Building the Labyrinth: Arthur Evans and the Construction of Minoan Civilization

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While some aspects of Arthur Evans' framework for the Minoan civilization have undergone modification, its main defining characteristics remain widely accepted. We should find the endurance of Evans' theoretical framework surprising rather than comforting, not least because of the slim empirical and epistemological basis for its formation. This study provides a detailed exploration of the genesis of concepts such as the Minoan palace (or palace-sanctuary), the priest-king, the mother goddess, and the essentially European (non-"Oriental") character of the Minoans. By situating these concepts within Evans' narrative project, I try to demonstrate that these are not objective interpretations that flow obviously from the data but rather began life as preconceptions formed by Evans as part of his Eurocentric agenda, well before the start of his excavations at Knossos. His modus operandi was to borrow selectively from theories and ideas (e.g., of race) that were current at the time in order to propagate his idea of Minoan civilization as the earliest in Europe and distinct in nature from other, better-known civilizations of the East (e.g., Egypt, Mesopotamia).[1]

INTRODUCTION

The past three decades have been characterized by an increased interest in historiography and more particularly in defining the cultural and intellectual currents that influenced Arthur Evans.[2] These studies have demonstrated that Evans was heavily influenced not only by the cultural and intellectual currents of the times in which he lived but also by his own personal experiences and agenda. Although it has been pointed out by others that the main purpose of Evans' narrative was to promote Crete as the cradle of European civilization,[3] the implications of this observation for the concepts that he constructed and the interpretations that he made have not been fully explored.[4] Although we have now in theory moved beyond a grand narrative of the origins of European modernity and the need to attribute to Europe in general and to Crete in particular a pivotal role in the evolution of civilization, in practice Evans' rhetoric lives on, not only in the popular literature, as might be expected, but also in mainstream academic discourse.

[1] I thank Editor-in-Chief J.B. Carter and the anonymous reviewers for the *AJA* for their constructive comments and suggestions, which were of great value to improve the quality of this article. Special thanks are due to M. Guterres for long discussions on race and the Minoans, to P. Haçigüzeller and F. Carpentier for advice and support, and to E. Mahy for help with the illustrations. I am indebted to P. Tomkins for correcting the English of a first draft of this paper. "Oriental" is used by Evans as a generic term to refer to Mesopotamian and Levantine cultures and is used in this sense throughout this article.

[2] McNeal 1974; Bintliff 1984; Farnoux 1995; MacGillivray 2001; Hamilakis 2002a; McEnroe 2002; Papadopoulos 2005; Fotiadis 2006; Momigliano 2006; Gere 2009; Karadimas 2015.

[3] Papadopoulos 2005, 90, 128–29; Fotiadis 2006, 18, 20; Sherratt 2006, 111, 113–14.

[4] With the exception of Minoan religion, for which see Morris 2006, 2010; Eller 2012.

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In the last decade of the 19th century, prior to his excavations at Knossos, Evans formed the idea that Crete was the cradle of European society, the precursor of modern Western society.[5] It is against this background that the European character of Minoan civilization, the palace, Minoan kingship, and a monotheistic belief system focused on the mother goddess should be viewed.[6] It is no coincidence that Minoan civilization, as defined by Evans, was strikingly different from contemporary "Oriental"[7] societies; indeed, as argued in this article, the characteristics of Minoan society mentioned above were specifically created by Evans to give substance to the idea that Crete was the home of European and non-Oriental civilization. This myth of the European origins of modernity was accomplished by minimizing external Eastern influences, by recasting them as adapted and transformed by the Minoans to whom were attributed extraordinary creative powers, and by drawing on contemporary racial theories that considered certain regions around the Mediterranean to be inhabited by an ancient European population of the same racial makeup as the Minoans, such as the concepts of "Eurafrica" and the "Mediterranean race."[8] This conceptual alienation of Crete from the Orient started as early as 1894, intensified after the start of the excavations at Knossos in 1900, and reached its zenith in the final volume of *The Palace of Minos*.[9] By shedding light on how Evans went about the creation of the oldest European civilization out of a then very scanty and poorly resolved data set, this article hopes to stimulate a more critical attitude toward his intellectual legacy.

From a postmodern perspective, it is clear that the strength of Evans' narrative does not reside in the data but in his rhetoric.[10] As Burrows eloquently puts it:[11]

> Knossos alone appeals to no mere esoteric audience of specialists. It moves along the broad ways, and carries us back, behind our learning and education, to the glamour and romance of our first fairy stories. Nor is the impression solely due to the nature of the material; it is largely due to Mr. Evans himself. It is not only that he has the gift of clear and attractive writing, or that he tries consciously to interest a wide public in work which must necessarily involve large expense. Mr. Evans naturally does not see things in a dry light. He has the dramatic instinct, and impresses it on all he touches.

Evans' interpretations were largely accepted by contemporary scholars, which suggests that his discovery, or rather creation, of the Minoan civilization answered to a widely felt need in Europe.[12] Moreover, the belief that Crete was different from the rest of the eastern Mediterranean has exercised a profound influence over subsequent generations of archaeologists, and even today his legacy has an impact on research.[13]

THE CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND TO THE INVENTION OF THE MINOANS

Although Evans is widely credited with discovering the Minoans, a cursory assessment of the wider cultural and academic context of European archaeology in the 19th century illustrates that the notion of a Minoan civilization had existed long before. Evans invented neither the term "Minoan" nor the notions of a "Minoan age" and a "Minoan civilization" flourishing in the middle of the second millennium B.C.E.[14] He translated and borrowed the term from Karl Hoeck, who had already divided the history of Crete into different periods (among which were "vorminoische" and "minoische Zeit") and suggested that the island was inhabited by a non-Hellenic people. Hoeck equated these "Minoans" with the "Eteocretans," and he attributed to them a splendid civilization rich in monuments (such as the labyrinth of Daedalus) and a "Minoan Thalassocracy."[15] Similarly, the idea that the name "Minos" refers to the hereditary title of a dynasty of priest-kings who exercised supremacy in matters of religion had already been formulated by Hoeck in the late 18th century.[16] Evans himself applied the term "Minoan" for the first time in 1896, when describing the military installations that he encountered on his travels in east Crete: "The great days of Crete were those of which we still

[5] This idea was formulated as early as 1891 by Christos Tsountas; see Voutsaki (forthcoming).

[6] Minoan kingship: Betancourt 2002, 207, 211; Pelon 2002, 111; Shaw 2004, 65–6, 80. Mother goddess: Marinatos 1993, 165–66; 2015, 58–73; 2016, 9; Driessen 2001, 364, 368.

[7] On Evans' use of this term, see supra n. 1.

[8] Brinton 1895, 78; Sergi 1901, esp. 30–8.

[9] Evans 1935.

[10] Fotiadis 2006, 21–2; Treuil 2006, 137–39.

[11] Burrows 1907, 1–2.

[12] Hall 1901, 1915; Burrows 1907; Baikie 1913; Dussaud 1914.

[13] Childe 1925, 29; Renfrew 1972, xxv–xxvi, 45–60, 476–504; Warren 1975, 95.

[14] Karadimas and Momigliano 2004, 244; Karadimas 2015, 5–7.

[15] Hoeck 1823–1829, 1:359–61, 3:xxxi; translations by Karadimas and Momigliano 2004, 246; Karadimas 2015, 6.

[16] Karadimas and Momigliano 2004, 246; Karadimas 2015, 7.

find a reflection in the Homeric poems—the period of Mycenaean culture, to which here at least we would fain attach the name *Minoan*."[17] For clarity's sake it must be noted that Evans used the adjectives "Minoan" and "Mycenaean" to refer to different, successive periods of Cretan prehistory rather than as racial/ethnic indicators;[18] Evans' Mycenaean period on Crete was the acme of the civilization of Crete (Late Minoan I–II, ca. 1700/1675–1420/10 B.C.E.), whereas he referred to the preceding period as Minoan (Middle Minoan I–III, ca. 2100/50–1750/1700 B.C.E.). This can be explained by Evans' belief that the Mycenaean riches discovered by Heinrich Schliemann were in fact the result of Minoan dominance over the Greek mainland. However, not even this was a new idea; it had already been suggested by Arthur Milchhöfer in 1883.[19]

The 19th century was the age of cultural evolutionism, when the classification of societies in terms of technological progress and increasing complexity went hand in hand with hierarchies of race, as is made clear by terms such as "lower races" and "primitive ancestors."[20] Prehistoric archaeology within Europe at this time should be understood as part of a growing interest in its own national histories. European prehistory became an alternative for the allure of the great ancient civilizations of the Near East and the history and arts of the classical civilizations.[21] In the second half of the 19th century, the quest to discover an ancient European civilization took shape within this context as a European response to the archaeological discoveries in Mesopotamia and Egypt. The success of the Eurocentric position and the appropriation of Crete as European can be explained as serving nationalist and colonialist agendas in Crete, Greece, and Europe in general.[22] Realizing this is key to understanding what set the archaeological agenda in the second half of the 19th century and why increasingly the independent development of Europe tended to be emphasized in opposition to the dominant paradigm of *ex oriente lux*.

Literacy was considered one of the defining characteristics of civilization.[23] Among the earliest known objects from Crete were inscribed sealstones, and these objects go a long way toward explaining why an island on the periphery of Europe came to be considered the home of a grand civilization.[24] Prior to Evans' own early writings on the subject, Milchhöfer had already earmarked Crete as the home of the so-called island stones, and Salomon Reinach had emphasized the importance of these sealstones for the existence of a culturally independent civilization within Europe.[25]

Reinach, a member of the École Française d'Athènes in 1879–1883 and conservator of the Musée des Antiquités Nationales at Saint-Germain-en-Laye from 1887 onward, played a significant role in the construction of European prehistory and developed a theory for an independent and indigenous European social and artistic development that owed little if anything to the contemporary civilizations of Egypt, the Levant, and Mesopotamia.[26] Reinach argued that the impressive remains found by Schliemann at Mycenae were indigenous and not Phoenician as argued by Wolfgang Helbig.[27] Evans and Reinach struck up a correspondence in 1894, which abruptly ceased in 1895 when Reinach accused Evans of plagiarism for not crediting him in "Primitive Pictographs and a Prae-Phoenician Script, from Crete and the Peloponnese."[28] In that paper Evans followed Reinach in emphasizing the European nature of the sealstones and their role in the development of European art.[29] Their correspondence was resumed in 1897, and, although Evans took care to acknowledge Reinach on certain occasions, there were further instances in which he blatantly neglected to do so. A good example of this is Evans' discussion of the non-Semitic character of the dove cult in 1935,[30] in which he even used the term "le mirage orientale [*sic*]" but neglected to refer to Reinach's eponymous 1893 publication.

Another influence on the Eurocentric direction that Evans took was undoubtedly the work of William Flinders Petrie, who had found Middle Minoan pottery, which he placed between 2500 and 2000 B.C.E., at a town (Kahun) near the mouth of the Fayum, in Egypt. Petrie suggested that the culture producing this

[17] Evans 1896a, 454.
[18] MacGillivray 2001, 151; Cadogan 2006, 50.
[19] Milchhöfer 1883, 121–37.
[20] Tylor 1865, 12; Lubbock 1869, 478; Morgan 1877, 3–18.
[21] Sherratt 1989, 172–75; Pluciennik 2005, 56; Díaz-Andreu 2007, 317.
[22] Varouchakis 2015, 3, 120–27, 200–1.
[23] Tylor 1865, 15, 87; Morgan 1877, 9–19.
[24] Milchhöfer 1883, 121–37.
[25] Milchhöfer 1883; Reinach 1893, 702; Evans 1894, 1897.
[26] Duchêne 2006, 88–9.
[27] Helbig 1886; Reinach 1893, 578, 701.
[28] Evans 1894. On the accusation of plagiarism, see MacGillivray 2001, 143; Duchêne 2006, 88.
[29] Evans 1894, 272, 328, 330, 333, 337.
[30] Evans 1935, 406.

"Aegean"[31] pottery was a predecessor to the Mycenaean civilization. His argument that this pottery signified "a rise of European civilization before 2500 B.C." gave impetus to the theory that the Aegean civilizations were European in origin and that the "Mykenaea period" had an equally rich predecessor that remained to be discovered.[32] He also emphasized that "the whole of the early civilization of the Peloponnessos, commonly now known as the 'Mykenaea period,' is a branch of the civilization of the Bronze Age in Europe, with but little contact with the East."[33]

The political and intellectual climate in the second half of the 19th century thus stimulated a quest for the oldest European civilization. In this context, and perhaps also influenced by his personal clashes with Ottoman power and culture in the Balkans,[34] Evans decided in the early 1890s to dedicate his attention to Crete.[35] Cretan mythology, the Cretan sealstones, Schliemann's discoveries on the Greek mainland, and the building discovered by Minos Kalokairinos at Knossos in 1879 convinced Evans that on Crete he would find the ancient, aboriginal European civilization that was the cradle of modern European culture.

EVANS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MINOANS BEFORE 1900

Although the adjective "Minoan," the concept of the priest-king, the Minoan thalassocracy, and the identification of Crete as the home of a grand civilization were all current before Evans,[36] it is usually Evans who is now credited with their creation. In this section I explore how Evans claimed ownership of these ideas and why he was so successful in promoting the idea that Crete was home to the earliest distinctly European civilization. I am here less concerned with tracking down the intellectual context for the ideas that Evans put forward in the last decade of the 19th century than with demonstrating how the foundations for his construction of the Minoans—which we have inherited—were laid before the start of his excavations at Knossos in 1900.[37] It is significant to establish the origin of Evans' ideas in the 1890s, when there was little or no secure empirical evidence to support them, rather than after 1900, when there were considerably more data available, because this sequence exposes the essentially imagined, rhetorical nature of Evans' vision and agenda.[38] Thus, rather than passively revealing the Minoan civilization as the fruits of his labors at Knossos from 1900, as the conventional mythology of Evans goes,[39] in reality Evans arrived at Knossos with a preconceived vision of, and agenda for, the Minoan civilization he expected to discover.[40]

In Evans' essays of the 1890s, Crete is already proposed as "the first European centre," a rival to the civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia, and the cradle of Western civilization.[41] Thus there can be no doubt that before the start of his excavations Evans already credited the Aegean in general but Crete in particular with producing "a higher form of culture, which was destined to react on that of a vast European zone—nay, even upon that of the older civilisations of Egypt and Asia."[42] In part Evans' zeal to realign the origins and inspiration of European modernity with a pre-Hellenic Aegean civilization may be traced to his frustration with what he saw as the obsession of his Oxford contemporaries with the history and achievements of classical Greece and their ignorance of the full significance of Schliemann's discoveries, the Cretan sealstones, and the other discoveries emerging from the new field of prehistoric archaeology.[43] The term "pre-Hellenic" featured prominently in Evans' early work, and he used it to designate the original indigenous European population of Crete and the mainland before the Greek colonization.[44] The use of this term should be seen within the context of the quest for an Aegean civilization "in many respects the equal contemporary of those of Egypt and Babylonia."[45]

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[31] Petrie 1890, 273: "This latter term I use to avoid the historical question of the race which produced this early pottery, and the local question as to whether it belongs to the Peleponnessos, the islands or the Asiatic coast."

[32] Petrie 1890, 276; see also MacGillivray 2001, 80–1.

[33] Petrie 1890, 276.

[34] MacGillivray 2001, 45–55; Evans 2008.

[35] MacGillivray 2001, 84, 100; Galanakis 2014, 85–6.

[36] Karadimas and Momigliano 2004, 245–46.

[37] Evans 1894, 1896a, 1896b, 1896c, 1897. For the intellectual context for Evans' ideas, see MacGillivray 2001; Karadimas and Momigliano 2004, 245–46; Papadopoulos 2005; Harlan 2011; Karadimas 2015.

[38] Fotiadis 2006, 18–19, 21–4.

[39] Evans 1943; Horwitz 1981.

[40] MacGillivray 2001, 6–7.

[41] Evans 1893, 195; 1896b, 914–16. See Galanakis (2014, 87) for an unpublished pre-1893 manuscript featuring these ideas.

[42] Evans 1896b, 911.

[43] MacGillivray 2001, 54, 64, 68.

[44] Evans 1897, 374; 1901, 189.

[45] Evans 1894, 271.

When characterizing the achievements of this "Aegean civilisation in prae-Mycenaean times,"[46] Evans drew attention to the existence of writing, metallurgy, arts, seafaring, and religion,[47] all qualities that he attributed to the highest ancient and modern civilizations, including his own. However, in his writings prior to 1900, Evans was not satisfied with simply establishing the civilized credentials of this prehistoric Aegean civilization; he was also concerned to demonstrate its distinctly European nature. In the following sections, I examine in detail Evans' early discussions of the various aspects of Aegean/Minoan civilization to draw out their Eurocentric nature. After 1900, this Eurocentric perspective became even more pronounced. Indeed it can be argued that some of the characteristics that are today still associated with the Minoans were originally constructed by Evans in opposition to Oriental civilizations because they cast Minoan Crete in a modern European light while simultaneously setting the Minoans apart from other contemporary Eastern civilizations. In the process, Evans' Minoans took on European concepts and values and became familiarized, accessible, and part of an origin myth for European modernity, qualities that help account for the enduring strength and popularity of Evans' vision.

By pointing out Evans' preconceived ideas, I do not wish to imply that his views were static and unchanging. On the contrary, his ideas evolved in accordance with the discoveries of the archaeological excavations and in most cases were modified to accommodate the data. However, his underlying agenda, that Crete should be understood as the cradle of European modernity and as governed by a monarchy residing in palaces, remained the same throughout his publications. Evans did indeed change some of the ideas he formed in the 1890s, such as the military characteristics of Minoan architecture and the aniconic nature of Minoan religion.[48]

Writing

Writing had long been seen as a key hallmark of civilization, and, unsurprisingly, it played a major role in Evans' identification of Crete as the home of a prehistoric European civilization.[49] Evans' interest in Cretan writing followed in the wake of earlier contributions by John Evans, Adolf Furtwängler, Arthur Milchhöfer, and Salomon Reinach. As early as 1872, Arthur Evans' father, John Evans, had formulated a theory for the existence of a system of prehistoric writing in Greece. Indeed, two-thirds of the signs discovered later by Arthur Evans turned out to match the sketches made by John Evans.[50] In 1880, William James Stillman had identified signs carved into the limestone blocks of the building uncovered by Kalokairinos at Knossos, and in 1883 Milchhöfer had identified the home of all known island stones, including those with writing, as Crete.[51] In 1893, Evans acquired some sealstones at the Athenian flea market and, after comparing them with some seals in the Ashmolean, the Berlin Museum (fig. 1), and those published by Milchhöfer, he announced to the Hellenic Society the discovery of a Mycenaean hieroglyphic writing system.[52] During his 1894 travels in Crete, he acquired more sealstones (or "milk stones" as they were locally known) (fig. 2) and promptly published them as further proof for a "Mycenaean" civilization on Crete.[53]

Having concluded that prehistoric writing existed on Crete, Evans' Eurocentric agenda manifests itself most clearly in what he then seeks to do with this conclusion. For Evans, it would seem, the Cretan evidence was merely the tip of the iceberg, the earliest of what he believed to be numerous early European writing systems that had slipped from view and awaited discovery. Indeed, to support this claim Evans explored other (far-fetched) attestations of pictographic writing in prehistoric Europe, such as carvings on rocks in Denmark and the Alps.[54]

Not only did Evans think that a script had existed in Crete, he also found evidence that at least two stages of writing, a pictorial or hieroglyphic one and a linear or phonetic one, had existed.[55] Such an evolution in

[46] Evans 1896b, 915.

[47] Writing: Evans 1894; 1896b, 911, 915. Metallurgy: Evans 1896b, 909–10. Arts: Evans 1896b, 909. Seafaring: Evans 1893, 221; 1896b, 911. Religion: Evans 1896c, 934.

[48] Evans 1895, 401–3; see also Gere 2009, 65–7.

[49] Evans 1895, 1896b; see also Gere 2009, 65–7.

[50] MacGillivray 2001, 195.

[51] Milchhöfer 1883, 121–37; see also Reinach 1883, 375, 702.

[52] Evans 1894, 276 n. 9; see also Galanakis 2014, 85.

[53] Evans 1894, 271–72, 274.

[54] Evans 1894, 270; 1908, 10–17.

[55] Evans 1894, 275, 324, 333. In fact this interpretation relied on an erroneous view of a simple evolution from a pictographic to a linear (i.e., phonetic) script on the sealstones. The transition from a pictographic to a linear script was stressed because pictography was not considered to be real writing, as it occurred in the "Red Indian stage of culture," among the more primitive races of mankind (Evans 1894, 270).

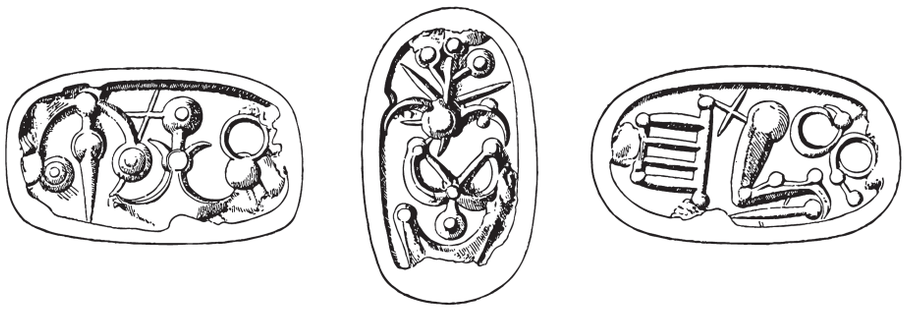

FIG. 1. Three-sided prismatic sealstone. Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, inv. no. SM FG57 (Evans 1894, fig. 25).

FIG. 2. Three-sided prismatic sealstone acquired by Evans on his explorations in east Crete in 1894. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, inv. no. AE.1777 (Evans 1894, fig. 23).

script on Crete was of particular significance to Evans' Eurocentric agenda because it took place prior to the development of the Phoenician writing system: "the great step in the history of writing implied by the evolution of symbols of phonetic value from primitive pictographs is thus shown to have effected itself on European soil."[56] He also claims that "the same development from the simple pictographic to the hieroglyphic or quasi-alphabetic stage might naturally have been expected to have taken place in more than one European area had it not been cut short by the invasion of the fully equipped Phoenician system of writing."[57]

The subsequent discovery in 1896 of the inscribed steatite libation table from the Psychro Cave (fig. 3)[58] was taken by Evans as confirmation of his 1894 theory, as it "is not only separated *longo intervallo* from the most ancient examples of Greek writing, but it distances by at least a thousand years the earliest specimens of the Semitic alphabet as seen on the Baal Lebanon bowls and the Moabite stone."[59]

Thus, Evans gave Cretan writing a paramount role in a narrative of European primacy chiefly because it allowed him to dismiss the convention that the Phoenician system of writing was the oldest and most significant: "the Phoenicians did not do more than add the finishing touches" to the Cretan prehistoric writing system.[60] Writing, Evans argued, was not invented in the East but in the West, by a European civilization that "might be regarded as in many respects the equal contemporary of those of Egypt and Babylonia."[61]

"Mycenaean" Art

Beginning with Evans in the 1890s, the attractive colors and naturalism of the material culture from Crete

[56] Evans 1896b, 915.

[57] Evans 1894, 271.

[58] Evans 1897, fig. 25. Another fragment of this libation table was found in 1898 by the French archaeologist P. Demargne; see Schoep 1994, 13.

[59] Evans 1897, 361. The Moabite stone (also known as the Mesha stele) is a cornerstone of Semitic epigraphy and history dating to ca. 840 B.C.E. The bronze bowls dedicated to Baal of Lebanon are dated to the eighth century B.C.E. (Taylor 1883, 210–16).

[60] Evans 1896b, 915.

[61] Evans 1894, 271.

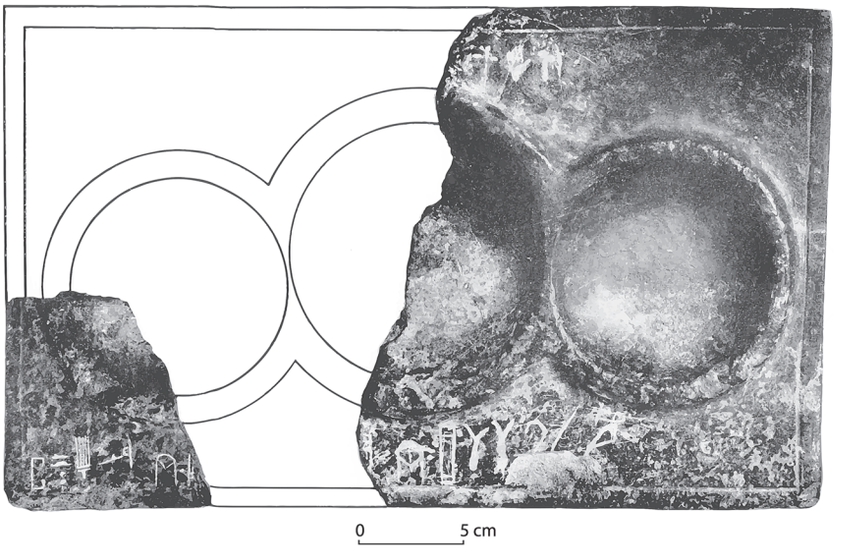

FIG. 3. Fragments of stone libation table from Psychro Cave: *left*, Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. I.P.S.352; *right*, Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, inv. nos. AE1, 1923.661 (Brice 1961, table 16; by kind permission of the Society of Antiquaries of London).

("Mycenaean" art)[62] have been harnessed to propagate the notion that prehistoric Crete formed the cradle of European art.[63] This is important because in 19th-century art history, it was widely believed that "art" was a palpable measure and mark of cognitive advancement or decline on the scale of the individual or of an entire race.[64] It was believed that the character, "spirit," "mentality," or "soul," and even the ethnic identity and cognitive capacity of races, could be (re)discovered through their material culture (esp. art) and gauged, measured, and compared.[65] As early as 1894, Evans attempted to capture the spirit of the people who produced the Cretan sealstones and the objects known from the Greek mainland (Grave Circle A and the Vapheio cups). To Evans, the quality of their material culture was proof of the cognitive sophistication of the Minoans. The "European spirit of individuality and freedom"[66] features prominently in Evans' descriptions, clearly reflecting cultural notions that had been circulating in Europe since the Enlightenment. By anachronistically attributing to the Minoans modern European characteristics and ideals, Evans and others not only confirmed and reinforced the distinctively European character of the Minoans but also created a past and authenticity for modern notions of Europeanness. By contrasting these "Minoan" characteristics with characteristics attributed to non-European prehistoric peoples (in terms such as flux vs. stagnation, inventiveness vs. conventionality, free vs. dependent, naturalistic vs. stiff), he reinforced the notion of a special "Minoan" ethnic identity and cognitive capacity:[67]

> We see the differences if we compare [the Aegean with] the civilisation of the Hittites of Anatolia and Northern Syria. . . . The native elements were there cramped and trammelled from the beginning by the Oriental contact. No real life and freedom of expression was ever reached; the art is stiff, conventional becoming more and more Asiatic, till finally crushed out by Assyrian conquest. . . . But in prehistoric Greece the indigenous element was able to hold its own, and to recast what it took from others in an original mould. Throughout its handiwork there breathes the European spirit of individuality and freedom.

[62] As noted above, Evans used the adjectives "Minoan" and "Mycenaean" to refer to successive periods of Cretan prehistory rather than as racial/ethnic indicators. The term "Mycenaean" corresponds to the Late Minoan I–II period (ca. 1700/1675–1420/10 B.C.E.).

[63] Evans 1896b, 916–17, 919; Childe 1925, 29; Charbonneaux 1929, 5–6; Myres 1933, 303–4; Hutchinson 1962, 123; Higgins 1967, 17; Warren 1975, 41–2; 1985, 94.

[64] Preziosi 2002, 36.

[65] Preziosi and Hitchcock 1999, 12–13, 23; Preziosi 2002, 32. See also Challis (2013, 75, 85–91, 103–6) on this mentality and how it affected Petrie's view of the Egyptian race.

[66] Evans 1896b, 919.

[67] Evans 1896b, 919; see also Preziosi 2002, 32.

Evans credits Crete with the "emancipation of the European genius" and deems its art superior to that of contemporaneous civilizations.[68] He describes the hypothesis that the Mycenaean civilization in Greece was Phoenician, an argument made in the 19th century by Helbig among others, as "the reasoning by which the whole prehistoric civilisation of the Greek world, so instinct with naturalism and individuality, is handed over to the least original member of the Semitic race."[69] Evans claimed Europe to be the "earliest-known home of anything that can be called human art, as opposed to mere tools and mechanical contrivances" and argued that the artistic genius of the later populations of Greece and Italy may in fact be traced back to the prehistoric past.[70]

From the beginning, Evans specifically sought to minimize the undeniable influence exercised by Eastern civilizations on "Mycenaean" art in order to counter the "exaggerated estimate of the part played by the East as the illuminator of the benighted West."[71] Influences from the East on the inhabitants of Crete were recast as "assimilation without losing their own individuality,"[72] thus preserving a sense that the Minoan civilization was the superior one.[73]

Once established by Evans, this dichotomy, not only between the art but also between the spirit of the Aegean/Europe and the Near East, was largely accepted by Evans' contemporaries and by later generations of archaeologists.[74] The importance of this should not be underestimated, as the perception of the characters of Minoan and Oriental art in opposite terms has played an important role in the widespread belief that Minoan society shows little resemblance to the Near East. As von Rüden points out, V. Gordon Childe managed to infuse his diffusionist *ex oriente lux* concept with a Western superiority, embodied by the European Minoans who were able to have a rational, high civilization without a despot:[75]

> We have seen that Minoan civilization was deeply indebted both to Egypt and Mesopotamia. Now I must insist that it was no mere copy of either, but an original and creative force. As such Crete stands out as essentially modern in outlook. The Minoan spirit was thoroughly European and in no sense oriental. A comparison with Egypt and Mesopotamia will make the contrast plain. We find in Crete none of the stupendous palaces which betoken the autocratic power of the oriental despot. Nor do gigantic temples and extravagant tombs like the pyramids reveal an excessive preoccupation with ghostly things. The consequences of this distinction are reflected in Minoan art. The Cretan artist was not limited to perpetuating the cruel deeds of a selfish despot nor doomed to formalism by the innate conservatism of priestly superstition. Hence the modern naturalism, the truly occidental feeling for life and nature that distinguish Minoan vase paintings, frescos and intaglios.

The idea that the spirit of Minoan art is European and very different from Oriental art persisted until a couple of decades ago. Thus, Warren, for example, argued that "the art found in the Palaces reflects a vitality and humanism that distinguishes Crete from contemporaneous societies such as Egypt and Assyria. The origin of the European tradition of humanism and individualism is generally attributed to the Greeks, but there is a sense in which Minoan culture can be considered the first example of a distinctively European tradition."[76] Frescoes in particular have been important markers for the Western modernity of the European Minoans. Immerwahr, for example, sets Minoan art and its sense of animation, spontaneity, and delight in nature apart from contemporary Egyptian and Mesopotamian art.[77] An opposition between "Minoan movement" and western Asian "lack of movement and stiffness" is also found in Niemeier and Niemeier's discussion of Minoan frescoes in western Asia.[78]

The Race and Ethnicity of the Minoans

Perhaps most surprising to present-day archaeologists, who are accustomed to treating racial theories with suspicion, is the fact that Evans already had very precise ideas about the race and ethnicity of the Minoans prior to 1900. To fully understand this we need to consider briefly the cultural and intellectual context at the time. The identification and classification of different races as well as the determination and ordering of racial superiority were a matter of serious scientific debate in the 19th century.[79] The discovery by orientalists

[68] Evans 1896b, 916, 922.
[69] Evans 1896b, 917.
[70] Evans 1896b, 909.
[71] Evans 1896b, 909.
[72] Evans 1896b, 917–18, 922.
[73] Evans 1896b, 917.
[74] Childe 1925, 29; Hutchinson 1962, 123; Higgins 1967, 17; Warren 1975, 41–2; 1985, 94.
[75] Childe 1925, 29; von Rüden 2014, 63.
[76] Warren 1985, 94.
[77] Immerwahr 1990, 41.
[78] Niemeier and Niemeier 1998, 89. See von Rüden (2014) for a full discussion.
[79] de Gobineau 1853, 1855; Huxley 1870; Brinton 1895;

in the late 18th century that languages spoken over a large part of Eurasia from Ireland to India all belonged to the Indo-European language family formed the basis of the interest in an Indo-European *Urheimat*, from which the Aryans spread.[80] Max Müller's translation of the Rigveda from Sanskrit had introduced European scholars to the tale of the migration of the Aryans into India from the northeast.[81] Although Müller's interest was purely linguistic, and despite his suggestions to separate philology and ethnology, his translation set in motion an avalanche of speculation about the racial and ethnic identity of the Aryans and the location of their homeland.[82] The term "Aryan" was a translation of the term "Ary" ("light one, noble one") in the Rigveda and came to be used instead of "Indo-Germanic" because of its broader historical and geographic connotations.[83] Racial groups and linguistic groups became synonymous to most scholars in the 19th century, and cephalometry became a tool to underpin racial differences.[84] Joseph Arthur de Gobineau had suggested that the white Aryan race was superior to the yellow and black races because it had remained pure and that European civilization, which corresponded to the ancient Indo-European culture also known as Aryan, represented the best of what remained of ancient civilizations. Southern Europeans, eastern Europeans, North Africans, Middle Easterners, Iranians, central Asians, and Indians he considered racially mixed and degenerate.[85] The Caucasus was identified as the Indo-Aryan homeland, and the term "Aryan" became a vehicle for asserting the superiority of the white Caucasian racial type. Karl Penka formulated an alternative hypothesis, arguing that the Aryans did not originate in the Caucasus but in Scandinavia and that they had blond hair and blue eyes.[86] In reaction to Penka's Nordicism and the theory that European civilization was the work of tall blond people from Scandinavia, an Italian physical anthropologist, Giuseppe Sergi, advanced the hypothesis that the Mediterranean race, which he identified as racially different from the Aryan and Semitic races, was responsible for European civilization.[87]

It is within this wider context that Evans' ideas about the race and ethnicity of the indigenous inhabitants of the Aegean should be situated.[88] In contrast to Sergi, Evans believed that the people of the Mediterranean lands in general belonged to the European race. The concepts of race current at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries were full of contradictions and ambivalence, and one should not expect a single coherent racial theory. Since Schliemann's discoveries at Mycenae, the ethnicity of the people buried in the Shaft Graves had become hotly debated; Schliemann himself considered them to be one of the prehistoric dynasties of the Aryan races and emphasized the presence of the swastika at Troy and Mycenae.[89] Others, however, suggested an origin in the eastern Greek islands and even in Syria, Egypt, and central Anatolia.[90] Christos Tsountas also believed that the Mycenaeans were Indo-Europeans who came from northern Europe.[91] Reacting against this general trend, Evans argued that the original inhabitants of Crete and Greece were a pre-Hellenic people. He used the term "pre-Hellenic" to refer to "an older non-Hellenic race,"[92] which he considered to belong to an indigenous European population that spoke a non-Aryan language.[93] He referred to original Cretans interchangeably as pre-Hellenic people and Eteocretans.[94] The Greek mainland, according to Evans, shared a pre-Hellenic population component with Crete, although he also conceded the presence of a Greek population element.[95]

Already in 1896 Evans made it clear that he did not want his Cretans to be "immigrant wanderers from Central Asia" and did not have a high opinion of the

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Ripley 1899.

[80] Jones 1824.

[81] Müller 1849–1875, 1859.

[82] In the 19th century, the Indo-European or Aryan idea had different connotations in Britain than on the Continent; in the former it stood for inclusion (of Britons), in the latter for exclusion (of Jews, Asians, Africans, etc.); see Trautmann 2004, 221.

[83] Benes 2006, 175; Díaz-Andreu 2007, 351.

[84] Díaz-Andreu 2007, 110, 350–52.

[85] de Gobineau 1853, 380, 446; 1855, 349–55.

[86] Penka 1886.

[87] Sergi 1901, v–vi.

[88] Evans 1894, 275, 333, 354; 1896b, 919; 1912, 279–84.

[89] Schliemann 1880, 77, 165; Gere 2009, 39–44.

[90] Voutsaki (forthcoming).

[91] Tsountas and Manatt 1897, 41–3.

[92] Evans 1912, 293.

[93] This language was considered to be akin to non-Aryan Lycian in Asia Minor (Kretschmer 1896).

[94] The term "Eteocretan" refers to "the original speech of the Cretan native before the days of the Greek colonization" (Evans 1894, 275); see also Karadimas 2015, 5–6, 10.

[95] Evans 1894; 1912, 279. Tsountas believed that the Mycenaeans were Greek (Tsountas and Manatt 1897, 359–60; Voutsaki [forthcoming]).

Aryans.[96] The artistic qualities of the pre-Hellenic Aegean population but also their skin color and language were crucial elements in Evans' argument that they belonged to "indigenous Cretan stock" rather than to the Aryan race.[97] Racially, he initially related the Cretans to a "Thraco-Phrygian race"[98] and later to the primitive population in Caria and Pisidia and the older elements in Lycia, which he considered to be "of European extraction."[99] Evans expressed the same view more elaborately in 1912:[100]

> To me at least the view that the Eteocretan population, who preserved their own language down to the third century before our era, spoke Greek in a remote prehistoric age is repugnant to the plainest dictates of common sense. What certain traces we have of the early race and language lead us in a quite different direction. It is not easy to recognize in this dark Mediterranean people, whose physical characteristics can be now carried back at least to the beginning of the second millennium before our era, a youthful member of the Aryan-speaking family. It is impossible to ignore the evidence supplied by a long series of local names which link the original speech of Crete and of a large part of mainland Greece to that of the primitive Anatolian stock, of whom the Carians stand forth as, perhaps, the purest representatives.

To understand why Evans viewed Caria, Lycia, and Pisidia, which are in Anatolia, as European, one must be aware that he was of the belief, widely held among ethnologists and craniometrists at the time, that the western part of Asia Minor originally formed part of the prehistoric homeland of Europe.[101] Evans saw evidence for the racial affinities of "this primitive Anatolian stock" with the Cretans in the occurrence of pre-Hellenic place-names ending in "-ssos" and "-nda" in southwest and south Anatolia and also in the survival of religious elements into historic times in the lands "East of the Aegean."[102]

Daniel Garrison Brinton's concept of "Eurafrica," which considers North Africa and the great basin of the Mediterranean as the primal home of the Eurafrican or white race,[103] and Sergi's Mediterranean race suited Evans' theories particularly well because they allowed him to argue for the existence of a white European race (albeit "darker-complexioned") in the area of the Mediterranean, which was not characterized by Aryan blond hair and blue eyes.[104] As Evans eloquently puts it:[105]

> [I]n a broader sense, the area in which lay the cradle of civilised mankind is becoming generally recognised. The plateaux of Central Asia have receded from our view. Anthropological researchers may be said to have established the fact that the White Race, in the widest acceptation of the term, including, that is, the darker-complexioned section of the South and West, is the true product of the region in which the earliest historic records find it concentrated. . . . The continent in which it rose . . . embraced, together with a part of anterior Asia, the greater part of Europe, and the whole of Northern Africa. . . . To this great continent Dr. Brinton, who has so ably illustrated the predominant part played by it in isolating the white from the African black and the yellow races of mankind, has proposed to give the useful and appropriate name "Eurafrica." In "Eurafrica," in its widest sense, we find the birthplace of the highest civilisations that the world has yet produced, and the mother country of its dominant peoples.

As early as 1894, Evans felt able to identify the physical characteristics of a European race that inhabited Crete and to distinguish them as different from the physical characteristics of a Semitic race. He based his identification on the frescoes from Egyptian Thebes that depict the Keftiu people—conventionally taken to be Aegean people—as brown skinned and dark haired. He notes that "the ruddy hue of the Kefti chiefs in the Theban paintings,—which seems to be the Egyptian way of rendering the rosy European cheeks,—as well as their dress and facial type are clearly non-Semitic."[106]

In 1897, Evans developed these ideas further by making use of the concept of an early indigenous population of the Nile Valley, to which he referred as an "Egypto-Libyan" or "proto-Egyptian" group.[107] He defined this autochthonous race of Egypt as "a race of Libyan stock who in early times extended as far as the Nubian

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[96] Evans 1896b, 909; see also Gere 2009, 112; Harlan 2011, 215–16.

[97] Evans 1894, 275, 354. Evans was convinced that the Cretan script reflected a pre-Hellenic language that was related to the language spoken in western Anatolia by the original inhabitants.

[98] Evans 1894, 271.

[99] Evans 1894, 279.

[100] Evans 1912, 279.

[101] Evans 1894, 271; 1897, 374.

[102] Evans 1912, 279. He refers in particular to the cult of Kybele and Attis as well as to the double axe symbol.

[103] Brinton 1890, 1895.

[104] Evans 1896b, 906; Sergi 1901, 42–4.

[105] Evans 1896b, 906.

[106] Quotation from Evans 1894, 370; see also 1896b, 917.

[107] Evans 1897, 367. This earlier population was identified by the German Egyptologist Alfred Wiedemann in the tombs at Naqada, but Evans does not provide a reference to Wiedemann's publication; see also Reinach 1893, 327.

borders of Egypt. Members of this white-skinned race—so European in its affinities—still formed a distinct part of the Egyptian population as late as the fourth Dynasty."[108]

Evans' view agreed well with the attribution of the culture of Naqada to an indigenous white-skinned people of Libyan stock by Petrie and James Quibell.[109] It seems likely that Evans' "Egypto-Libyan" group was coined under the influence of Sergi's Mediterranean race,[110] which Evans already referred to as early as 1896.[111] According to Sergi, the Libyans (of whom the ancient Egyptians were a branch) formed, together with the Ligurians, Pelasgians, and Iberians, one of the four main branches of the Mediterranean race. Evans was clearly attracted to Sergi's notion of a dolichocephalic Mediterranean race that formed a "distinct 'brown' or 'brunette' branch [of the White Race], whose swarthier complexion, however, and dark hair bear no negroid affinities, and are not due to any intermixture on that side."[112]

Evans allows for influences from this Egypto-Libyan group on Crete and even for an actual migration of Egypto-Libyans to Crete. By emphasizing the Egypto-Libyan group's European nature he makes foreign influences on Crete become less foreign.[113] He also stresses that any Egypto-Libyan immigrants on Crete "gradually merged in an earlier population of European stock, or may have continued to coexist with it."[114]

A Palace at Knossos?

In 1878, Kalokairinos uncovered the remains of a large building (30 x 60 m) with storage jars on the Kephala Hill at Knossos. In his excavation notes, he referred to it as "le palais royal du Roi Minos."[115] William James Stillman, American ambassador to Crete, called the building Kalokairinos unearthed the "Daedalian Labyrinth at Gnossus."[116] In 1894, Evans mused whether the building was a "Labyrinth, Palace, or an Andreion," but at the end of the same article he seems to have decided it was "the prehistoric Palace at Knôsos."[117] He also referred to the observations of other scholars who "were struck by the great resemblance presented by the details of the structure to those of the Palaces of Mycenae and Tiryns."[118]

From the very beginning of the 1900 excavations, Evans had decided that the building at Knossos was a palace, and he termed it as such without any justification.[119] The discovery in that first year of a gypsum seat, in what Evans inevitably called the Throne Room, must have seemed to him to be a clear validation of this idea:[120]

> The elaborate decoration, the stately aloofness, superior size and elevation of the gypsum seat sufficiently declare it to be a throne. At the same time the specially rich character of the relics found in the chamber itself corroborates the conclusion that a royal personage once sat here for council, or for the enjoyment of the oriental *kéif*.

Reluctant to leave matters there, Evans speculated further that "the smaller size of the hollowed seat itself as compared with that from the neighbouring chamber points to its occupant as a king rather than a queen."[121]

Religion

Although Evans' views on Minoan religion would change in the course of his career, which in fact underscores their fluidity and inconsistency, the emphasis on the European nature of Minoan religion remained constant. Thus, his views evolved from an aniconic religion to a pantheon of "Goddesses"[122] to a monotheistic mother goddess cult after the discovery of the faience figurines in the Temple Repositories in 1903.[123] Already from the period prior to the Knossos excavations, Evans regarded the worship of aniconic images, such as pillars and trees, as European and not Semitic because "it belongs to a religious stage widely

[108] Evans 1897, 379.

[109] Petrie and Quibell 1896, 63, 64; Evans 1897, 367, 380. For a discussion of ethnicity and race by Petrie, see Challis 2013, esp. 167–85.

[110] Sergi 1901, v–vi.

[111] Evans 1896b, 907.

[112] Evans 1896b, 907.

[113] Evans 1897, 377 n. 3, 379, 380, 392.

[114] Evans 1897, 374.

[115] These notes were drawn up many years later (see Kopaka 1990), but a preliminary report on the pottery was published in Haussoullier 1880.

[116] Stillman 1880–1881; MacGillivray 2001, 95–6.

[117] Evans 1894, 281, 350.

[118] Evans 1894, 281.

[119] Evans 1899–1900, 3, 4, 7.

[120] Evans 1899–1900, 42.

[121] Evans 1899–1900, 42. The neighboring chamber to which Evans refers is the room preceding the Throne Room, where ashes—according to Evans—belonged to a wooden throne.

[122] Evans 1899–1900, 43 n. 1; 1900–1901, 29, 31 n. 2. For a detailed discussion, see Eller 2012.

[123] Evans 1902–1903, 87, 103.

represented on European soil, and nowhere more persistent than in the West."[124] Evans further asserted the European nature of Minoan religion in 1901 by explaining the close resemblances between the Mycenaean and Semitic cult of sacred pillars as the survival of religious elements that were shared by a pre-Semitic group (cf. Sergi's Mediterranean race)[125] inhabiting the Mediterranean shores ("indigenous ethnic elements akin to those of prehistoric Greece")[126] rather than the result of influences moving from east to west:[127]

> The undoubted parallelism observable between the tree and pillar cult of the Mycenaean and that of the Semitic world . . . does not necessarily imply a direct borrowing from Semitic sources. Neither is it necessary to presuppose the existence in the Aegean world of a "proto-Semitic" element in very early times. The coincidences that we find, so far as they are not sufficiently explained by the general resemblance presented by a parallel stage of religious evolution, may be regarded as parallel survivals due to ethnic elements with European affinities which on the east Mediterranean shores largely underlay the Semitic.

Evans' initial focus on pillars and trees can further be explained as a means for him to emphasize the distinct pre-Hellenic (and thus pre-Greek) character of the Minoans, a view that contrasted with the beliefs of contemporary classical scholars who were keen to stress continuity between Neopalatial religious scenes and later Greek religion.[128] Besides pillars and trees, doves and birds also received a lot of attention. Before Evans, Reinach had already argued that the dove cult was un-Semitic,[129] an idea adapted and developed by Evans, who claimed that "birds of various kinds play an important part in this early cult of sacred trees and pillars" because "the spiritual being constantly descends on the tree or stone in the form of a bird."[130] Later, Evans goes as far as to argue that "primitive Minoan religious conceptions were known to the Semitic mind" on the basis that in the Bible the dove was used as a symbol for the Holy Spirit.[131] The later discovery of a small dove in a Neolithic stratum at Knossos gave further substance to the idea that the influence passed from west to east and that the Christian symbol of the dove has a genealogy going back to the Minoans.[132] The allusions to Christian symbols such as doves and crosses should be viewed in terms of his desire to Europeanize and familiarize the Minoans. In the preliminary report for 1903, he concludes that the marble cross from the Temple Repositories "was not only a religious symbol of Minoan cult, but an actual object of worship" and that this "cannot but have a profound interest in its relation to that later cult of the same emblem which still holds the Christian world."[133]

THE EVOLUTION OF EVANS' MINOANS AFTER 1900

It is interesting to see how the excavations at Knossos affected Evans' preconceived set of ideas discussed above. It is striking how his preexcavation ideas were mostly retained, albeit sometimes with some slight remodeling to fit the evidence emerging from Knossos and elsewhere, resulting in constructs such as the palace-sanctuary and the priest-king. Evans' discussion of foreign influences on Minoan Crete, the evidence for which became significantly greater and more complex after 1900, remained geared toward minimizing their impact and emphasizing the independent character of the Minoans. Evans' Eurocentric agenda and the orientalist prejudice that had so informed his thinking prior to 1900 became, if anything, even stronger once excavations began and again once he started composing *The Palace of Minos*. Indeed, he showed a tendency to highlight the differences between Crete and Oriental societies in even more explicit terms, to the degree that it may even be argued that two cornerstones of Evans' (and also our own) theoretical understanding of Minoan culture—the Minoan palace (or palace-sanctuary) and the priest-king—owe more to Evans' personal desire to see Minoan society as the polar opposite of Oriental societies than to any discovery made at Knossos.

Evans' Eclectic Diffusionism

In the late 19th century, cultural evolutionism was challenged across Europe by growing nationalism and a declining faith in the benefits of technological progress.[134] The belief that human behavior was biologically determined promoted growing skepticism about human creativity, and the belief that develop-

[124] Evans 1896b, 919; see also Harlan 2011.
[125] Sergi 1901; see also Brinton 1895, 97.
[126] Evans 1901, 135.
[127] Evans 1901, 131–32.
[128] E.g., Harrison 1903.
[129] Reinach 1893, 562–63.
[130] Evans 1901, 105.
[131] Evans 1921, 223.
[132] Evans 1935, 411.
[133] Evans 1902–1903, 93; see also Evans 1921, 517.
[134] Trigger 1989, 148.

ments were dispersed from a common place of origin was gaining traction.[135] Cultural change was attributed to the diffusion of ideas and/or the migration of actual groups of people.[136] It is well known and indeed not surprising that Evans explained important events such as the beginning of the Neolithic and the beginning of the Bronze Age as the result of the influx of new ideas and even population elements.[137] What is rather less widely appreciated, however, is that Evans' diffusionist ideas were in the first place informed by racial theories current at the time and shaped by his Eurocentric agenda.[138] This is manifest in the highly selective way Evans treated the evidence for off-island influences, allowing for a genuine influx of ideas and/or population elements only from regions and people that were considered to be European by contemporary racial theories. Thus, whereas influences from north Africa (Libya and Egypt) as well as western Anatolia were allowed, on certain conditions, influences from Syro-Palestine, Mesopotamia, and central Anatolia were minimized and in some cases even actively dismissed ("le mirage orientale [*sic*]").[139]

Predictably it is western Anatolia, of all regions, that features most prominently in Evans' writings, principally because of the existing perception that western Anatolia and Crete (and indeed the rest of Europe) shared ethnic and racial roots.[140] After 1900, Anatolia continued to enjoy a special status, and, following the discovery of a deep Neolithic sequence at Knossos, Evans chose to attribute the "dawn of Minoan history" to the arrival of the Neolithic inhabitants of Crete from Anatolia. Moreover, he stressed that this "Anatolo-Cretan Neolithic" was quite distinct from the Neolithic of the Greek mainland.[141]

Given the strength of his conviction regarding the antiquity of these Anatolo-Cretan links, it is striking and surprising that Evans cites evidence for these links with references to places and practices on the western shore of Anatolia that postdate the Bronze Age.[142] Thus, for example, he refers to the survival into historic times of the cult of the mother goddess (Kybele) and her youthful satellite (Attis or Adonis) and the resemblance between the Knossian Throne Room and certain Anatolian sanctuaries.[143] In contrast, the Hittite civilization, which was contemporary with Minoan civilization, hardly features at all, despite that it and its capital, Hattuša, were well known by the time Evans was composing *The Palace of Minos*.[144] Evans' attitude toward Hittite cultural influences was—to say the least—ambiguous, which perhaps explains why he did not draw any direct comparisons between Crete and Hattuša.

Contemporary racial theories held different views concerning the racial stock to which the Hittites belonged. According to Felix von Luschan, a renowned craniometrist who joined the German Society for Racial Hygiene in 1908, all western Asia was originally inhabited by a homogeneous, melanochroic race, with extreme hypsibrachycephaly and a "Hittite nose," which survived in the modern Armenoids.[145] Sergi also considered the Hittites to be the primitive inhabitants of Syria and Anatolia, but in his opinion they belonged to the dolichocephalic Mediterranean race.[146] Brinton, however, believed that the Hittites were Aryan and came to Anatolia from the west several thousand years B.C.E.[147] It seems that Evans selected elements from these different theories and used linguistic, mythological, craniometrical, and archaeological evidence to construct his own ambiguous view.

Initially, Evans seems to have accepted von Luschan's equation of the Armenoid race with the Hittites on the basis of their brachycephaly: "The evidence of early racial type supplied by such sources as the Hittite reliefs of Gods and princes points to the widespread existence in Eastern and Central Asia Minor of a [Armenoid] race still represented by the modern Armenians and pronouncedly brachycephalic."[148] He argued for a similarity between the male profile on a sealing from the Hieroglyphic Deposit at Knossos (fig. 4) and the "Armenoid" race, which he equated with the indigenous Anatolian race: "The profile before us—dating from the Second

[135] Trigger 1989, 150.
[136] Trigger 1989, 154.
[137] Evans 1921, 13; Gere 2009, 5, 12, 112.
[138] But see Momigliano 2006, 77–8.
[139] Evans 1935, 406.
[140] Evans 1894, 271; 1896b, 910–11.
[141] Evans 1928, 4.
[142] Evans 1921, 3–4.
[143] Evans 1921, 3–4, 14.
[144] Wright 1884; Sayce 1899; Winckler 1913; Garstang 1910, 1929.
[145] von Luschan 1911, 242.
[146] Sergi 1901, 146, 149.
[147] Brinton 1890, 101.
[148] Evans 1921, 6–7; see also Evans 1896b, 911. The equation of the Armenoid race with the Hittites is rejected in Sergi 1901, 149.

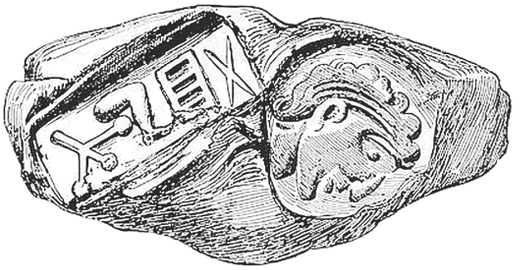

FIG. 4. Middle Minoan II sealing from the Hieroglyphic Deposit at Knossos. Heraklion, Heraklion Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 179 (Evans 1921, fig. 206).

Middle Minoan Period—certainly suggests that at any rate the earlier priest-kings themselves belonged to a ruling caste of the old Anatolian type, to which the name 'Armenoid' may be given."[149] He also described "the intrusion of a new dynastic element of 'Mediterranean' stock" in the Late Minoan profile of the fresco of the Cup Bearer from Knossos.[150]

However, at the same time he drew a distinction between the culture and population of eastern and central Anatolia on the one hand and southwest Anatolia, with which he believed Crete had an ethnic relationship, on the other: "That by the middle of the Third Millennium before our era the Cappadocian uplands had become the centre of a primitive Hittite civilization may be admitted. To judge, however, from existing data, the distinctively Hittite culture left little mark on the South-Western region of Asia Minor."[151] In addition, he emphasized that the Lycians were not Hittite.[152]

From 1928 onward, Evans started to use the term "proto-Armenoid" instead of "Armenoid" to refer to the same profile on the Middle Minoan II seal impression (see fig. 4).[153] He also used the term "proto-Armenoid" to refer to an underlying stock in Anatolia and Syria, a Syro-Anatolian ethnic group "of which we have traced a Western extension in an important ingredient of the early Cretan population."[154] This group, Evans argued, shares with Crete the dove cult and the cult of the mother goddess and divine child, which are unaffected by Semitic and other exotic influences in these regions.[155] At the same time he connected these shared religious elements with Christendom to stress their European character.[156] Evans did not refer to Hittite religion as we know it from Bronze Age Anatolia, and he does not seem to have believed that the Hittites belonged to the proto-Armenoid stock. A possible explanation for the switch from "Armenoid" to "proto-Armenoid" could be that, in the course of the 1920s, it became generally accepted that Hittite was a branch of the Indo-European languages rather than a protolanguage (Indo-Hittite) from which two branches (Anatolian and Indo-European) developed. This, in Evans' mind-set, would have made the Hittites Aryan and set them apart from the indigenous Anatolian race in southwestern Anatolia and on Crete.[157] As noted above, Evans had no truck with Aryan theory and rejected Aryan and Indo-European theories for the origin of European modernity.

Despite the numerous references to Anatolian, and more specifically southwestern Anatolian, connections of the old underlying population in Crete, Evans attributed the "quickening spirit" of the Early Minoan period to "offshoots of a pre-dynastic Egyptian population" that "may have found their way hither from the Delta" at the beginning of the Bronze Age,[158] though he em-

[149] Evans 1921, 9. He also likened the same brachycephalic head and aquiline nose to the "old Anatolian strain in Crete" (Evans 1921, 272).

[150] Evans 1921, 8–9. Here he mixes elements from von Luschan's racial theory with Sergi's, despite that the two scholars held different views.

[151] Evans 1921, 14.

[152] Evans 1921, 9: "An ethnic relationship, moreover, is implied in the tradition that Minos was brother of Sarpedon, who stands for the Lykian race, which at any rate was not Hittite." Evans may have used the term "Hittite" as a chronological rather than an ethnic indicator, much like the terms "Minoan" and "Mycenaean." "Hittite" could then refer to the Anatolian Late Bronze Age, when the Hittite empire was founded.

[153] Evans 1928, 5, 268, 779; 1930, 230–31; 1935, 406–7, 986.

[154] Evans 1935, 406.

[155] Evans 1930, 476: "If we may believe that the underlying stock throughout this more easterly region [Anatolia and Syria]—the proto-Armenoid as here defined in those parts much overlaid by Semitic and other exotic elements—was essentially the same as that of pre-historic Crete, it seems possible that the insular type of the cult . . . may have answered more nearly to its original character."

[156] "The parallelism already noted between the old Cretan and Anatolian cults did not cease at the Syrian or even Palestinian borders, and certain elements may well have been the common property of a very early ethnic element that once occupied the whole of this East Mediterranean angle" (Evans 1928, 278; see also Evans 1928, 277; 1930, 143).

[157] Knudtzon 1902; von Luschan 1911, 242. By 1915, Hrozný established that the Hittite language was Indo-European (see Hrozný 1915, 1917), but this was only generally accepted in the 1920s.

[158] Evans 1921, 13.

phasized at the same time that "the native stock was strong enough to assimilate them."[159] Evans and others believed that this predynastic group had existed in Egypt long before the Egyptians of the Pharaonic period and that it had arrived in conquest from the southeast and was affiliated with the Libyans.

Thus, Evans' diffusionism is both eclectic and selective, only allowing influences from an Egypto-Libyan group that he saw as racially similar (i.e., European) to the Cretans.[160] In the same vein, Evans posited the existence of a pre-Semitic group in the Levant that belonged to the same Mediterranean race as the Minoans.[161] This idea goes back to Brinton, who claimed that the European group in Anatolia "extended its conquests southward where they formed the pre-Semitic inhabitants of the whole of Syria."[162]

Sergi's theory that a Mediterranean race inhabited the coastal zones around the Mediterranean was extremely useful for Evans' Eurocentric agenda, as it allowed him to acknowledge the (undeniable) external influences on Crete from the regions to the south and east of the Mediterranean without having to dilute the essential Europeanness of his Minoans. In addition, the theory of a Mediterranean race usefully countered the idea that Europe was indebted to the ancient Near East. Finally, as noted above, it allowed a place for the brown-skinned Minoans, as depicted on the frescoes from Knossos (and the Theban tombs) within the white race. For instance, Evans describes the Cup Bearer from Knossos as a representative of the Mediterranean race, with dark eyes, a ruddy brown complexion, black wavy hair, and a short, compact frame.[163]

Besides ascribing the most significant external influences on the Minoans to regions populated by groups with a supposedly similar racial (i.e., European) makeup, Evans also made consistent appeal to the great assimilative powers of the Minoans to mediate and minimize foreign influences on Crete in the Middle and Late Bronze Age. He stressed that "Crete did not find itself in the position in which Palestine and Phoenicia, having only land frontiers, stood towards the great border Powers of the Nile and the Euphrates."[164] He also argued that Crete's "enterprising inhabitants continually absorbed and assimilated Egyptian forms and ideas, developing them on independent lines. They took what they wanted, nothing more, and were neither artistically nor politically enslaved."[165]

Evans admitted to influences from the Near Eastern world (Babylonia, Syria, and Cappadocia) from the Middle Minoan period but cautioned that there is little evidence of direct relations with the easternmost Mediterranean before the end of the Middle Minoan period.[166] The establishment of a direct commercial network early in Late Minoan I was, he held, responsible for the introduction on Crete of Near Eastern influences such as clay tablets, ceremonial axes, and flounced costumes.[167] However, Evans was quick to argue that "the waves of higher civilizing influences that ultimately reached Crete through Syria and Cyprus from a more distant Mesopotamian source only affected Minoan culture at a time when it had already reached a comparatively advanced stage," thus making clear that Eastern models did not affect the formation of Minoan society.[168] This is another way of downplaying Oriental influences and emphasizing the European origins of Minoan culture.

To conclude, Evans exhibited a clear and consistent tendency to downplay influences from Mesopotamia and, to a lesser degree, from Egypt, while admitting the possibility of some Hittite influences because of the Anatolian connections of the indigenous Cretan stock. Although this tendency was already present before 1900, it became more pronounced in the volumes of *The Palace of Minos*. This narrative of a creative and essentially European and largely independent civilization on Crete was widely accepted by contemporary and later generations of archaeologists.[169]

Orientalism

Considering that Evans sought to propose Minoan Crete as a rival to the civilizations of the ancient Near East,[170] the absence of references in his scholarship to Mesopotamian palaces and temples is, on first consideration, surprising, especially given the numerous publications of Mesopotamian palaces, temples, and city-states that appeared during the late 19th and early

[159] Evans 1921, 13.
[160] Gillette 2002, 25–6; Evans 1896b, 906; 1925, 225–26.
[161] Evans 1901, 112.
[162] Brinton 1895, 97.
[163] Evans 1921, 8.
[164] Evans 1921, 19.
[165] Evans 1921, 19.
[166] Evans 1921, 15.
[167] Evans 1935, 398.
[168] Evans 1921, 16.
[169] Sherratt 2006.
[170] Evans 1896b.

20th centuries.[171] This absence makes sense only when viewed in the context of Evans' Eurocentric agenda. Evans' declaration that "Crete stands forth again today as the champion of the European spirit against the yoke of Asia" reveals much about his views on the Middle East of his day.[172]

Early interest of the West in the archaeology of the Near East was ambiguous.[173] Some thinkers searched for the origins of Western cultural, social, and religious beliefs. Others, meanwhile, sought to highlight contrasts between East and West; these upheld the convention, now known as orientalism,[174] that the ancient Eastern states were monolithic despotisms in opposition to the democratic, individualistic, and entrepreneurial spirit of Europe.[175] Orientalist attitudes were pervasive in shaping archaeological traditions and interpreting finds.[176]

Although the ideas of the Mesopotamian temple-state and theocratic rule in the third millennium were first explicitly published by Anna Schneider and Anton Deimel, they had been around for years.[177] There was a long tradition of viewing the ancient Near East as "decadent, despotic, monolithic and stagnant,"[178] thus as the opposite of progressive, democratic, and egalitarian European society. This tradition of Mesopotamian despotism can be traced back to the Bible, classical literature, and Western political treatises of the 18th and 19th centuries.[179] Montesquieu contrasted despotic rulership in the East with the relative liberty of Europe, and this line of thought is also found in Karl Marx's Asiatic mode of production,[180] which refers to a form of state that was ruled by tribute-controlling despots and characterized by the absence of private property. In the 19th century it was widely believed that Mesopotamian kingdoms were despotic, and despotism was considered to be a primitive and imperfect form of government. George Rawlinson, referring to the Bronze and Iron Age Asiatic kingdoms, stated the widely accepted view at the time:[181]

> The form of government is in every case a monarchy; the monarchy is always hereditary; and the hereditary monarch is a despot. . . . Despotism is the simplest, coarsest, and rudest of all the forms of civil government. It was thus, the first which men, pressed by a sudden need, extemporized. And in Asia the wish has never arisen to improve upon this primitive and imperfect essay.

This tradition proved very persistent and was given additional credence by Karl Wittfogel's hydraulic hypothesis, which argued that the labor and complex bureaucracy required for large-scale irrigation works formed the basis of despotic rule. This hypothesis was successfully challenged by Ignace Gelb in 1971 and Igor Diakonoff in 1982, who were able to demonstrate that not all land was owned by the temple but that some was owned privately and lay outside temple control and temple jurisdiction.[182] The despotic theory is currently also being questioned from the perspective of the assumed "monopoly on law," and emphasis has moved toward tensions between and among local groups and the central authority.[183]

Although Evans nowhere explicitly discussed his views on Oriental society, something of them can be inferred from the ways in which he tried to distance Crete from the "Orient," specifically the contrasts he sought between Minoan (ancient European) society and Oriental society.[184] This manifests itself most clearly in Evans' development of concepts such as the Minoan palace-sanctuary,[185] the priest-king, and the cult of the mother goddess and divine son. I argue that Evans developed these concepts consciously and specifically in opposition to Oriental despotism and religion.

Harems, Temple Prostitutes, and Tyrants' Whims

In the references Evans made to Mesopotamia, there is a clear orientalist undertone that is far from unusual for the time.[186] Thus, his characterization of Minoan

[171] E.g., Rawlinson 1871, 36; Smith 1876, 13; 1884, 63–89; Sayce 1899.

[172] Evans 1896b, 919; MacGillivray 2001, 153.

[173] Larsen 1989, 233.

[174] Said 1978, 19–24.

[175] Lenormant 1881; Smith 1884; Sayce 1899.

[176] Larsen 1989, 236.

[177] Schneider 1920; Deimel 1931; Foster 1981, 228; Robertson 1995, 450.

[178] Larsen 1989, 233.

[179] Adam Smith (1776) described despotism, linked to agriculture rather than commerce, as a type of society at a low level of evolutionary development, and largely in a stationary state; see also Seri 2005, 192–93.

[180] Sherratt 1989, 164.

[181] Rawlinson 1871, 36.

[182] Wittfogel 1957; Gelb 1971; Diakonoff 1982.

[183] Yoffee (2005, 100–12) refutes Oriental despotism and argues against the "monopoly on law" usually ascribed to the earliest states. Instead he emphasizes the constant tensions between and among local groups and the central authority; see also Seri 2005, 192–93.

[184] Morris 2010.

[185] Schoep 2010a.

[186] Sherratt 1989, 177.

women is largely, if not entirely, constructed in opposition to orientalist stereotypes.[187] For example, Evans noted that "the participation of women in the bull-grappling scenes can by no means be regarded as a symptom of bondage or of a perverse tyrant's whim."[188] He denied vehemently that the women depicted on frescoes from Knossos and Mycenae were temple prostitutes and argued that "the plump dames of the Mycenae fragment and the even ampler proportions of the luxuriously somnolent figures on the well-known ivory handle, from the same site, might at least be taken to illustrate the results of pampered seclusion such as that habitual with the better class of women in certain Southern countries." Evans was very clear that they "can certainly not be regarded as the products of such a sedentary existence [temple prostitutes]. Still less can they be conceived of as a sacral guild apart, such as those dedicated to the obscenities of the Syrian cult."[189] Elsewhere, he argued that there "are many reasons for believing that harem life in the Oriental sense was unknown to the Minoans" and that Minoan women were free to mingle with men. On the basis of these fresco fragments, Evans concluded that there was partial and regulated segregation of the two sexes,[190] that women enjoyed a degree of social superiority, and that there was no evidence for the seclusion of women in harems:[191]

> The women, as we have seen, take the front seats in these shows and the non-admission of male spectators among them may well, as suggested, be a sign of female predominance characteristic of the matriarchal stage. But it was perhaps this very feeling of social superiority that enabled them in the case of the crowd below to mix freely with the other sex. Both are there deliberately grouped together, in a conversational relation.

Such conclusions conveniently led Evans to the view that Minoan Crete was at least partly a matriarchal society. This was convenient because, during the 19th century, it was commonplace to view patriarchy as a characteristic of Indo-European and Semitic peoples.[192] By emphasizing the superior position of Minoan women, Evans was able to distinguish Minoan society not only from Oriental society (i.e., women were not temple prostitutes or members of a harem) but also from Indo-European society. By arguing for a "matriarchal stage" in Minoan society, he emphasized not only its pre-Hellenic (i.e., pre-Indo-European and prepatriarchal) nature but also its status as the earliest European civilization. Thus, the Minoans became the prototype of a matriarchal society. Although Evans nowhere explicitly referred to the work of Johann Jakob Bachofen,[193] who had interpreted the myth of Theseus as an account of the triumph of Greek patriarchy over Minoan culture,[194] Bachofen's influence can nevertheless be detected.[195]

However, Evans' borrowing can again be seen as eclectic, because he only envisaged a matriarchal organization in the domain of religion, thus creating an inconsistent, even paradoxical social model: "It is certain that, however much the male element had asserted itself in the domain of government by the great days of Minoan Civilization, the stamp of Religion still continued to reflect the older matriarchal stage of social development."[196] In this way he sought to combine all the advantages (for his wider agenda) of a matriarchal society with a male priest-king; in the latter case Evans relied on the argument that the seat of the throne in the Throne Room "seems better adapted for a man."[197]

Evans' identification, after the discovery of the faience figurines of the snake goddess in 1903, of a monotheistic religion centered on the Minoan mother goddess is also closely connected to the construction of a partly matriarchal society.[198] A monotheistic Minoan religion set Crete radically apart from contemporary civilizations in Egypt and the Near East and at the same time made it more familiar to the Christian West.[199]

Evans' Eurocentric agenda also played a role in his creation of the Cretan divine son/child.[200] Although

[187] Morris 2010, 83–5.
[188] Evans 1930, 232.
[189] Evans 1930, 61.
[190] Evans 1930, 296.
[191] Evans 1930, 58.
[192] Davies 2010, 55.
[193] Morris 2006, 71.
[194] Davies 2010, 97.
[195] Evans 1921, 45–52; 1930, 457.
[196] Evans 1930, 457; see also Gere 2009, 76–85.
[197] Evans 1899–1900, 38.
[198] Typically, Evans made sure to dismiss the possibility of Egyptian influence on the snake goddess: "Taken as a whole neither the Snake Goddess nor her votaries present any special Egyptian characteristics. As a matter of fact they are clad in the last fashions of the Knossian court" (Evans 1902–1903, 85–6). For a full discussion of Evans' creation of the mother goddess, see Eller 2012.
[199] Lapatin 2002; Morris 2006, 74–5; 2010, 86–7.
[200] Evans 1930, 467–68.

partly inspired by James George Frazer's agricultural year god, Evans created a new status for the divine child. Unlike Frazer's male god, who is at the same time son and consort to the great goddess, "the Minoan relationship is rather that of Mother and Child than of mistress and youthful paramour."[201] It is hard not to see the figure of the Virgin Mary underlying the concept of Mother and Child, as Morris has pointed out.[202] This reflects not only the way in which motherhood and sexuality were separated in Western society in the 19th and early 20th centuries but also the way in which the East was cast as effeminate and sexually unrestrained.[203] By attributing to the Minoan mother goddess a combination of motherhood and virginity, Evans clearly set her apart from the Egyptian and Near Eastern goddesses, whom he characterized as sensual, erotic, and Oriental. His final view of Minoan religion, centered on the mother goddess and her divine son, made the Minoans seem more modern and more European than their Near Eastern polytheistic neighbors.[204] The same was achieved by emphasizing the resemblances between Minoan religion and early Christianity (doves, mourning rites, mother and child relationship, pietà, etc.).[205]

The Minoan Palace-Sanctuary

Like Minoan society and religion, the palace-sanctuary can be shown to be a construct inspired primarily by Evans' broader Eurocentric agenda and partly by archaeological discoveries. Evans' use of the term "palace" as early as 1900 implies a conviction that Minoan society was ruled by a monarch—indeed, that this was a self-evident truth. At no point did Evans provide a justification or explanation for this. However, justification may perhaps be found in the widespread belief, at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, that "the rise of monarchy appears to be an essential condition of the emergence of mankind from savagery" and that kingship implies "a career of aggrandisement, which at an early stage of history is often favorable to social, industrial, and intellectual progress, which reveals itself in the growth of art and science and the spread of more liberal views."[206] In other words, wherever there was civilization there must have been monarchy, and wherever there was monarchy there must be palaces. Monarchy was thus the default model for understanding prehistoric social complexity in Evans' day.

In 1903, after the discovery of ritual paraphernalia in the stone cists that Evans called the Temple Repositories, he could not but acknowledge that, besides a royal function, his palace also had a "sacerdotal" function.[207] From this moment onward, Evans' palace became a dual-function hybrid for which he coined the term "palace-sanctuary."[208] Evans' concept of a single monumental building that was simultaneously the residence of a ruler and the main sanctuary of a society, while a straightforward solution to the dilemma posed by the Temple Repositories, nevertheless took him into uncharted territory. When looking around for parallels, Evans was typically keen to dismiss Egypt because there "the royal and the priestly authority were kept somewhat apart, and the Temple overshadowed the Palace."[209] Equally typically Evans sought (anachronistic) analogies with "[western] Anatolian centres," such as Pessinus and Antioch, claiming that there, too, "the royal and the sacerdotal abode was one and the same, and the Palace was also a Sanctuary."[210] The absence of any mention of contemporary Hittite society is once again notable, not least because from the capital of the Hittite empire, Hattuša, Hugo Winckler had reported a palace as early as 1906.[211] Such an omission probably rested on the belief that the central and eastern part of Anatolia was inhabited by a different race than the southwestern part of Anatolia and thus, for Evans at least, was irrelevant to any discussion of the Minoans.

Evans' hybrid palace-sanctuary was accepted without question both by his contemporaries and by subsequent generations of archaeologists.[212] It remains widely accepted that the Minoan palaces were the

[201] Frazer 1906–1915; Evans 1930, 475.
[202] Morris 2006, 74; Gere 2009, 124.
[203] Morris 2006, 75.
[204] Evans 1921, 51; Morris 2006, 70.
[205] Evans 1928, 277–78; 1930, 143.
[206] Frazer 1904–1905, 84–6.
[207] Evans 1902–1903, 38, 67. For first use of the term "Temple Repositories," see Evans 1902–1903, 1.
[208] Evans 1921, 4, 359, 517; 1935, xxvii, 49.
[209] Evans 1921, 3–4.
[210] Evans 1921, 3–4.
[211] Winckler 1913; Garstang 1929, 88. Only later, when the royal abode was discovered on the Büyükkale Acropolis at Hattuša, was Winckler's palace in the Lower City reinterpreted as the Great Temple (Neve 1995).
[212] E.g., Hall 1901, 1915; Burrows 1907; Myres 1911, 1933; Dussaud 1914; Childe 1925; Charbonneaux 1929; Hutchinson 1962; Higgins 1967; Hood 1978.

seat of a political, religious, and economic authority and that the political and the religious functions were housed under one roof.[213] In short, the validity of Evans' palace-sanctuary model was and still is considered by most to be beyond question.

In reality, however, the model of the Minoan palace-sanctuary lacks an empirical and epistemological basis.[214] It is an institution without parallel in the context of the wider eastern Mediterranean in the third and second millennia B.C.E. While specific circumstances in different contexts may be expected to vary, there is nevertheless a general trend in Bronze Age urban societies of the eastern Mediterranean for the main political and religious venues of power, usually referred to as the palace and the temple, to be housed in separate structures in different locations. Even in theocratic societies, such as those of Egypt and the Hittites, a spatial separation existed between palace and temple, between the main secular and sacred venues of power.[215] Despite the prominent role played by the Egyptian pharaohs and the Hittite kings in the religious ceremonies that took place in the temples, the palaces were places of stately representation, where the power of kingship was demonstrated and where matters of state and religion were decided.

The inconsistencies associated with combining "the royal and priestly authority under one roof" on Crete do not seem to have concerned Evans.[216] In fact, the palace-sanctuary hybrid furthered his Eurocentric agenda by distancing Minoan society from the contemporary societies of Egypt, where the "Temple overshadowed the Palace,"[217] and of Mesopotamia, where the temple was at that time considered to be the seat of a despotic or theocratic rule.[218] While more open to connections with western Anatolia because of racial theories, Evans still made sure to emphasize difference: "in Crete the kingly aspect was more to the fore than in the religious centers of Asia Minor."[219] Strangely enough, as noted above, he cited as evidence sites of the historical period rather than Bronze Age centers. It is clear that in Evans' view the kingly aspect was more important than the priestly aspect (resulting in a palace-sanctuary rather than a sanctuary-palace). Evans' description of the palace-sanctuary as "a peaceful abode of priest-kings, in some ways more modern than anything produced by classical Greece" should again be seen in the context of Evans' Eurocentric agenda.[220] Moreover, the anomalous character of his hybrid creation in the contemporary eastern Mediterranean presented him with a perfect opportunity to present his Minoans as distinct from their Oriental counterparts and thus to reinforce their European nature.

The Minoan Priest-King

Closely associated with the Minoan palace-sanctuary is the priest-king, another eclectic hybrid essentially constructed by Evans.[221] Although Evans assumed the existence of a king following his discovery of the Throne Room,[222] there is no mention of either King Minos or the priest-king in his first two excavation reports. The famous fresco fragments in bas-relief of a male head wearing a lily crown and a male torso with a lily crown were, on discovery in 1901, attributed to two different male figures. Only the former was generally identified as a "king."[223] Like the palace-sanctuary, the priest-king made his entry only after Evans discovered the Temple Repositories in 1903 and subsequently interpreted the central part of the West Wing as "an extensive sanctuary and its dépendances," concluding that "there were here, as in early Anatolia, Priest-Kings."[224] In support of this statement, he cites an old tradition that made Minos the son of Zeus and that saw Minos as the incarnation of Zeus.

The relief fresco fragments of the lily and the male figure discovered in 1901 thus became associated with the priest-king in 1903, and earlier reservations about the lily being more usually associated with female figures were conveniently forgotten.[225] Fresh fragments of the same fresco found in 1904 permitted the restoration of "*what was not improbably* one of the Priest-kings

[213] Warren 1985; Cherry 1986; Cadogan 1991; Watrous 2001; Macdonald 2005; Knappett 2008; Manning 2008.

[214] See Schoep (2010a) for a discussion.

[215] Schoep 2010a.

[216] Evans 1921, 3.

[217] Evans 1921, 3; see also Evans 1935, 960.

[218] Larsen 1989, 233. The view of a temple-state is no longer accepted, and the palace is now considered to be the expression of a secular authority separate from the temple; see also Postgate 1992, 109.

[219] Evans 1921, 3–4.

[220] Evans 1921, 1.

[221] Bennett 1961–1962; Sherratt 2005, 237.

[222] Evans 1899–1900, 6.

[223] Evans 1900–1901, 15–16.

[224] Evans 1902–1903, 38.

[225] E.g., Evans 1900–1901, 15.

of Knossos."[226] The importance of the priest-king to Evans' project is perhaps best illustrated by his choice of the lily crown to adorn the cover of *The Palace of Minos*.[227] The reconstructed priest-king fresco by Emile Gilliéron *fils*, perhaps the most iconic of all Minoan images, was produced in 1928, and a couple of recently published sketches by Evans demonstrate the degree to which Evans was involved in its creation.[228]

The Minoan priest-king is partly based on Frazer's sacred kingship, but Evans tailored the concept to fit his own Eurocentric agenda by treating it as a further evolved stage than Frazer's priest-king, one that should be seen as a predecessor of later, western European absolute monarchies.[229] Evans pursued this analogy between his Minoan priest-kings and later European monarchy on several occasions, not only in reference to the lily crown but also through the idea that Minoan royalty sponsored the production of pottery:[230]

> The Minoan Priest-Kings thus anticipated an usage followed by many modern European rulers of establishing fabrics of faïence, porcelain, or majolica, in direct connexion with their palaces and castles. The faïence manufactory in the Palace of Knossos is in this respect the remote predecessor of that of Vincennes and Sèvres, of Medicean Florence, of Urbino or Capodimonte, of Meissen, and of many other royal or princely fabrics of a similar kind.

In this way Evans fashioned a very specific type of kingship for Crete, one with its own regalia and insignia, such as the lily crown and the loincloth,[231] its own type of religion (i.e., the monotheistic mother goddess), its own type of institution (palace-sanctuary), and royal workshops that were the equal of any historic or modern European monarch. His was a creation that owed very little to actual archaeological data, which remain at best equivocal on the subject.[232] Rather, it was shaped by Evans' desire to promote Crete as the cradle of European civilization, ruled by the earliest predecessors of what he saw as a distinctly European (and thus non-Oriental) form of monarchy.

MINOAN ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

There is no doubt that Evans' legacy has been very influential and has directed Minoan archaeology for most of the 20th century, but it may be more surprising that even today it exerts considerable influence. As noted by Cappel et al., "Evans' ideas have served and still serve as point of departure for many debates on major and minor issues in our discipline. Be that as it may, there can be no doubt that we have to free ourselves from the heavy burden of his legacy; yet this is not an easy task."[233]

Evans' tripartite Minoan chronology, which was based on the stratigraphy at Knossos, provided the backbone for the chronology of the entire island and even the wider Aegean. It is still used today and has been refined and adjusted by scholars working at Knossos but also elsewhere on the island.[234] Evans' main outline of the architectural history of the palace at Knossos is also still accepted, although here as well refinements and additions have been made.[235] Such an addition is the existence of an Early Minoan building with a large court under the later Central Court; the Early Minoan structures follow the same orientation and plan as the later structures. Such refinements and adjustments of Evans' legacy are to be expected after more than a century, and they are generally welcomed and widely accepted.

The past three decades of Minoan research have been characterized by an increasing interest in defining the cultural and intellectual currents that influenced Evans.[236] From these studies it emerges clearly that not

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[226] Evans 1903–1904, 2 (emphasis added).

[227] Evans 1921.

[228] Sherratt 2000, 2005. The mythical King Minos made his appearance only in Evans' (1904–1905, 26) preliminary report from Knossos. Evans transformed him into a historical personage in 1921, when he argued that the bad reputation of Minos as a tyrant and a destroyer could be explained by Athenian chauvinism, which exaggerated the tyrannical side of Minos and which converted "the Palace of a long series of great rulers into an ogre's den" (Evans 1921, 1).

[229] Farnoux 1995, 328. To the same purpose Evans stressed on several occasions the modern and civilized character of the Minoans and their technical accomplishments: "the multiplicity of technical processes already mastered, the surprising advance in hydraulic and sanitary engineering—leaving Egypt far behind—bear witness to a considerable measure of attainment in the domain of science" (Evans 1921, 2).

[230] Quotation from Evans 1902–1903, 67; see also Evans 1921, 490.

[231] Farnoux 1995, 329.

[232] Davis 1995, 19.

[233] Cappel et al. 2015, v.

[234] For an update of Minoan chronology, see contributions in Momigliano 2007.

[235] E.g., Macdonald and Knappett 2007; Macdonald 2012; Tomkins 2012.

[236] McNeal 1974; Bintliff 1984; Sherratt 1989; Farnoux 1995; MacGillivray 2001; Hamilakis 2002a; McEnroe 2002; Papado-

only the cultural and intellectual currents of the times in which he lived but also his personal experiences and Eurocentric agenda colored his perception of the Minoans. Although this research has generally made scholars more aware of the subjective nature of some of Evans' interpretations, there still is reluctance to relinquish others of them, especially the interpretation of the building at Knossos as the palace and the existence of a king with political, religious, and economic authority.[237] This interpretation still informs reconstructions of Minoan political geography, whether one advocates a unified Knossian state or multiple peer polities.[238] Although we have now in theory moved beyond a grand narrative of the origins of European modernity, in practice Evans' rhetoric lives on and Minoan society remains firmly rooted in European modernity, with its familiar palaces, villas, and kings.[239]

Despite the lack of a ruler's iconography,[240] the idea of a king who holds political, religious, and economic power and resides in the palace is still widely accepted, although the term "priest-king" has become less popular.[241] It is possible that the institution of kingship existed on Crete, considering the general phenomenon of this institution in Bronze Age Egypt, the Near East, and Anatolia.[242] However, even if there was a king who had religious power, it is unlikely that the palace represented the political and the religious domain, as Evans would have it. Evans' hybrid palace-sanctuary, which houses the political and the religious under a single roof, is anomalous in the wider context of the eastern Mediterranean, and, even in theocratic societies, such as Egypt and the Hittite empire, a spatial separation existed between the main secular (palace) and sacred (temple) venues of power.[243]

Over the last decade and a half, the idea that the palace was the residence not of a king but of a communal ceremonial building has been gaining wider acceptance.[244] Such an interpretation is based on the importance of several large courts, the overwhelming evidence for ritual practices, and the long biography of the structures, which in the case of Knossos stretches over more than 1,000 years. In the Near East, rulers generally constructed new residences for themselves in different locations, but the emplacement of the temple usually remained central, sacrosanct, and immutable.[245] This would suggest that a ritual rather than a palatial interpretation is more likely for the Minoan palaces. The proponents of the interpretation of the palace as a ceremonial center seem to favor a model in which political power was flexible rather than institutionalized and in which competition existed between factions. Palaces as well as structures with palatial characteristics (villas, mini-palaces) are seen as the bases of factions of different sizes and influence. This model does not exclude the existence of a leader, but the emphasis is on flexible power and competition.

Most more recent studies of Minoan religion have focused not on the religious system as such but on the identification of cult symbols (double axes, figurines), cult places (caves, peak sanctuaries, urban sanctuaries), and cult practices. Evans' idea that Minoan religion revolved around a Great Goddess and a young male god is today accepted by many scholars.[246] However, a growing number of scholars deem a pantheon of male and female deities, like those in contemporary eastern Mediterranean societies, more likely.[247] The interpretation of Neopalatial iconographic sources (metal rings, seals, frescoes, relief vases, figurines) is not without problems, since it is not always clear whether the figures depicted are votaries or deities. However, there is convincing evidence in the slightly later Linear B

poulos 2005; Fotiadis 2006; Momigliano 2006; Gere 2009; Karadimas 2015.

[237] Renfrew 1972; Warren 1985, 2000; Cherry 1986; Hood 1995; Watrous 2001; Macdonald 2005; Panagiotopoulos 2006; Macdonald and Knappett 2007; Boulotis 2008; Knappett 2008; Manning 2008; Rethemniotakis 2008a; Poursat 2012; Broodbank 2013; Soles 2016. The enduring influence of Evans is well illustrated by the scholars who came to Evans' defense after the publication of MacGillivray 2001 (e.g., Palaima 2000, 18 August; see also the general undertone in Warren 2000; Marinatos 2015).

[238] E.g., Cherry 1986; Schoep 1999; Bevan 2010.

[239] Hamilakis (2002a, 18–19) pleads for a defamiliarization of Minoan archaeology.

[240] Davis 1995, 19.

[241] Betancourt 2002, 207, 211; Pelon 2002, 111; Shaw 2004, 65–6; Boulotis 2008, 47; Poursat 2012, 182; Soles 2016, 251.

[242] Boulotis 2008, 47.

[243] Schoep 2010b, 236.

[244] Day and Relaki 2002, 219–20; Driessen 2002, 13; Hamilakis 2002b, 198; Schoep 2002, 123–24; Barrett and Damilati 2004, 167; MacGillivray 2004, 337; Soar 2014, 12.

[245] Postgate 1992, 137.

[246] See, e.g., Willetts 1962, 54, 119; Immerwahr 1990, 46; Marinatos 1993, 165–66; 2016, 3; Driessen 2001, 364, 368; Rethemniotakis 2008b, 81; Vlachopoulos 2008, 453.

[247] Dickinson 1994, 173; Schoep 2010a, 136–38; Blakolmer 2014, 124; Gulizio and Nakassis 2014, 124.

tablets from Knossos of an older Minoan pantheon of male and female gods (e.g., *pi-pi-tu-na, qe-ra-si-ja, pa-de*).[248] Unfortunately, it is at present not possible to relate the archaeological evidence of cult places and practices to the textual mentions of Minoan deities.

To overcome Evans' lasting influence, we must completely revise his imaginative synthesis of Minoan culture, not just partially amend it, and we must replace it with something better.[249] This implies not only proposing alternative models but also thinking through their implications. To give one example, if the palace was a ceremonial center rather than the residence of a king, where does that leave the Minoan state? Does the concept of state still apply, and, if so, how was it structured and organized? Where did the leader or ruling faction reside, and how was power structured? Were the palatial sites mainly ceremonial or political centers, or did they combine both functions?

One way of improving our current understanding of Minoan society is to expand exploration of the spatial organization of political, religious, and social structures in palatial and nonpalatial settlements.[250] Minoan palatial sites remain poorly understood because excavations have focused in the first place on their planned ceremonial core (e.g., Knossos, Malia, Phaistos, Archanes) rather than on the residential areas. A comparative approach with Anatolian and west Asian urban centers, addressing specifically the question of how political, religious, and social power was organized spatially, could provide an interesting framework for reference and clarify the position of Crete within its eastern Mediterranean context. New approaches to spatial aspects of urban centers have been applied in other parts of the world, such as Mesoamerica. There, a shift in focus from the ceremonial cores of urban sites to their residential neighborhoods has allowed for an in-depth exploration of daily life, social identity, and the role of commoners in society.[251] On Crete, the relationship between the centrally planned ceremonial core of settlements (e.g., Knossos, Malia, Phaistos, Archanes) and residential neighborhoods urgently needs to be explored. Only when this is done can the relationship of urban and palatial sites with other settlements and the issue of territorial organization be fully addressed.

CONCLUSION

This article has explored how the core elements of the Minoan civilization were constructed by Evans in the last decade of the 19th century, before the start of his excavations at Knossos. Evans had already cast Crete as the cradle of European civilization and as a rival to the civilizations of Egypt and the ancient Near East. He also had clear ideas about the race and ethnicity of the Minoans, art, writing, the function of the building at Knossos, and religion. Evans' interpretations were steered by his Eurocentric agenda, an agenda that became still more pronounced after the start of his excavations on Crete to the point of being orientalist. In fact, some of Evans' ideas regarding his European Minoans were created in opposition to prejudices about Oriental societies. I have argued that understanding his Eurocentric and orientalist agenda, the logic of which is not always apparent to the casual, modern reader, is crucial to help us understand why Evans excluded some interpretations and favored others.

Evans' diffusionism was highly selective and eclectic, allowing for influences only from regions that were of "European" ancestry according to the racial theories of his time. Thus, for example, influences from North Africa (the Egypto-Libyan connection) are accepted because of the theory that the original inhabitants of this region constituted a predynastic population of (white-skinned) European stock. Similarly, influences from southwest Anatolia were allowed, because this part of Anatolia was considered to be inhabited by people who were racially European. However, influences from other regions, such as central and eastern Anatolia, the Levant, and Mesopotamia, were always minimized and even dismissed. In cases where the Eastern influences were undeniable, Evans chose always to emphasize that they were adopted but also transformed by the Minoans, crediting the latter with extraordinary creative powers. Evans clearly sought to portray Minoan society as an essentially European society by alienating it from contemporaneous societies in the eastern Mediterranean.

Evans' conceptualization of the Minoans has overall been powerful and enduring, and we are still coming to terms with his legacy. His Eurocentric vision remains an appealing and seductive one, one that still speaks to present-day political ideals and discourses within and beyond Greece. However, as this article has attempted to show, this vision is fundamentally an artificial creation, driven by a specific agenda for the societies of the Cretan Bronze Age, forged mainly in the decade before 1900, and grounded in ideas and theories

[248] Gulizio and Nakassis 2014, 120–22.

[249] Cappel et al. 2015, v.

[250] As in, e.g., Adams 2004; Buell 2014. See also contributions in Letesson and Knappett 2017.

[251] E.g., Smith 2010.

(about race, social complexity, and social evolution) that we would now see as outmoded, overly simplistic, ill-informed, or simply wrong. Thinking counterfactually, one wonders what might have happened and how the development of Minoan archaeology might have been different had someone else excavated Knossos. One can, of course, only speculate, but it seems quite likely that our inherited conceptualization of Minoan society would have been different. We might, perhaps, have spent the last century talking about the Temple of Knossos, a polytheistic Minoan religion, and a society with eastern Mediterranean, rather than distinctively or prophetically European, characteristics.

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