The dealer's claim that the pin came from the Knossos area is unsupportable but plausible, given the pin's composition and the concentration of high-status burials at Knossos (Olivier, Godart and Laffineur 1981, 3). The pin's authenticity has been questioned because it lacks use-wear, and because its decoration and inscription contain some irregularities and variations (Olivier, Godart and Laffineur 1981, 5);[8] but irregularities and variations are evident in other inscribed Minoan objects,[9] while the lack of use-wear could simply mean that this pin was made for a burial. The irregular composition of the gold, as well as the level of corrosion on the surface (due to significant copper content), both suggest authenticity (Olivier, Godart and Laffineur 1981, 23), and the scholarly consensus these days is that the object is probably genuine.

The pin, which is slightly bent, is approximately 11 cm long and is constructed of a thin rod with a circular cross section, expanding to form an upper lanceolate at one end. Both surfaces of the lanceolate are slightly convex. One surface contains an engraved design consisting of an undulating stem running longitudinally through the middle of the field, with alternating veined leaves in groups of three positioned to the left and right of the stem. The width of the design

[8] The craftsman, for example, has neglected to depict the veining in some of the larger leaves, while the syllabogram QA in the inscription has a non-standard form (Olivier, Godart and Laffineur 1981, 8, 19).

[9] See, for example, the second 'TE' on PK Za 8 (Godart and Olivier 1982, 25) and the 'SU' and 'SI' on SY Za 2 (Godart and Olivier 1985, 64). These irregular forms nevertheless 'retain their identities and standard values' (Palaima 1989, 159). Ferrara (2012, 166) suggests that varying and/or embellishing standard linear signs on non-administrative documents may have been aimed at combining legibility with personal appeal.

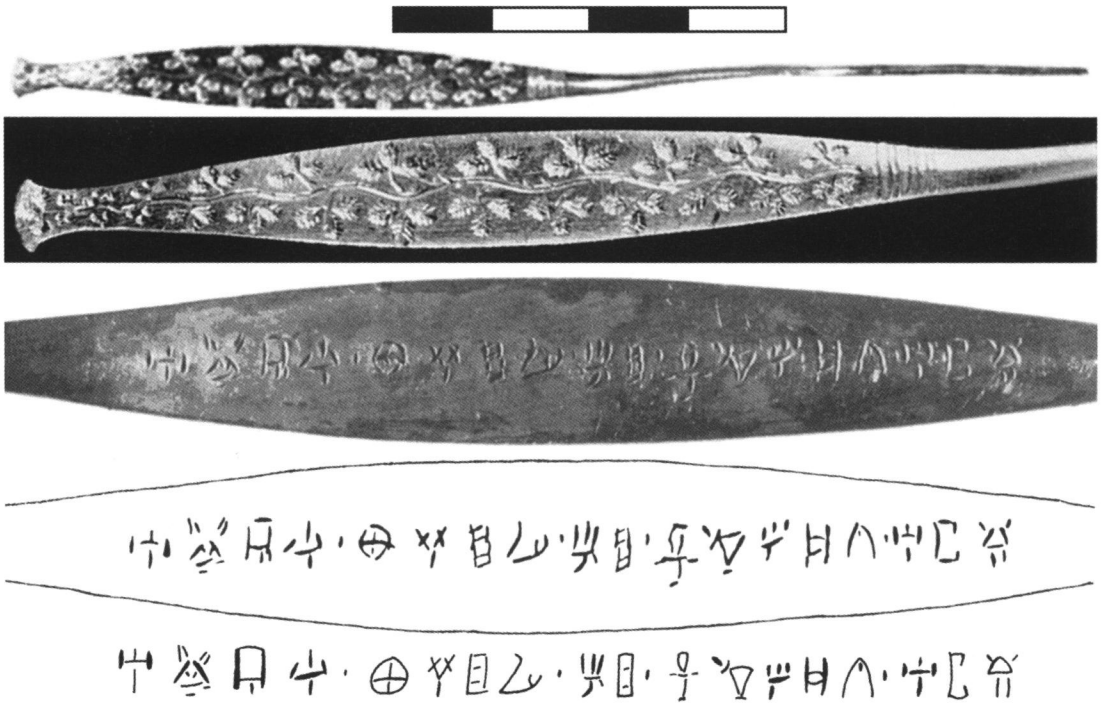

Fig. 8. Gold hairpin **CR(?) Zf 1**. After Olivier, Godart and Laffineur 1981, 4 fig. 1, 6 fig. 2, and Godart and Olivier 1982, 146–7.

varies in proportion to the width of the available field; thus where the pin narrows, the leaves are reduced to points.[10] This vegetal pattern has been likened by Olivier, Godart and Laffineur (1981, 8) to other typically Minoan naturalistic designs depicting species native to Crete,[11] and it is also a motif seen at the House of the Frescoes in Knossos (Evans 1921–35, II.454 pl. XI top and bottom left, fig. 266*a1–a2*).[12] The opposite surface of the lanceolate is engraved with 18 signs in Linear A; the inscription is complete and undamaged. Although this gold pin has no exact parallels, Minoan pins with similar stylised designs (such as a stem topped by a flower) are attested at Mochlos[13] and Malia.[14]

DISCUSSION

While there is consensus that the inscription on gold ring **KN Zf 13** is in Linear A, no such consensus has been reached on the nature or purpose of this object. The ring has an inner

[10] The engraving on the two sides was made with two different tools: the deep, narrow marks of the inscription were created with a sharp engraving tool, while the wide, shallow lines of the plant design were created with a poorly sharpened rounded tool. Laffineur observes a similar contrast in the width of the incisions on the inscribed gold double-axe AR Zf 1 from Arkalakhori (Olivier, Godart and Laffineur 1981, 7 n. 7).

[11] Botanists have variously identified the plant-design as *Medicago* (alfalfa) or *Tamarix*, particularly *T. parviflora* = *T. cretica* (Olivier, Godart and Laffineur 1981, 8; for the class of design, see Walberg 1978, 18, pl. 5a, bottom right).

[12] The shape of each leaf resembles the boughs of the tree depicted growing from the tripartite shrine on the Archanes Ring (HM 989; Sakellarakis 1967, fig. 13). We are grateful to John Younger for calling our attention to this fact.

[13] Seager 1912, 32 no. II.29, figs. 10–11; 72 no. XIX.11*a–d*, figs. 41–2; Davaras 1975, 106 no. 21, pls. 19*a*, 22*d*.

[14] Demargne 1945, 54, no. 561, pl. XXII; Branigan 1974, nos. 1524–42A, pls. 17–18.

diameter of 13 mm, which some have deemed too small for a finger ring. Forsdyke and Evans were both of the opinion that the ring functioned merely as a seal,[15] and that it was most likely inscribed with a personal name. Certainly, such small rings could have been suspended from bracelets, anklets or necklaces. Minoan adults or children could very well have worn such rings around the neck or wrist as amulets. That sealstones were sometimes worn on the wrist in the Aegean Bronze Age is suggested by their depiction on statuettes and in frescoes, such as the 'Cup Bearer' fresco at Knossos, and also by the occasional discovery of seals in the vicinity of the wrist in burials.[16] Evidence from burials also suggests that seals could be worn on the ankle,[17] while evidence that they were worn on necklaces comes from a multitude of sites on the mainland and on Crete.[18] Statuettes from Cyprus show that swivel-bezel rings were worn around the neck there, a fashion evidently borrowed from Egypt (Lagarce 1976, figs. 4, 6).

While the evidence for the use of sealstones and finger rings as jewellery is thus unequivocal, the Mavrospilio ring is (again) not likely to be a seal: an impression of the bezel would produce a sinistroverse inscription, whereas almost all known Linear A inscriptions are dextroverse.[19] Also, the shallow and narrow grooves of the inscription would have rendered impressions of this bezel indistinct and difficult to read; and as Olivier has observed (1982, 18), the ring itself is so delicate that using it as a seal would probably deform or even destroy it. Although no *inscribed* ring has yet been found *in situ* on or near the hand in an Aegean Bronze Age burial,[20] the findspots of inscribed rings in Cyprus indicate that they were worn as finger rings. An inscribed gold finger ring was found in Tomb 9 at Kition,[21] while an inscribed stirrup-shaped bezel ring comes from Late Cypriot II Hala Sultan Tekke (Boardman 1970, 7; Masson, O. 1957, 20–2, fig. 15; Palaima 1989, fig. 8), and another from Late Cypriot III Kouklia-*Evreti* (Megaw 1953, 133 pl. IV*b*; Masson, O. 1957, 20). This stirrup form of ring, usually with a cartouche-shaped bezel running parallel to the hoop,[22] is

[15] Evans 1921–35, I.557; Forsdyke 1926–7, 285; see also Higgins 1980a, 84; Boardman 2001, 63.

[16] Boardman 2001, 63; Higgins 1980a, 84; Younger 1977, 141–59; Younger 1992, 276. Women in the frescoes at Akrotiri also wear seals, almost always on the outside of the right wrist with the seal turned inwards towards the skin. A female may be wearing another unpublished example from the vicinity of the Western Staircase at Tiryns (Joseph Maran, pers. comm.). Few men wear sealstones in Minoan or Theran art, apart from a musician and the 'Cup Bearer' (Younger 1992, 273–6).

[17] For example: Tomb 19 at Profitis Ilias near Tiryns (Younger 1977, 152–3).

[18] For example: Tomb 2 at Nafplion (Younger 1977, 146–7).

[19] Rare examples of sinistroverse or boustrophedon Linear A inscriptions occur on IO Za 9 and 11, KN Za 19, **PL Zf 1** and VRY Za 1 (Godart and Olivier 1982).

[20] Certainly, *unengraved* rings have been found near the hand in burials (Younger 1977, 151–2), though it remains important to evaluate this evidence critically, as associations between rings and hands have occasionally been staged. A ring found in the shrine at Anemospilia, for example, was placed on the left little finger of a nearby skeleton for the excavation photo (Sakellaris and Sakellari 1997, 294–5, fig. 253 right).

[21] The ring, from the lower burial layer of Tomb 9, has a flat hoop and elliptical bezel engraved with a bird in flight and three Cypro-Minoan signs within an engraved border; the ring is dated to *c.*1300–1225 BC (Buchholz and Karageorghis 1973, 167 no. 1782; Karageorghis 1974, 44, 61, no. 10, pl. 66).

[22] In the Aegean, ovoid bezels usually run perpendicular to the hoop (Boardman 1970; Younger 1988; Krzyszkowska 2005, 127). Round bezels such as the one on the Mavrospilio ring are much less common; other examples include several round sealings (Pini 2010, 14–15) and two rings from a Middle Minoan II–III context at Ayios Charalambos (Pini 1992, nos. 045 [bronze] and 046 [silver]; for the dating, see Krzyszkowska 2005, 126 n. 27). Aegean rings with round bezels appear somewhat earlier than those with ovoid bezels; most range in date from Middle Minoan II to Late Minoan I, and their bezels are invariably solid, rather than hollow like the later ovoid bezels (Krzyszkowska 2005, 126–8; see also Pini 2010, 17, comment on no. 1). Later rings with round bezels include a gold ring with a bezel with coloured inlay dated to Late Minoan I from Heraklion-Poros Chamber Tomb Π (Pini 2010, no. 8) and two gold rings – also with inlay – dating to Late Helladic III, one from Mega Monastiri Tomb Γ in Thessaly (Pini 2010, no. 29) and the other from Kalapodi-Kokkalia Tomb IV in Phthiotis (Pini 2010, no. 30). In the Levant, rings with round bezels usually date from late Iron II through to the Persian period (Golani 2009b, 325–6). In Cyprus, a round bezel with filigree ornamentation comes from Enkomi (Gjerstad 1934, pl. LXXXVIII:2).

widespread throughout Cyprus (Boardman 1970),[23] the Levant,[24] and Egypt, where the form is thought to have originated.[25]

We (along with others)[26] do not believe that the lack of iconographic evidence for engraved rings on Minoan fingers excludes the notion that the Mavrospilio ring – and indeed, small rings in general[27] – could have been worn on the hand. Small rings might be worn by children, or on the little finger of an adolescent or small adult,[28] and rings are in fact the most common type of metal jewellery found in Aegean child-burials from the Middle Bronze Age onwards (Pomadère 2012, 437–8). Evidence from Middle Helladic burials on the mainland (Pomadère 2012, 436) and from Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age burials in the Levant[29] indicates that in the Aegean and elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean, children and infants were often buried with jewellery, demonstrating not only a degree of care for these individuals, but a perception of them *as* individuals. *In situ* finds from Argos, dated to Late Helladic I, include a six to seven year old child wearing a bronze ring on the right hand (Haas-Lebegyev 2012, 428). A gold ring with a small internal diameter dated to Middle Minoan II–III was found in Knossos-Ailias Tomb VII (Pini 2010, no. 2), and another small ring was discovered within a possible child's burial in the Staikos plot at Thebes, dated to Late Helladic II–IIIA (Pini 2010, no. 31).[30] Small finger rings also come from Ayia Irini in the Cyclades (Overbeck 1989, 203). Rings with an inner diameter of less than 13 mm are plentiful in the sub-Mycenaean burials at Kerameikos, while gold jewellery is attested in child-burials at Lefkandi, where very small rings that could only have been worn by children were common.[31] As personal ornamentation (especially for children) frequently served an apotropaic function in cultures throughout the eastern Mediterranean,[32] jewellery in Aegean child-burials may have been meant to play a supernatural role in protecting vulnerable subadults from harm (Pomadère 2012, 436).

The Mavrospilio ring may very well have served such an apotropaic function, regardless of its owner's age. One can compare its spiral inscription to the spiral inscriptions painted on the interiors of two conical cups from Knossos,[33] which in turn can be compared to Babylonian

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[23] For example: a silver ring inscribed with the name of Amenhotep IV from Tomb 93 at Enkomi on Cyprus (Murray, Smith and Walters 1900, 17, 36, pl. 4:617).

[24] In the Levant, these rings occur with figurative designs, hieroglyphs or pseudo-hieroglyphs, and sometimes no design at all. Examples include a ring from Madaba (Harding 1953, fig. 11, pl. 5:220); an unpublished Early Iron Age ring from et-Taiyiba in Israel (IAA 2006–297); another from Tel Miqne-Ekron, considered by Brandl to contain an abbreviated title used by Egyptian priests (Golani 2009b, 313 fig. VI:8:17); and an undecorated example from Beth Shean (Golani 2009a, table 11:12:12, photo 11:8*b*).

[25] The movement of this type of ring across the Mediterranean is illustrated by a fragmentary gold example recovered from the Late Bronze Age Uluburun shipwreck; the surviving half of the oval bezel contains Egyptian hieroglyphs (Pulak 1988, 1, fig. 33).

[26] For example: Popham, Catling and Catling (1974, 223) suggest that small rings are merely those suited to slender fingers; see also Olivier 1982, 16; Krzyszkowska 2005, 128–30.

[27] The hoops of Minoan gold rings are 'notoriously small; an inner diameter of 1.3 cm is not unusual' (Krzyszkowska 2005, 128). For discussions and tabulations of Bronze Age Aegean hoop sizes, see Pini 2010, 62–4, 66, 71–2, tab. 2; Müller 2005, 172–3, pls. XXXIV–V.

[28] A. Lebessi, excavator of the Minoan shrine at Kato Syme, was able to slide the Mavrospilio ring to the base of her little finger without difficulty (Olivier 1982, 18).

[29] For example: Tell el-Far'ah (Braunstein 2011, 13); Tell es-Safi (Verduci in press); Tell es-Sa'idiyeh (Green 2006, 129, 139).

[30] Though this burial is presumed to be that of a child, no osteological analysis was conducted (Pini 2010, 28).

[31] The commonness of these rings is perhaps not surprising, given the large number of infant burials at this site (Higgins 1980b, 221; Popham, Sackett and Themelis 1979, pl. 230*a–c*).

[32] Beads were worn in conjunction with apotropaic amulets, scarabs, and seals at Tell es-Sa'idiyeh in the Levant (Green 2006, 139). Amulets on bracelets and necklaces are commonly associated with Egyptian child-burials of the Third Intermediate Period, an association not seen in adult burials (Grajetzki 2003, 97 fig.115; Braunstein 2011, 23). At Tell el-Far'ah, amulets and scarabs with representations of Egyptian gods are strongly connected with children, though the significance attached to these objects may have differed from the Egyptian one: the appropriation of Egyptian-style objects into Canaanite mortuary practices may have been as much about reflecting a certain level of prestige as it was about offering apotropaic protection to children (Braunstein 2011, 13, 20, 24).

[33] KN Zc 6 and 7 (Godart and Olivier 1982, 118–25). The inscriptions inside these cups, however, spiral *counterclockwise* from the centre to the rim, whereas the inscription on the Mavrospilio ring spirals *clockwise* from

devil-traps – terracotta bowls whose interiors are inscribed with spiraliform magical texts (Budge 1961, 284–90) that are meant to trap demons inside the bowl. Spirals have been compared to stylised snakes, such as the one found on the Egyptian board game *Mehen* (Whittaker 2005, 31–6).

Naturally, the presence of an inscribed ring of precious metal in a burial also reflects the status of the ring's owner.[34] In this sense, we might compare the Mavrospilio ring to two gold stirrup-shaped bezel rings with Cypro-Minoan inscriptions (K-AD 734 and 795: Masson, E. 1985; Goring 1996, 31–2, fig. 4) found in a rich Late Cypriot IIA2 burial assemblage near the intact skeleton of a young woman in Tomb 11 at Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios (Goring 1989, 100–1, 103; Goring 1996; South *et al.* in press).[35] Ferrara (2012, 67) sees these inscribed rings as evidence that literacy had become 'a marker of the elite prestige paraphernalia'.[36] The wealth of Tomb 11, comparable in its period only to Tomb 2 at Enkomi, suggests not only that this female must have been of extraordinary status to have had access to such jewellery, but also that her elite status was being demonstrated through the use of writing as a legitimising element.

Importantly, the writing could have served this purpose *regardless* of whether the rings' owner could read it – and this is no less true of the Mavrospilio ring, and indeed of all inscribed Minoan jewellery: one cannot assume that the people who wore these objects could actually read the writing on them. Most likely they could not, as throughout the eastern Mediterranean at this time, knowledge of writing was *esoteric* knowledge that was carefully guarded by those who possessed it (Davis, B. 2014, 133 n. 721). This same state of affairs meant that most people who saw these objects being worn would also not have been able to read the writing on them. However, both the wearer and nearby observers would have been aware of the *presence* of writing, which in itself would have signified an association with esoteric knowledge through the scribe who created it, thereby serving as a legitimising factor affirming the authority and status of the person wearing the inscribed object.[37] Thus writing becomes one of the many ways in which adornment could be actively involved in the social reproduction of status by people distinguishing themselves from others via the display of prestige items (Hayden 1998; Peregrine 1991; Knapp 1986; Knapp 1996; Webb 2002, 111).

The remaining four items of inscribed Minoan jewellery are all hairpins, which in the Aegean occur in a variety of forms. The contexts of hairpins, when known, are usually associated with

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the rim to the centre. As the interiors of the cups are concave, whereas the bezel of the ring is convex, perhaps the shape of the surface is somehow motivating the choice of direction for the writing.

[34] In the case of child burials, the presence of writing is likely to reflect the status not just of the child, but of the parents as well (Green 2006, 164, 188). Child burials in mid-third millennium Ur, for example, contained seals that were often inscribed with personal names, thus marking personal identity, but also representing inherited wealth and prestige. Inscribed vessels at this site were also used to mark identity and usually named the deceased (Gansell 2007, 40–1).

[35] According to the excavator, the tomb contained the burial of three young women and four children, with the only articulated female skeleton situated on a western bench. The deceased, clearly of high status, was found with jewellery *in situ*: six gold earrings, four gold spirals, at least one necklace and two silver toe rings.

[36] The inscriptions on the rings are identical except for a few small iconographic details. Ferrara suggests that the inscriptions might refer to the rings' owner, comparing them to the Cypriot Syllabic inscription containing a Greek female name in the nominative on a silver bezel ring from Enkomi (Ferrara 2012, 67 n. 132; Evans 1900, 205) – one major difference being that the inscription on the Enkomi ring (as on the Mavrospilio ring) is meant to be read on the bezel itself, whereas the inscriptions on the two rings from Kalavassos are designed to be read in impression. Ferrara's interpretation of the rings' purpose runs counter to that of Goring, who suggested they were seals potentially not worn on the hand, despite strong evidence of use-wear (Goring 1996, 32).

[37] In seeking to account for the diversity of inscribed objects on Bronze Age Cyprus, Sherratt (2003, 228) suggests that literacy – 'or at least a generalised awareness of literate signs and their values (what might be called literacy-consciousness)' – was widespread on the island, on the basis that 'there is little point in anyone inscribing his or her name, or the recipient of his or her dedication, on an object unless a reasonable number of people can read [the writing], or at least recognise its significance'. We would respond by suggesting that most people would probably *not* have been able to read the writing, but that a much, much wider audience would surely have recognised its social and perhaps ritual significance: In the case of ritual inscriptions, we would further suggest that the writing was primarily directed not at people, but at one or more deities whose ability to read it would have been presumed.

female burials, while the pins themselves are often found near the skull or in pyxides (Hallager 2012, 354, n. 11, with references). They are generally made of high-status metals such as gold and silver, though examples are also attested in bronze, glass and ivory.[38] The four inscribed Minoan hairpins are no exception: three are of silver, while the fourth is of gold, and all but the (unprovenanced) gold specimen were found in funerary contexts, like the Mavrospilio gold ring. The fact that four (and probably all five) items of inscribed Minoan jewellery come from burial contexts does not necessarily mean that these items were made specifically for burials: most ancient objects of precious metal come from burials, simply because precious-metal items that remained in circulation were prone to eventual recycling. As an example, the Uluburun shipwreck contained a rich collection of scrap gold and silver derived from jewellery (Pulak 1998, 206). Furthermore, if the inscribed Minoan hairpins were made specifically for burials, then we should expect to find no trace of use-wear; yet the Platanos silver hairpin (Fig. 6) has clearly been broken in the middle of its inscription, and the broken end has been smoothed (Alexiou and Brice 1976, 19). We have already noted that the lack of use-wear on unprovenanced gold hairpin **CR(?) Zf 1** suggests that it was made specifically for a burial; but if the Platanos hairpin were made specifically for a burial and broken during the preparations for it, there would be little point in smoothing the broken end. Instead, the smoothing of the break suggests that this broken hairpin continued to be used by a living person. Of course, it is impossible to demonstrate that the deceased was the person who continued to use the hairpin after it was broken; but the evidence does suggest that not *all* inscribed Minoan hairpins were created specifically for burials.

The use of hairpins in the Aegean extends from the early second millennium BC into the Late Bronze Age. Hook-shaped pins were regarded by Blinkenberg (an early authority on Aegean fibulae) and later by Higgins (whose expertise covered the spectrum of Aegean adornment) as the immediate predecessor of the violin-bow fibula – that is, they were thought to be used for fastening clothing (Blinkenberg 1926, 40, fig. 5; Higgins 1980a, 85).[39] Many scholars, however, are of the opinion that these objects would have been useful in the elaborate Minoan hair arrangements seen in the Neopalatial period.[40] The Piskokephalo head (Fig. 9) exemplifies this type of raised coiffure (Platon 1951, 134–5, pl. H1; Alexiou 1975, 136 fig. 2; Zervos 1956, figs. 403, 406), one that would have benefitted from the use of pins, although whether these pins served a practical or merely ornamental function is still a topic of contention.[41]

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[38] For glass examples, see Effinger 1996, 55. The ivory pins from Milatos are unpublished (Hallager 2012, n. 9); also see Konstantinidi 2001, 25–6 and the table on 42, as well as Hallager's (2012, n. 39) corrections to that table. Though Hallager questions the material of the Milatos pins, the excavator clearly states that they are ivory in his preliminary report (Davaras 1980, 521–3, esp. 522), and the examples on display in the Ayios Nikolaos Museum confirm that Davaras was correct.

[39] Blinkenberg (1926, 40, fig. 5) described this type as 'une simple epingle repliée'. For silver and gold examples, see Hutchinson 1956, 68 fig. 3 (in silver); Evans 1906, 151 no. 24, fig. 129 (in gold, from Isopata). Evans (1906, 151) compares the silver hairpin from Mavrospilio to bronze hairpins from Augo, Gournia, Zakro and Palaikastro in Crete; also see Hastings 1905, 279, pl. X. Vandenabeele (1985) reiterates the view of Alexiou and Brice that no Minoan figurative art depicts either fibulae or hairpins, and that pins in Mycenaean period burials were found in the vicinity of the shoulders or chest (Bielefeld 1968, 38–9).

[40] The notion that the hook-headed pin served as a hairpin has persisted for more than a century and is now fairly well accepted. For examples of this view, see Hastings 1905, 278–9, pl. X; Evans 1906, 151; Forsdyke 1926–7, 289; Jacobstahl 1956, 91; Marinatos 1967, B26; Hood, S. 1971, 102 fig. 76; Alexiou and Brice 1972, 113–15; Vagnetti 1972, 364–71; Dimopoulou-Rethemiotaki and Rethemiotakis 1978, 104; Papaeuthymiou-Papanthimou 1979, 208–13; Higgins 1980a, 61, 72; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1984, 53; Konstantinidi 2001, 25–6.

[41] Laffineur criticises those who interpret these objects as hairpins for consistently neglecting to explain exactly how they could have held such a hairstyle in place, and suggests that perhaps they served a merely decorative function (Olivier, Godart and Laffineur 1981, 12). Alexiou and Brice (1976, 19) suggest that such hairstyles were primarily held in place by ribbons, as shown in the Piskokephalo figurines, and that hairpins served a secondary role in fixing the coiffures, while their hooks and lanceolates protruding from the hair were regarded as ornaments. We would like to point out, however, that the shape of Minoan hairpins suggests that they could have been used on their own to fix buns and more elaborate coiffures, in much the same way as hair sticks are used today; thus these objects might very well have played a primary role in holding hairstyles in place.

Fig. 9. Terracotta head from Piskokephalo. After Holland 1929, 189 fig. 6.

Fig. 10. Gold ring from Isopata. After Platon and Pini 1984, no. 51.

In any case, we also believe these objects to be hairpins rather than fasteners for clothing, as the crocus design moulded in high relief on pins such as the one from Mavrospilio would have made them impractical for inserting through fabric, as would the design of the twisted gold hook from Isopata (Evans 1906, 151, fig. 129). Furthermore, Minoan garments were primarily of cut-and-sew construction rather than drapery, while outer garments were perhaps too sturdy to have been held in place by such delicate pins. By contrast, if these objects are hairpins, then the raised designs would have served a purpose by helping the pins grip the hair and remain in place. Countless US patents for hairpins using similar technologies exist today.[42]

It has been suggested that the dots above the foreheads of the figures on the gold ring from Isopata (Fig. 10) may actually represent such hairpins in stylised form (Rehak 2000, 273). The

[42] These range from traditional U-shaped pins, such as US patent 864360A, to more detailed varieties, including a double-sided hook hairpin (US patent 2272409), and a hook hairpin with a securing encasement (US patent 5417230A).

crocus, closely associated with mature women in the Xeste 3 frescoes, appears on this ring as well (Day 2011, 361).[43]

We might also mention the floral hairpins depicted on the gold ring from the Acropolis Tomb at Mycenae, which perhaps more clearly represent some type of hair adornment (Niemeier 1990, 167 fig. 1).[44] A gold and silver pin from Shaft Grave III, with its head in the form of a woman surrounded by a floral design, supports an association of these pins with women (Hood, S. 1978, 200 fig. 199).

As the inscriptions on all four inscribed Minoan hairpins appear to follow no set formula, Rehak has suggested that these objects were 'not dedicated according to some prescribed ritual but according to personal desire. Their words, therefore, are the closest we may ever get to actual words spoken or thought by Minoan women' (Rehak 2009, 14).[45] In agreeing with his interpretation, we would only add that though the hairpins themselves may not have been dedicated according to a 'prescribed ritual', the content of their inscriptions may nevertheless be ritual (or at least *ritualised*) in nature, as the Linear A sequence JA-SA-SA-RA- on hairpin **PL Zf 1** is a sequence that elsewhere occurs only on ritual objects.[46] Thus the inscriptions on at least some of the inscribed jewellery may contain *personalised ritual dedications*, rather than straightforward statements of origin ('X made me'), ownership ('I belong to X') or interpersonal gift ('X gives this to Y').

Rehak has in fact contributed significantly to the literature on engraved hairpins, with particular reference to the Wounded Woman in the fresco at Xeste 3, Akrotiri (Rehak 2009).[47] The seated female in that fresco is distinguished by her unusual hairpins. She wears one over her forehead

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[43] The crocus is not the only iconographic detail linking the Isopata ring to hairpins: an unpublished hairpin from Knossos bears a terminal ornament in the shape of an eye, similar to the disembodied eye that forms one of the background details on the ring (Hood, M.S.F. 1958, 20).

[44] Schliemann (1878, 355–6) preferred to interpret these hairpins as elements of a diadem, despite not having found any evidence of such an object at Mycenae.

[45] Rehak's notion that these inscriptions contain meaningful Minoan phrases (rather than, say, non-linguistic incantations) is supported by the structure of the words themselves. Languages commonly employ some sets of consonants for multiple unrelated words, which then differ only by a vowel or two, as in English 'batter/bitter/better/butter' – or in Egyptian *nfr*, which can mean 'good', 'cloth', 'beer', or 'foundation', depending on the vowels used to pronounce the word. Many sequences of signs on the inscribed Minoan jewellery differ only by a vowel or two from sequences of signs found on other Minoan documents; thus the writing on the jewellery contains a number of known Minoan consonant-patterns. Examples (from Younger 2014):

- On the Archanes silver hairpin (**ARKH Zf 9**): -KI-SI-KI-, vs. -KI-SI-KA on tablet KH 5.1–2.
- On the unprovenanced gold hairpin (**CR(?) Zf 1**): KA-NI-JA-, vs. -KA-NA-JA- on libation table PK Za 12; -KI-SE-NU-, vs. -KI-SE-NA on tablet HT 26a.2–3.
- On the Mavrospilio silver hairpin (**KN Zf 31**): DA-DU-MI-, vs. DA-DU-MA- on tablet HT 95a.1; A-WA-PI, vs. JA-WA-PI on pithos PE Zb 7; A-DA-RA, vs. A-DA-RO on tablet ARKH 5.2.
- On the Mavrospilio gold ring (**KN Zf 13**): -KE-PA-JA-, vs. KU-PA-JA on tablet HT 116a.1–2.

Again: the implication is not that these similar words are related, but that the use of attested Minoan consonant-patterns on the jewellery suggests that their inscriptions contain meaningful Minoan phrases.

The evidence is even stronger on the Platanos silver hairpin (**PL Zf 1**):

- U-QE-TI • JA-SA-SA-RA-, vs. RI-QE-TI • A-SA-SA-RA- on female votive figurine PO Zg 1.

Here, the two pairs of words are almost certainly related, given their occurrence together on two different objects with ritual associations. Once again, the implication is that the inscriptions on the jewellery contain meaningful Minoan phrases.

[46] JA-SA-SA-RA occurs on IO Za 2, 6, 9, 12 and 16, KN Za 10, PK Za 14, PS Za 2 and TL Za 1, while the variant A-SA-SA-RA- occurs on IO Zb 10, PK Za 4 and 11, PO Zg 1 and PR Za 1 (Godart and Olivier 1982). Of these 14 objects, all come from a ritual context or have a form directly associated with ritual (libation table, votive ladle, votive figurine) except for PK Za 4, a stone cup from Roussolakkos (the settlement below Petsofas peak sanctuary); thus it is perhaps not entirely circular reasoning to suggest that the cup was also a ritual object that had been inscribed for eventual dedication at the peak sanctuary.

[47] On the Akrotiri frescoes, see Doumas 1992, pls. 105–6; Televantou 1984, 14–54.

that imitates an olive twig with blue and yellow leaves.[48] Lacking is the usual forelock, and despite a hairpin shaped like a lily[49] protruding from the loop of hair at the nape of her neck, a tress of her hair falls free. Rehak (2009, 13) observes: 'If the wound is a metaphor for the onset of menstruation, then we can regard the hairpins as pointing out the lack of her forelock, and emphasising the loosening of her hair. She is, therefore, a *kore* in the etymological sense, having had her hair cut in preparation for marriage.'[50] In this view, the Wounded Woman, costumed and bejewelled, appears to be the focus of an important event rather than a victim of misfortune. The differences in her hair, adornment and pose indicate that she may have left puberty behind and entered adulthood;[51] thus the presence of hairpins may be related to a rite of passage: from adolescence to womanhood.

Finally, one further potential meaning of inscribed Minoan jewellery is worth mentioning. By the beginning of the Neopalatial period, Minoan writing was shifting from a primarily bureaucratic role to one more closely associated with religion and palatial elites (Godart 1979; Olivier 1986, 379; Schoep 1999, 2001).[52] From this point onwards, Linear A can be found on increasing numbers of prestige ritual objects, such as stone libation tables and metal double axes (Pope 1956; Vermeule 1959; Godart and Olivier 1982, 142–3). Inscriptions on many of these objects almost certainly identify the dedicant(s) by name,[53] thereby broadcasting to the deities (and to the few Minoans who were literate) the dedicants' status through their access both to expensive items and to the esoteric knowledge of scribes. This display of writing on prestige objects in ritual contexts thus may have been playing an important role in developing an association between the elite and the divine (Whittaker 2005, 29).[54] The presence of writing on Minoan gold and silver jewellery[55] together with features

[48] See Günkel-Maschek 2012, n. 3 for references to the identification of the plant as olive or myrtle. We believe the evidence to favour the olive; see next note. The Minoan artistic convention of portraying silver in blue, and gold or copper in yellow, is most recently discussed by Verduci (2008, n. 29); also see Evans 1921–35, II.725; Rehak 1996, 45; Shaw 1998, 58; Verlinden 1984, 101. A hairpin of both gold and silver was found in Shaft Grave III at Mycenae (Younger 1992, 260).

[49] The flower is identical in design to the lilies decorating the central panel of the horned altar. A large olive tree grows behind and partially embraces the altar, whose horns are dripping with blood (Vlachopoulos 2008, 491); this co-occurrence of lilies, olive-foliage and blood is thought to be reflected in the lily hairpin, olive-twig hairpin, and bleeding foot of the Wounded Woman.

[50] Also see Younger 1992, 266–9; Younger 2009, 209.

[51] E.N. Davis (1986) offers an in-depth analysis of the portrayal of women in the Xeste 3 frescoes.

[52] The only certain example of non-administrative Protopalatial writing is a Cretan hieroglyphic inscription on an offering table of blue limestone (Chapouthier 1938). Other possible examples include a small group of seals containing the Cretan hieroglyphic equivalent of the Linear A sequence A-SA-SA-RA-, which in the Neopalatial period occurs only on ritual objects (Brice 1997, 94 fig. 1).

[53] Many Linear A inscriptions on high-status ritual objects are believed to contain the name of the dedicant (Davis, B. 2014, 270). Recording one's name on a dedicated object is thought to be a way of permanently establishing one's presence at the site of dedication (Davis, B. 2014, 131). The practice of inscribing one's name on an object to indicate ownership or authorship was also common in Cyprus and the Levant (Masson, E. 2002, 78), as in a silver bowl from Hala Sultan Tekke inscribed 'Aky son of Ykhd made [this] bowl' in Ugaritic (Voskos and Knapp 2008, 663), but this practice remains strangely unattested in the Mycenaean world (Voskos and Knapp 2008, 675). That Linear B appears on no personal or ritual objects may indicate that certain social or symbolic meanings of Linear A were not transferred to Linear B (Whittaker 2005, 29), or that writing on personal and ritual objects was not valued by the Mycenaeans as a means of social or symbolic differentiation.

[54] See also the preceding note. Judging by the quality of some inscribed Minoan dedications, their dedicants were clearly elite; examples include gold axes ARKH Zf 1 and 2, alabaster bowl IO Za 6, marble bowl KN Za 19, libation tables PS Za 2 and SY Za 2, alabaster ladle TL Za 1, and others (Godart and Olivier 1982). For a discussion of the increasing association between religion and the elite in the Neopalatial period, see Rehak and Younger 1998, 141–2.

[55] Interestingly, inscribed *bronze* jewellery is unattested in the Bronze Age Aegean, with the earliest known example dating to the 5th century BC (Picón 1983, 101). Though one might argue against this notion on the basis of a few Late Helladic finds, such as four bronze rings bearing possible traces of writing found on the breast of the elite man buried in the Late Helladic IIIA1 Midea tholos (Persson 1931, 29, 32–3, 55–8), inscribed items of Aegean Bronze Age jewellery remain almost exclusively of gold or silver. Though this could be due to an accident of preservation, it also might reflect an early connection between writing and the wealthiest elite.

associated with ritual[56] suggests that these items may also have been expressing such an association, one linking power with religion.

CONCLUSIONS

The fact that inscribed Minoan jewellery is well suited to display indicates a degree of intentionality. The inscription of personal objects created a relationship between the objects and their wearers, enabling the wearers to construct their identities (Verduci 2014) not just through what they wore, but how and where they wore it (Meskell and Joyce 2003, 226). This relationship between object and wearer created a corresponding relationship between wearer and observer; thus these objects were actively involved in engineering the cognitive and behavioural responses to their own existence (Meskell 2003, 45).

As to the precise motives of the discourse intended by inscribed Minoan jewellery: the eventual decipherment of Linear A may (or may not) help to clarify these motives, but in the meantime, the currently available data do support four tentative conclusions. First: so far, inscribed Minoan jewellery seems to lie mostly outside the purview of men, in that all but one of the inscribed items are hairpins, which (as described earlier) are clearly associated with adult females; thus the inscriptions on these objects, to echo Rehak's earlier suggestion (2009, 14), may very well be the closest thing we have to the voices of Minoan women. By contrast, the Mavrospilio ring cannot be gendered. It may have belonged to a child or to an adult, and it may have been worn either as a finger ring or as an amulet around the wrist or neck; none of these possibilities can be eliminated. Second: these objects were almost certainly used to construct and broadcast the elite identity (and perhaps authority) of the people who wore them. Third: these objects may also have served as apotropaic amulets and/or symbols of rites of passage for their wearers, thus expressing certain rituals (unrelated to literacy) associated with the lives of the people who wore them (Helms 1988, 261). Fourth: for the illiterate majority of Minoans, the inscriptions on these objects would have represented access to secret, even mystical knowledge, and to the power that comes from access to such knowledge; thus these objects may have played an active role in linking elite Minoan (and in the case of the hairpins, elite Minoan *female*) identity and authority to the divine.

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bedavis@unimelb.edu.au

[56] The spiraliform design of the inscription on the Mavrospilio gold ring, for example, or the presence of the ritual sequence JA-SA-SA-RA- on the Platanos silver hairpin.

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Στολισμός, λατρεία και ταυτότητα: ενεπίγραφα Μινωικά κοσμήματα

Στο προκείμενο άρθρο, εξετάζουμε εκ νέου επιλεγμένα ενεπίγραφα Μινωικά κοσμήματα αντικείμενα υπό το φως του διαρκώς αυξανόμενου αριθμού μελετών με επίκεντρο την ανατολική Μεσογειακή τέχνη του κοσμήματος και της σημασίας της. Καταλήγουμε στα εξής τέσσερα συμπεράσματα. Πρώτον, καθώς τα εν λόγω αντικειμένα (εξαιρουμένου ενός) σχετίζονται σαφέστατα με ενήλικες γυναίκες, ενώ το κατ' εξαίρεσιν αντικείμενο (ένα δακτυλίδι) δεν μπορεί να ταυτιστεί με συγκεκριμένο φύλο ή ηλικία, τα ενεπίγραφα Μινωικά κοσμήματα δεν σχετίζονται κατά κύριο λόγο με άνδρες. Δεύτερον, τα αντικείμενα αυτά χρησιμοποιήθηκαν για να κατασκευάσουν και να μεταδώσουν την ταυτότητα της άρχουσας τάξης (και πιθανώς την εξουσία) των ανθρώπων που τα φορούσαν. Τρίτον, τα αντικείμενα πιθανώς λειτουργούσαν ως αποτροπαϊκά φυλακτά και/ή σύμβολά διαβατήριων τελετών για τους φορείς τους, εκφράζοντας ως εκ τούτου ορισμένες τελετουργίες σχετιζόμενες με τον τρόπο ζωής των ανθρώπων που τα φορούσαν. Τέταρτον, τα ενεπίγραφα αντικείμενα της Μινωικής τέχνης του κοσμήματος πιθανώς είχαν συμβάλει στη σύνδεση της ταυτότητας και της εξουσίας της Μινωικής άρχουσας τάξης (και ιδιαιτέρως των μελών της γυναικείας άρχουσας τάξης) με το θείο.