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Archaeology and Masculinity in Late Bronze Age Knossos

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Archaeology
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December 1997

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF ARTS

ARCHAEOLOGY

Doctor of Philosophy

ARCHAEOLOGY AND MASCULINITY IN LATE BRONZE AGE KNOSSOS

by Benjamin Matthew Mayer Alberti

This thesis critically examines the applicability of the concept of masculinity as a descriptive or analytical category in archaeological analyses. Central to this project is the recognition that the concept of gender employed by the majority of archaeologists has limited practical application. Such a concept of gender relies upon a radical separation between sex and gender, where gender is understood to be the cultural elaboration of a natural body. Following recent feminist theorising on the body, it is argued that the categories of sex and the body are equally culturally constructed. Consequently, gender is reformulated to encompass the means by which particular ideas of the body and sex are made to appear 'natural'. Masculinity is complicit with the formulation of a binary model to sex based on the normative categories male/female. The status of the body as produced through discourse is highlighted by men's experiences of their bodies which differ from the ideals perpetuated through theory and representation. Furthermore, cross-cultural evidence indicates that bodies can be conceptualised and valorised on the basis of criteria other than the genitalia visible at birth.

The analysis of figurative imagery from Late Bronze Age Knossos reveals a representational ideal of bodies largely undifferentiated by physical sexual characteristics. Rather, a single body-shape is presented which is differentiated through the details of clothing, body position and gesture. The material upsets the binaries sex/gender and nature/culture. An alternative idea of bodies is operative in the imagery in which genital differences are not the primary means of categorisation, nor the defining feature of bodies.

This approach to bodies has important implications for analyses of gender in archaeology. Gender can no longer be projected unproblematically onto a male/female template in the past. Furthermore, masculinity is not necessarily an appropriate basis for an archaeological inquiry. Rather, the evidence of gender can be understood as both generative and expressive of different ontologies of the body, including such concepts as masculinity.

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> … consider the symmetrical opposition of the face as sign and instrument par excellence of the public secret, in contrast to the genitalia as that which is publicly known but generally concealed—as contrasted with the face as that which is the most blatantly exposed part of the modern body so that all the better to function as a mask. Yet, like the face, the genitalia can be thought of as a window to the soul, too, it being the blush, in light-skinned people at least, that uncontrollable ascent of blood to the face wrought by the shame of exposure, that brings the symmetrically opposed face and genitalia together. And of course, for many of us, it is the blush that, in seeing, we pretend not to see. Yes! What sort of "knowing" is this?
>
> (Taussig 1995: 108—9)

Taussig's 'blush' reveals the intimate connection between public secrets and concealed public knowledge, between the face and the genitalia. The face is both mask and sign that must hide and reveal a person's 'soul' on their body. The 'soul' as a figure of the core identity of a person is produced through and on their body. Masculinity as an 'inner essence' is indivisible from the idea of a body defined by a penis—it both produces and expresses that idea, whilst hiding the process by which it does so, 'masking' the visible connection between the genitals, the face and the soul.

Central to this thesis is the recognition that masculinity and gender are complicit in the naturalisation of a particular idea of the body. The distinction between sex and gender maintained by the majority of archaeologists examining gender in the past results in the reification of the body as 'natural' and beyond the influence of culture. Sex is understood as a natural aspect of the body (itself natural); society can merely create various etchings on the blank slate of natural sex. In this thesis I draw upon the work of feminist writing that emphasises the role that ideas of the body play in creating intelligible bodies. Butler's (1990a, 1993) reformulation of gender as performative is used both to critique the idea of gender as expressive of an internal, core gender identity and to understand the ways in which bodies can be differently produced. In contradistinction to the formulation of gender as an internal essence that a person expresses, Butler understands the expressions of gender—every-day acts and gestures—to work performatively to constitute the identity they appear to express. The notion of gender as performative is particularly suitable to an archaeological inquiry through its focus on the surface stylisation and the public display of bodies. Furthermore, it enables interpretation to move beyond an *a priori* binary division of bodies as male or female, to

consider the ways in which bodies are both contoured by, and generative of, beliefs of the body.

This thesis is divided into three parts: Part 1 explores the theorisation of bodies and masculinity; Part 2 analyzes the figurative imagery from Late Bronze Age Knossos in the light of the arguments made in Part 1; and Part 3 concludes by discussing the implications of the analysis in Part 2 for the study of masculinity in past societies.

The influence of feminist thought on archaeology and the current state of research into gender in archaeology are examined in Chapter 1. I argue that the splitting of gender from sex is difficult to apply in archaeological analysis due to the recognition that gender is often archaeologically invisible in such a formulation. An archaeology of gender is often reliant upon finding evidence of sex and thus binds gender once more to a natural body. Furthermore, postulating gender as cultural, but sex as natural and therefore beyond culture leaves sex under-theorised. Chapter 2 explores how the belief in a natural body reifies a binary model of sex and obscures other ways that sex and the body may be organised. Drawing from feminist writing on bodies, I argue that the 'natural facts' of the body are culturally mediated. Gender, understood as performative, is the mechanism of this mediation and the means that sex becomes enthroned as the defining feature of bodies. These ideas are developed in Chapter 3 in order to explore the relationship between masculinity and a 'male' body. The recognition that ideals of masculinity are never experienced in a pure form reveals the role that beliefs have in producing valued bodies rather than merely representing them. Cross-cultural evidence is drawn upon to elucidate the relationship between genitalia and identity in other cultural contexts. In contemporary society people are sexed at birth: sex, body and identity are inseparable. In other cultural settings, genitalia are not recognised as the primary determinants of identity. A distinct male body may not be a relevant concept in other cultural or historical settings.

The figurative imagery on the frescoes, figurines and sealstones from the MM IIIB—LM III Palace site at Knossos provide evidence of an alternative way of understanding the crucial limits and boundaries of the body. The seductive naturalism of the images produces a false sense of familiarity in the way gender is apparently presented. Consequently, all previous interpretations have fitted the figures into a rigid male/female binary framework. However, difficulties in maintaining a binary division of

the figures based on sex are explored in Chapter 5. The analysis in Chapter 6 reveals that the figures in the images share a common body-shape which is undifferentiated by sex. The figures are individuated from one another by the details in the images, including clothing, gesture and colour. Chapter 7 examines two sets of images—the 'Cup-Bearer' and 'Procession' frescoes and the faience and ivory figurines—in greater depth within their archaeological contexts. Furthermore, the appearances of breasts in the images, I argue, can be understood as part of the adornment of an unsexed body.

The implications for archaeological inquiry of the specific visual production of bodies in the Knossian imagery are explored in Chapter 9. The uncritical acceptance of a male body and the relationship between masculinity and that body make the use of masculinity in archaeology problematic. Rather than base analysis on the assumption of the male/female binary, I argue that focusing on the localised production of bodies will elucidate the many possible ways bodies are differentiated from one another and the relative importance attached to different parts of those bodies.

Acknowledgements

I owe many people a debt of gratitude for support whilst writing this thesis. Above all, I am indebted to my supervisor, Yvonne Marshall, without whose unfaltering encouragement, intellectual guidance, and confidence in my work, I would not have completed this thesis. I owe special thanks to Peter Ucko, who originally inspired me to study for a thesis and was my supervisor for two years before moving to the Institute of Archaeology, London. I am indebted to my advisor, Peter Middleton, who was a constant source of new ideas from which I have profited greatly. I am also extremely grateful to Trudi Tate who advised me for a year whilst Peter Middleton was on sabbatical.

The staff and post-graduate community in the Department of Archaeology have provided a friendly and stimulating academic environment from which I have greatly profited during the research for this thesis. I am especially thankful to Thomas Dowson and Siân Jones for emotional support and academic advice and inspiration. Many thanks to Yoelle Carter, Chris Fowler, Matt Leivers, Maggie Ronayne and Eric Todd for tireless proof-reading. Jayne Gidlow and Dave Wheatley were invaluable in assisting me produce the figures for this thesis. All the plans were drawn by Matt Leivers.

I am grateful to the SRGS for financial assistance whilst conducting field-work in Crete. I am especially thankful to Mary Stubbington who was tireless in maintaining my registration. I am thankful to Michael Vickers, the curator of the Evans room at the Ashmoleum Museum, Oxford, for allowing me access to fresco material. I owe thanks to Yannis Hamalakis, Paul Rehak and Brian Sparkes for advice and assistance with the material.

There are many people who have not been directly involved with this thesis, but have nonetheless helped and supported me during my research. Above all, I thank Johanna Alberti for her intellectual, emotional and moral support and encouragement, as well as for comments on early drafts of this thesis and for her unfaltering faith in my academic abilities. I am forever in debt to George Alberti for his generous and unfailing financial support, and for his optimism, encouragement and patience. Other people to whom I owe thanks include Cressida Fforde, Katie Joyce, Jon Martin and Dave Pollard, for putting up with me at home; Christine O'Shea for her love, emotional support and faith in me; and Mary Baker, Juliette Bright, Antony Firth, Kat Hall, Rob Hosfield, Ian Jopson, Sophie Jundi, Sara Kettley, Pier Paolo Frasinelli, Ingreth Macfarlane, Quentin Mackie, Rick Peterson, and Julia Roberts.

Finally, to Mary Johnston, who provided the original inspiration for this thesis by introducing me to feminist writings.

Part 1: *Male Bodies*

Chapter 1: Introduction: Archaeology, Gender and Masculinity

Introduction

> [H]umanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him ... He is the Subject, he is the Absolute - she is the Other.
>
> (de Beauvoir 1988 [1953]: 16)

De Beauvoir's contention that woman is defined as the Other to the Subject man continues to be a driving force behind feminist critique of the literal and conceptual subjugation of women by men. Archaeology has not escaped such critique and there is a growing field of feminist-inspired archaeology, most commonly known as 'gender archaeology'. However, even though it is generally recognised that men are to blame for women's current situation, as is obvious from the above quote, there has been little examination of masculinity within gender archaeology beyond the common idea of patriarchy as a monolithic and damaging structure. This chapter will examine both the current state of research into gender within archaeology and the reasons why masculinity has not been explored.

The critical use of gender within archaeology began in the 1980s (Conkey and Spector 1984), but it was not until the early 1990s that gender archaeology developed into a recognisable field of study, with the publication of collections of conference papers on the subject (Claassen 1992a; Gero and Conkey 1991; du Cros and Smith 1993; Nelson *et al.* 1994; Walde and Willows 1991). Included in the extant body of work are various ways in which gender and archaeology have been combined. Roberts (1993: 18) makes a distinction between 'gendered archaeology' and 'the archaeology of gender': the former approach encompasses work which is concerned with the examination of the gendered context of archaeological practice and gender bias within interpretation; whilst the latter approach corresponds to the use of gender in archaeological writing as a 'category of analysis'. The two approaches can be distinguished in terms of political commitment: the first is inseparable from feminist goals and influences; whereas the second need not align itself with feminism, and can be used in an apparently 'politically neutral' way. Although work-place issues and other concerns of a practice-based critique of gender are of crucial importance to archaeology, it is the use of gender as an analytical category within archaeology that I will examine.

The concept of gender as used within archaeology has a particular history and meaning; the history of the concept is crucial to understanding the way in which gender is used by archaeologists and why it is attractive to them. I will argue that the category of gender as used in archaeology establishes its own limits: what can and cannot be said about gender depends upon how it is understood in the first place. Therefore, I will trace the inception of the concept of gender within archaeology and how it has developed. A key reason for the appeal of gender as it is currently employed in 'the archaeology of gender' is its supposed political neutrality (see Brown 1993; Kehoe 1992; Rabinowitz 1993: 10). However, I will argue that there are serious short-comings in the deployment of such a concept of gender; a concept which rests upon universalist assumptions about the 'naturalness' of male and female bodies. As a consequence, the acceptability of 'gender' as a worthwhile area of study within the archaeological academy results in normative ideas of gender, sex and the body being upheld. Gender is a crucial aspect of any exploration of the past and much important work has been undertaken since the inception of gender archaeology. However, as it is currently employed by the majority of 'gender archaeologists', the term remains dangerously under-theorised.

The lack of research into masculinity within archaeology is indicative of the circularity which exists in the current understanding of gender within the discipline. The initial reasons for not making masculinity an explicit area of study are clear, for as feminist analyses have shown (e.g. Gorman 1993; Lloyd 1984; Slocum 1975), previous interpretations of society purported to represent the whole of humanity but were based largely on men's activities and written from a male standpoint. However, since gender has supposedly become politically neutral and more acceptable to the academy, in the process becoming dissociated from a necessary commitment to feminism, there is little reason for such an omission. I will argue that a meaningful exploration of masculinity by archaeologists necessitates the incorporation of an alternative understanding of sex, gender and the interrelationship between the two. The result of such an alternative understanding of sex and gender will not only effect the interpretation of gender in past societies, but also engender a greater understanding of the affect of masculinities on the practice of archaeology in the present.

Gender and archaeology: original impetus and desired outcomes

The original impetus for an archaeology of gender came from anthropology, where feminist concerns had been recognised and applied to the field since the early 1970s (see di Leonardo 1991; Moore 1988; Strathern 1988: 22—40). An examination of the ways in which feminist critique has developed within archaeology and the desired outcome of such critique explain to some extent why masculinity has not been an explicit object of study, where the concept of gender came from and what exactly it entails for an archaeology of gender.

As with other disciplines affected by feminist-inspired scholarship, the work on gender within archaeology developed through three stages: the recognition of male bias within the discipline; remedial research aimed at redressing the balance; and new theorising which hopefully avoided gender bias (on the three stages of feminist impact on research see Wylie 1991: 31—2). Consequently, what is classed as gender archaeology includes: critiques of biased accounts of the past (e.g. Bolen 1992; Conkey and Williams 1991; Slocum 1975); work which is aimed at focusing explicitly on woman's activities and roles in the past, often activities and roles previously assumed to be the province of men (see Gero and Conkey 1991; Gero 1992; Spector 1983); and the elaboration of theories concerned with providing a way of looking at gender in the past that avoids gender bias and bias in contemporary social theory (see Gilchrist 1994; Marshall 1995; Wylie 1992). Furthermore, as a result of feminism's roots in contemporary social practices, and its recognition of the effect of such practices on theorising and interpretation there has been a great deal of research done into work-place issues and gender bias in the structure of the discipline (see du Cros and Smith 1993; Gero 1983, 1985; Moser 1993, 1996).

There is no consensus on the desired results of an archaeology of gender. The three 'stages' are not mutually exclusive, nor do they necessitate that one be completed before another begins; archaeologists continue to work within all three. Furthermore, gender archaeologists have varying commitments to feminism and how, therefore, they want to use gender within archaeology: as another social category for analysis or as a means to critique and re-establish the structure and project of the discipline of archaeology (for discussion on the distinction between gender archaeology and feminist

archaeology see Cullen 1996: 410; Scott 1997; in classics, see Rabinowitz 1993: 10). The former is the most successful in current archaeological practice due to its use of an abstract, neutral concept and its dissociation from an explicitly feminist agenda.

Male bias in archaeology

The ascription of gender to people in the past in traditional archaeological interpretation largely follows normative values: timeless, essential qualities are attributed to men and women throughout history. Such a tendency is well illustrated by Evans' (1921: 693) interpretations of depictions of combat on material from Bronze Age Crete:

> Of the spectacles themselves - the acrobatic performances with bulls - illustrations have come down to us from many sides, and from the vase reliefs and intaglios we see something of the contests between man and man, not only with the fists but with actual weapons. To the excitement of the Spanish arena was added the even more poignant human thrills of the Roman amphitheatre, and in a society wrapped up in such fierce sports it can easily be imagined how the ladies of Knossos, who occupied the front seats at these shows, leaned forward in suspense over the fate of wounded heroes of the ring or applauded the prowess of fellow champions, the Seconds in these well-matched groups of antagonists, who strove to defeat and avenge their fallen comrades.

Whether Evans is correct in interpreting the combatants as male and the spectators as female is not the issue. Rather, the issue is that males and females are attributed with characteristics which Evans presumed that men and women have always possessed. 'Ladies in suspense' and 'wounded heroes' are descriptions which reinforce the supposedly natural qualities of an essential masculinity and femininity; they reproduce a particular Western stereotype of gender which has specific historical and cultural roots. Although archaeologists who are not explicitly feminist have produced critiques of such biased accounts of past societies (e.g. Ucko 1968), it has largely been feminist-inspired work that has exposed this bias. The recognition that archaeological theory and practice are not immune from the effects of their socio-political context is emphasised by post-processual and critical archaeologies (see McGuire and Paynter 1991; Roskams 1988;

Shanks and Tilley 1987; Trigger 1984, 1989) and feminist archaeology (see Conkey and Spector 1984; Gero 1983, 1985; Gilchrist 1994: x). For feminist-inspired archaeology, such a recognition took the form of exposing androcentrism within archaeological interpretation and practice. Conkey and Spector (1984: 1) argue that, 'archaeology, like other traditional disciplines viewed through the lens of feminist criticism, has been neither objective nor inclusive on the subject of gender'. They point out that because archaeology draws so heavily on ethnography for its inferences about past social systems, it comes under the same criticism to which feminists within anthropology have subjected traditional anthropological approaches. Conkey and Spector (1984: 3) argue that: 'If our descriptions and interpretations of life in other cultures simply reiterate our own assumptions about gender, we undermine efforts toward explicating cultural diversity or commonalties ... while at the same time justifying our own gender ideology'. Exposing such bias in archaeology has involved: criticising gender-exclusive models of past human behaviour (e.g. Slocum 1975); exposing assumptions concerning task-tool associations (e.g. Spector 1983); and showing that supposedly male activities are given far more emphasis and importance than supposedly female activities (Conkey and Spector 1984: 7).

The feminist criticism that previous views of society have been from a specifically male viewpoint is illustrated by Evans' (1936) index: 'man' appears only in conjunction with a sign in Linear Script B (1936: 97), whereas the entry for 'women' includes 'Women, Minoan, position of ...' (1936: 220). Evans' indexing emphasises the point that society is equated with 'man', therefore their existence in the past is assumed and does not need to be 'indexed', whereas women are notable only in their positioning relative to men. Evans' view of men and women in society can be explained by understanding the context in which he was writing, including contemporary theory within the social sciences. In what Trigger (1989: 73) characterises as 'the beginnings of scientific archaeology', he demonstrates that the nineteenth century saw archaeology heavily influenced by evolutionary thinking. The concern was with the evolution of material culture as revealing moral and social improvements in 'mankind'. Furthermore, social theorists, such as Darwin, Spencer, Lubbock and Morgan held a common belief in the increased regulation of human sexuality as societies 'progressed', which directly reflected their definitions of women's and men's roles from prehistory to the present.

The original human societies were postulated to have been promiscuous, followed by a matrilineal stage (with a corresponding matriarchal stage, according to some authors) and then our current patrilineal societies. Within his text, Evans (1930: 227, 457) refers to his belief that Minoan society was within the matriarchal stage of development (see Chapter 5). The roles of men and women were clearly mapped out, irrespective of cultural or historical specificities. The coming of civilisation determined that the lawless matrilineality of early humans was tamed and women were able to give up inappropriate productive labour and overt sexuality in order to concentrate on their 'natural' domestic functions, whilst men protected and supported them. These conclusions were based upon gross assumptions made by the scholars who proposed them. For example, Darwin's (1859, 1871) thesis of early human behaviour was based upon what he perceived to be the natural states of women (passive, nurturing, altruistic) and men (assertive, inventive, selfish), founded upon the idea that men needed to be good at competition in order to enhance their chances of finding a mate. Fedigan (1986: 27—9) has demonstrated how Darwin contradicted his own theory of natural selection when he wrote of human sexuality, as he saw selection as operating almost entirely on males. Fedigan (1986: 29) characterises this approach as the 'coat-tails' theory of human evolution: 'traits are selected for in males and women evolve by clinging to the men's coat-tails'. Evolutionary theorists' picture of society is one in which men evolve and are the active agents of change, whereas women remain passive recipients of change. Such a model of society naturalises contemporary views on the perceived roles of women and men by projecting those roles into prehistory. This model was extended to psychological traits of men and women by Freud (1985 [1912—3]). Feminist critiques (see Conkey and Williams 1991: 115—7; Fedigan 1986; Landau 1984: 263—5) have demonstrated that the basic evolutionary premises developed in the nineteenth century continue to influence archaeological interpretation, for example, in the 'Man the Hunter' thesis (e.g. Lovejoy 1981; Washburn and Lancaster 1968).

Much of the feminist critique of male-biased accounts of society stems from the recognition of the importance of metaphysical dualisms in structuring Western interpretations of gender. For example, culture and man are positioned on the dominant side of the dualisms, with nature and women occupying the lesser side (Haraway 1991: 135; Lloyd 1984). Again, Evans' account of Bronze Age Cretan society is influenced by,

and fuels, such a division. He wrote extensively on the supposed dominance of a 'Mother Goddess' in her various manifestations within Minoan society (e.g. Evans 1921: 500—10, 1930: 468—73; see Chapter 5). Such a view of the predominance of a 'Mother Goddess' in early societies is still widely written about (e.g. Evasdaughter 1997; Gimbutas 1982; Hayden 1986). However, interpretations of the 'Mother Goddess' have also been subjected to extensive critiques by a number of feminist-inspired archaeologists (e.g. Meskell 1995; Talalay 1994), who have exposed the thesis as maintaining a particular cultural gender myth. Nonetheless, even though such critiques have demonstrated the complicity of the 'Mother Goddess' thesis in maintaining a particular gender myth, the work has concentrated on how that myth maintains a particular view of women within society. Taken from a different perspective, the critique could equally be applied to the particular type of masculinity that is fostered by the myth. For example, not only does Evans' work position women in accordance with a phallologocentric structure, but it also maintains men in a particular position and as such feeds a cultural and historically specific myth of masculinity. Importantly, the relative positioning of men and women within symbolic structures through such myths is not an equal positioning. Such positioning occurs within unequal relations of power and influence. The monolithic status of the metaphysical category 'man' positions real men in particular ways; however, that positioning is often reliant upon the denigration of the category 'woman' which has actual effects on the lives of women.

Redressing the imbalance: the remedial stage of feminist scholarship

'Add-women-and-stir' is the term used to characterise the remedial stage of feminist influence within a discipline: the addition to research of a focus on women. Within archaeology this focus has taken the form of actively looking for women's presence within the past, including what are assumed to be women's activities, and taking the 'roles' of women as being as central to societal change as those of men (e.g. Gero 1992; Williams and Bendremer 1997). The remedial stage is the active contestation of male-biased accounts of past society by adding women to interpretation. Probably

the greatest number of articles written under the loose rubric of gender archaeology have used such an approach. Choosing women as the explicit focus of analysis, apart from redressing an obvious imbalance in accounts of the past, has been justified by stating that women are being used as a way into understanding previous gender systems (e.g. Conkey and Gero 1991: 23).

Remedial research into gender, with an explicit focus on women, was often the first result of feminist criticism within the discipline. Such a focus does not necessarily entail that a new theoretical approach be developed; the majority of such work has been firmly situated within the framework of processual archaeology. As such, concern has not often been with developing a new way of theorising the past or the evidence of the past but rather, developing the methodological capability for recognising gender activity in the past (for discussion, see Conkey and Gero 1991; Wylie 1991, 1992).

Even though some authors (e.g. Wylie 1991, 1992) consider gender archaeology and processual archaeology not to be inherently mutually exclusive approaches, there are nonetheless restrictions due to the precepts of processual archaeology. For example, because processual archaeology tends to concentrate on systems level analyses, social details are often not considered important. Furthermore, as culture is seen as society's 'system of the total extrasomatic means of adaption' (Binford 1972: 205), then 'ethnographic' details are deemed to be dependent upon environmental conditions or other external forces of change. Moreover, processual archaeology is extremely positivist in its belief that there is an objective, scientific truth that is out there waiting to be discovered. Consequently, such an approach is often blind to its own biases and cannot recognise the influence of contemporary socio-political structures on archaeological interpretation. In the case of gender, this means that male bias in theory and interpretation is not recognised. It is possible to add a woman's perspective to research, or to look specifically for women's activities within the processual archaeological framework. However, such research necessarily stays within the confines of the processual framework and cannot have a critical influence on the theory itself, which will remain essentially positivist and androcentric. Furthermore, the gendered conditions of practice within archaeology itself are left unexplored.

The shift in focus has considerably broadened the scope of archaeological inquiry; a focus on women has dispelled myths brought about by one-sided accounts of

the past, as well as revealing the existence of societal perspectives other than dominant conceptualisations of past social worlds. For example, the most accessible evidence for a past society may include written records and monumental art and architecture; such evidence, however, represents the manifestations of the viewpoint of a particular segment of society. The view of society presented by such evidence, therefore, will itself come from a partial perspective; however, a focus on the 'dominated' rather than the 'dominant' may reveal subtle modes of knowing and being which contest the dominant view (e.g. Foxhall 1994, 1995; Hall n.d.; Katz 1995; Moore 1986: 74; Scott 1997: 1—5, 9).

Re-theorising within gender archaeology

The 'add-women-and-stir' approach within archaeological interpretation has its correlate with equity issues in the workplace, such as the unequal representation of men and women within education, prominent academic jobs and particular aspects of fieldwork (see Díaz-Andreu and Sanz Gallego 1994; Domasnes 1992; Gero 1985; Nelson *et al.* 1994; Kramer and Stark 1988; Truscott and Smith 1993). In Norway the governmental policy of positive discrimination resulted by 1991 in a roughly equal representation of men and women within academic archaeology and in the field, including four out of nine professorships (Domasnes 1992: 8—9). However, the type of research conducted has remained the same, with little explicit focus on gender (Domasnes 1992: 9). Realisation of the limitations of the remedial stage in archaeological interpretation and the discipline of archaeology, graphically illustrated by Domasnes, has led to a stress on the importance of re-theorising within gender archaeology. Furthermore, focusing on women, but not exploring gender structures, leaves the symbolic structuring of gender and bias in theory unexamined. Cullen (1996: 414) signals the danger of focusing solely on women, which 'ironically underscores the privileged position of males, whose presence in the past apparently needs no verification'.

The third stage of feminist influence—re-theorising—is seen by many feminist or gender archaeologists as the desired outcome of gender archaeology. Re-theorising

encompasses a variety of approaches, including questioning our 'objects of knowledge' (Conkey and Gero 1991: 22—3), questioning the complicity of archaeology in maintaining certain myths and phallologocentric structures (e.g. Baker 1997; Conkey and Williams 1991) and using gender as an analytic tool, or as a category fundamental to social structures (e.g. Gero 1992; Gilchrist 1991, 1994; Joyce 1993). Clearly, there is no single over-arching, 'true' goal of gender archaeology, nor a single approach that can be called 'gender archaeology'. As Gilchrist notes (1994: 8), to attempt to enforce such a definition would be in opposition to feminist goals of diversifying explanations and escaping from restrictions of a singular, 'authoritative' account of society (see also Conkey and Gero 1991). The feminist critique of mainstream epistemology and the questioning of assumptions is common to much of gender archaeology. However, it is the use of gender as an analytical tool that is becoming the most common goal of gender archaeology. Some archaeologists are explicit in their belief that the introduction of the concept of gender into archaeological analysis is the main goal of gender archaeology (e.g. Gilchrist 1994). Gilchrist (1991: 499) argues that the emphasis has moved away from methodological issues associated with an archaeology of gender towards social theory, and argues that: 'Our goals will be partly realised when gender is considered not as an optional issue, but as another structuring principle fundamental to interpreting past societies'. According to Gilchrist, therefore, once the category of gender is included within archaeological discourse, alongside other classes of social variables, such as class and race, then gender archaeology will have been partially successful. As a result, gender archaeology is becoming increasingly divorced from its specifically feminist-inspired roots; much of the current work on gender and archaeology uses the concept of gender as offered by the original exponents of such an approach, but those who use it do not find it necessary to state their political position, nor to support an explicitly feminist standpoint.

Even though a great deal of critical work has been carried out with the concept of gender as understood by the archaeologists discussed above, especially in bringing gender to the attention of the archaeological mainstream, the particular notion of gender employed has had little critical attention. If re-theorising is the goal of gender archaeology, then surely such re-theorising should not end with the introduction of a concept from anthropology. Some archaeologists have questioned the applicability of

the concept of gender to archaeological interpretation (see Roberts 1993; Claassen 1992b; see Chapter 2), whilst others have attempted to theorise beyond such a category (see Baker 1997; Knapp and Meskell 1997; Marshall 1995; see Chapter 2). Furthermore, if gender archaeology aims to be inclusive rather than exclusive, as is apparent by the inclusion of gender as a category of social analysis, then the exclusion of an explicit focus on masculinity may indicate a particular limitation of the understanding of gender most commonly adopted by gender archaeologists.

Archaeology and the sex/gender split

In order to 're-theorise', archaeologists took a concept of gender developed by anthropologists and applied it to archaeological interpretation. As noted above, the acceptance of gender archaeology has been primarily due to its distancing from an explicitly feminist political stance; hence, the acceptance of the label 'gender archaeology', rather than 'feminist archaeology'. Such a term is seen as more politically 'neutral' and more easily approved by the academic establishment (see Brown 1993; Engelstad 1991; Kehoe 1992: 25; Rabinowitz 1993: 10; Roberts 1993: 19). Consequently, the work done under the general rubric of gender archaeology tends to be, to use Roberts' (1993: 18) term, 'the archaeology of gender'. It is crucial, therefore, to understand the genesis of the term gender, how it is understood and used by archaeologists, in order to understand why it is that the concept may be impeding further research into gender within archaeology.

The term 'gender identity' was introduced to psychoanalytic literature and from there to anthropology, by Stoller (1964: 220, 225), who posited the term in relation to the biology/culture distinction, in which sex was biological and gender cultural. The concept found fertile ground in anthropology, where the distinction was seized upon by social constructivists who wished to escape from the restrictions of biologically determinist accounts of gender formation. Henceforth, gender could be understood as a culturally acquired trait, which need not be tied to a biological sex and there soon followed a proliferation of gender related terms such as 'gender role', 'gender ideology',

and 'gender relations'. Such an understanding of gender as culturally constructed and ultimately of infinite variety and form, was that which was adopted by archaeologists, even though the term was originally, and most usefully, applied to living subjects. If gender is distinct from biological sex, then the most obvious way to measure or describe such difference is by observing the actual differences between the biological sex of a subject and the cultural characteristics exhibited by that subject.

When archaeologists give a definition of gender, they explain it along the lines of its use in anthropology. The paper by Conkey and Spector (1984) is taken as a basis by many archaeologists who use the concept. Conkey and Spector (1984: 1) explain gender as the culturally perceived appropriate behaviour of women and men, the construction of feminine and masculine as meaningful, and how women and men relate to one another. They go on to discuss how ethnographic studies demonstrating complexity and cross-cultural variability in 'gender arrangements' could serve as the basis for more detailed analyses of the material manifestations of such arrangements (*ibid.* 1984: 24—7). Conkey and Spector (1984: 14—5) postulate that understanding the connection between gender arrangements and material culture will lead to a better understanding of the role of gender in structuring processes of change.

Other authors stress the radical separation between sex and gender. Drawing from Conkey and Spector (1984), Bird (1993: 22) states that, ' it is important to understand that gender classifications are not necessarily biologically determined, but are cultural constructs that may vary both cross-culturally and through time'. Furthermore, Balme and Beck (1993: 62) state that there is no simple relationship between sex and gender, that sex roles and gender identity are not always the same, and that, 'there seems to be no universal distinction between sex and gender in human societies'. Similarly, Handsman (1991: 360) argues that, 'gender is never a matter of fixed, universal categories - one female, the other not. Instead gender is relational in both society and space'. However, he later contradicts himself by reinstating a universal category 'woman', stating that: 'Gender is also the key to realising that women, their labour, and the values of what they produced were central to communal relations in all prehistoric societies' (Handsman 1991: 360).

Handsman's apparent confusion over how much biology affects gender indicates the stronger trend in gender archaeology which sees gender as elaborated

upon, or structured by, the universal features of the biological categories male and female. Drawing from the work of Ortner and Whitehead (1981), Conkey and Spector (1984: 15—6) understood gender to consist of both natural and cultural features. The natural features of gender (reproduction, actual physical differences between women and men) are merely an 'ambiguous backdrop' to what men and women are, and to the relations between them, which are largely 'products of social and cultural processes'. In their introduction to *Engendering Archaeology*, the first major volume that explored the implications of the 1984 article, Conkey and Gero (1991: 8) state that their approach rejects the biological determinism explicit in many models of sex role differentiation. In contrast, they define gender as, 'a constitutive element of human social relations, based on culturally perceived and culturally inscribed differences and similarities between and among males and females' (Conkey and Gero 1991: 8). Gilchrist (1994: 2), in one of the few book-length analyses of gender and archaeology, defines gender as, 'the social construction of difference between men and women'. Furthermore, Gilchrist (1991: 399) has written of gender as 'distinct from the biological static of sex; its study is equally concerned with men and women. Gender centres on the social construction of masculinity and femininity: the social values invested in the sexual differences between men and women'.

It can be widely demonstrated, therefore, that archaeologists' use of the concept of gender relies upon the anthropological definition of gender as being radically distinct from sex. Such a concept of gender has been enormously successful and influential in gender archaeology. The apparent neutrality of the term has lead to the inclusion of gender within analyses which are not explicitly focused on gender (e.g. Hodder 1990; Barrett 1988, 1989). The popularity, or acceptability, of gender for archaeological analysis is due to the supposed escape from essentialist arguments that gender is derived from a biological sex, and due to its 'political neutrality'. Furthermore, the use of gender in this form means that it can be examined within existing epistemologies (see Wylie 1993). However, the inclusion of gender into recent post-processual archaeological writing is problematic (see Engelstad 1991). Frequently, such writing is influenced by theories which do not consider gender or a self-critical awareness of the effect of writing from a gendered standpoint. Often the work used is that of a privileged male (e.g. Heidegger). The lack of consideration of the gendered standpoint of such theories

by archaeologists (e.g. Thomas 1996; Tilley 1994) who then use gender as an adjunct to those theories, ignores the gendered aspect of the theories themselves. Again, gender becomes a 'gender neutral' (male) aspect of analysis (Scott 1997: 4—5).

It is striking that the use of the current concept of gender is to some extent due to its apolitical implications, yet there has been so little work explicitly and critically addressing masculinity within the archaeological literature (see Scott 1997: 8—10). Masculinity is being explored, but in a similar way to the 'study' of women within archaeology, through the examination of such subjects as 'gender relations', 'gender ideologies' and 'gender and power'. A monolithic idea of masculinity is often implicitly the object against which women and 'femininity' are measured. The structure of masculinity is now being taken for granted by a conflation of a phallologocentric structure with men's experiences of masculinities. Such a situation leaves masculinity problematically under-theorised. Knapp (1996) argues for a 'masculinist' archaeology, which would fit into the 'politically neutral' climate of the archaeology of gender. Knapp's work is valuable in recognising the variegated and 'hegemonic' aspects of masculinity (see Chapter 3). However, the re-use of the term 'masculinist' implies an equality in the type of knowledge produced by a focus on masculinity, as well as ignoring the socio-political context of unequal relations of power in which the author is working.

The success of the concept of gender employed by the majority of gender archaeologists has enabled gender to be accepted as a relevant and worthwhile area of research. However, the problems with such a concept of gender and its use as 'another social category' are less obvious, especially when many see this as the desired outcome of gender archaeology. It is crucial to recognise that maintaining the concept of gender as another category of analysis without subjecting it to re-theorisation results in gender losing its critical edge (Brown 1997: 13). It cripples the dialectic between the past and present, between political action and intellectual insight. If gender is taken as just another social variable, and uncritically accepted as the social construction of meaning onto a natural sex, then it is no longer possible to explore the implications of the feminist critique of sex. Maintaining gender as radically free from a 'natural' sex serves to reinforce the male/female dualism and the assumed primacy of physical sexual characteristics in the formation of identity and the elaboration of difference (see

Chapter 2). To explore masculinity within a gender archaeology that employs such an understanding of gender results in the conflation of masculinity with physical sexual characteristics; gender is understood as distinct from sex—male or female bodies—yet archaeology can only 'see' gender through sex. Furthermore, the use of the concept creates the illusion of a relation of equality between masculinity and femininity. Not only does that supposed equality erase issues of power and unequal access to resources, knowledge and authority, but it also maintains relations of inequality through naturalising features of male and female bodies that are seen as timeless and unchanging.

Chapter 2: Beyond the Sex/Gender Split

Introduction

Archaeologists informed by feminist theory and anthropology are beginning to problematise the sex/gender split. Central to their critique are the observations that an archaeology of gender relies upon an archaeology of sex; and, that sex is as much a cultural construction as gender. The first observation leads to the question of whether gender is visible in the archaeological record other than as the attributes associated with a particular sex. The second observation is a more fundamental challenge to the sex/gender split: if sex is as constructed as gender, then what we designate as male and female through skeletal remains or imagery may not have been pertinent means of categorising for past peoples. Releasing bodies from sexual biologism would allow archaeologists to formulate alternative interpretations of bodies and gender in the past. One of the material effects of formulating gender as radically separate from a biological sex is to naturalise sexual difference and sexual inequality in the present. The sex/gender split disallows further critical analysis of the structure of sexed differences, resulting in 'political neutrality' and an inability to engage with feminist theory that challenges the ontological status of the categories 'man' and 'woman'.

The work of the so-called 'post-structuralist' feminists offers important insights into the relationship between bodies and gender identity, as well as providing incisive critiques of the sex/gender split and the idea of 'social construction'. Some post-structuralist feminists argue against the use of the term 'gender' on the grounds that it 'presupposes a notion of cultural construction in which the subject is taken as a given, and gender then acquires a supplementary meaning or role' (Butler 1994b: 16). The turn to gender for them represents a papering over of the more fundamental structuring of language, intelligibility and the production of the subject. The use of the concept gender by the majority of gender archaeologists within the archaeological establishment appears to directly contradict the 'political impetus of feminist analysis—to mark the constitutive asymmetry of sexed positions by which language and the unconscious emerge' (Butler 1994b: 17). Butler explores how the asymmetry in language has been established, how the asymmetry produces particular bodies as 'natural', and the role that

gender has in hiding the mechanism of that production, so assuring its existence within discourse as an immutable fact.

The post-structuralist feminists share a belief in theorising the body beyond its conceptualisation as natural and pre-cultural. Reclaiming women's bodies from their representation within Western discourse is an important part of that project. This chapter examines their work, with particular reference to Butler's (1990a, 1993) reformulation of gender as performative. Butler provides an incisive critique of the idea of gender as constructed, and suggests that re-thinking construction as 'materialisation'—how bodies take on substance and come to matter—enables sex to be understood as discursively produced. Furthermore, a number of feminist authors (e.g. Butler 1990a; Rubin 1993; Sedgwick 1993) have argued convincingly that a presumption of heterosexual desire underlies the presumption of the binary division of sex as a natural means of categorising bodies. Butler (1990a, 1990b) argues that this presumption is inherent in much gender theory, including Freud's original postulation of primary bisexuality, and is the means whereby the discursive status of sex is hidden, and the 'naturalness' of the binary male/female is maintained. According to Butler, there exists a hidden causality between sex, gender and desire. Even though postulating that sex and gender are radically distinct appears to suggest that gender need not follow a particular biological sex, Butler demonstrates that gender must always refer back to sex. As such, gender is the lynch-pin in the discursive production of sex in contemporary society. Postulating gender as free from sex in effect hides the causal relationship between them. Butler argues that gender produces the idea of a natural sex and hides the mechanisms by which it does so. Gender as performative refers to this process—gender constitutes that which it is supposed to express.

Butler's theory of gender as performative has important implications for an archaeology of gender. Primarily, her critique of models of social construction expose the inadequacy of the concept of gender employed by the majority of gender archaeologists for exploring gender in the past. Furthermore, 'male' and 'female' bodies can no longer be assumed to be the basis for gender differentiation in past societies. Rather, an emphasis on 'corporeal styles' and different means of signifying differentiation on and through the body enables gender to include alternative

understandings of sexed differences and different means of producing bodies that mattered.

The cultural construction of sex

As argued in Chapter 1, archaeologists' understanding of gender as distinct from sex developed from contact with feminist research within anthropology. The crucial development was the splitting of gender into biological and cultural dimensions: sex came to mean biological sex, whereas gender referred to the cultural component of women's and men's identities. However, some archaeologists have pointed out the difficulties and inconsistencies of maintaining the sex/gender distinction in archaeological interpretation. The criticisms are based upon two observations: that the archaeological visibility of gender as opposed to sex is suspect; and, that sex is as much a cultural construct as gender. Such questions have lead to the recognition within archaeology and anthropology that the relationship between sex and gender is under-theorised (Moore 1994a: 12—3; Marshall 1995: 4; Sørensen 1992: 34—6). Claassen (1992b: 2) argues that many archaeologists have assumed that burials provide the best information for addressing questions of gender in the past. She goes on to state that: 'Sex, the biological condition, and gender, the cultural condition ... have different degrees of archaeological visibility' (Claassen 1992b: 2). In the context of material found with 'sexed' skeletons in burials, Claassen (1992b: 3) suggests that if there has to be some unique combination of material for each gender, then these items will be attributed to the particular sex with which they are found, and then to the typical gender attributed to that sex, with the consequence that any possibility of identifying gender independently of sex is eliminated. She concludes that what archaeologists are actually looking at is sex and sex roles, not gender (1992b: 4). Similarly, Sørensen (1992: 36) indicates that archaeology's empirical basis creates practical problems due to the traditional feminist distinction between gender and sex. She states that archaeological analysis almost always makes use of biological classifications to identify gender, which

causes an overlap between the categories woman/female and man/male, with the consequence that

> ... the archaeological literature continues to use the separation between sex and gender provided by social anthropology and sociology, and pretends to study gender when in fact most often we look at sex and sexual associations.
>
> (Sørensen 1992: 35)

Marshall (1995: 5) points out that the majority of remedial feminist research within archaeology has taken place in research areas where there is a greater access to biological sex: burial studies that deal with sexed skeletal remains; art which provides indications of biological sex; and human origins research which bases its models on primate societies. She argues that, '[t]he fact that these fields have received the most attention in gender studies suggests an archaeology of gender may depend on an archaeology of sex' (Marshall 1995: 5).

Apart from the recognition that an archaeology of gender may in fact only be an archaeology of sex and sex roles, there has been a growing realisation within feminism generally, and feminist archaeology more specifically, that our cultural category 'biological sex' is as constructed as gender. Much of such work stems from Foucault's (e.g. 1978, 1985, 1986a) research into sex as a construct of discourse. The general assumption has been that gender is social and therefore contingent, whereas sex is inherent and stable; culture maps social gendered differences onto innate sexual differences.

> Gender was seen as socially constructed, but underlying that idea was a notion that although gender was not determined by biology, it *was* the social elaboration in specific contexts of the obvious facts of biological sexual difference.
>
> (Moore 1994a: 12, original emphasis)

Similarly, Claassen (1992b: 4) argues that: 'Most archaeologists believe that the cultural construction of gender is inextricably linked to physical bodies, to the sex of skeletons'. In which case, the radical separation between gender and sexed bodies implied by the concept of gender as culturally constructed and the possibility of recognising gender

archaeologically is undermined by the very premise upon which the separation was based.

The majority of work within gender archaeology has fallen foul of the circularity of this conceptualisation of gender. Claassen (1992b: 3) points out that even though most gender archaeologists would accept the possibility of more (or less) than two genders existing in prehistory, and some archaeologists actually make the issue central to their enquiries, it is only actually possible to identify a maximum of four genders if we rely upon material correlates with sexed skeletal remains.

> Berdache individuals of Native American cultures are arguably a third gender, or a between-gender, but their material culture is indistinguishable from that stereotypically assigned to women or men[1]. If we allow female bones and predominantly male artefacts, male bones and predominantly female artefacts to define two additional genders we will be limited to four genders.
>
> (Claassen 1992b: 3)

Consequently, although the concept would appear to allow a radical separation between biological sex and gender, this is not actually possible.

Claassen (1992b: 4) points out that within archaeology and physical anthropology sex is anatomically *and* culturally created. She gives the example of the sexing of skeletons: a number of male and female traits are identified, using explicit or implicit assumptions, which are then averaged out. That the skeleton has to be sexed is the result of cultural baggage, as is the method used to determine the sex. Claassen (1992b: 4) concludes that: 'Admitting that both gender and sex are culturally determined would seem to indicate that there is no point in distinguishing between these terms'.

Sørensen (1992: 35) indicates that archaeologists are becoming aware that the binary division of physical sexual characteristics may not be originary. Yanagisako and Collier (1987) suggest that the binary of the sex/gender division not only follows on from a Western philosophical tradition, but is ethnocentric in its assumption that other cultures too must have such a binary structure. Sørensen (1992: 34) explains that sex—presented as an expression of biological differences—characterises women by their reproductive abilities. However, she points out that women are not reproductive the

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[1] For an alternative understanding of berdache and their associated 'material culture', see Chapter 3.

whole of their lives (see below, p.36), and that both men and women go through different stages variously associated with sexual characteristics throughout their lives (Sørensen 1992: 34).

The idea that sex is natural and gender is cultural results in preoccupations with 'origins' and beginnings, with determining when an original sexed body was first given meaning through gender. Sex is considered innate and natural, therefore the archaeologist sees sex (in skeletal remains, or art) and must recreate the gender, the cultural construct which was placed on that sex. For example, Whelan (1991) in looking at mortuary remains is interested in searching for when sex originally became gendered. Moore (1994a: 12—3) states that sex is an effect rather than an origin, itself a category which is the product of a given discourse:

> Consequently, the construction of fixed binary sexes, with fixed categorical differences, is the effect of a specific discourse. What is more, if binary sex is an effect of discourse, then it cannot be considered as a unitary essentialism and, more importantly, it cannot be recognized as invariant or natural.

Moore (1994a: 13) indicates that the concept of sex as a construct has two important consequences: that a distinction between sex and gender can no longer be maintained; and that we can no longer assume that binary biological sex everywhere provides the basis for the cultural categories 'male' and 'female'.

The above authors indicate that archaeologists and anthropologists are beginning to problematise the concept of gender and its relationship to biological sex. They demonstrate the impossibility of recognising more than two genders, because as gender is used by archaeologists it has again become synonymous with sex. Furthermore, they demonstrate that as gender is conceptualised at present by most archaeologists there is still a strong determining connection between sexed differences and gender; and, that the radical implications of gender as not determined by biology is a false promise as understood by archaeologists. The concept of gender as presently understood by the majority of gender archaeologists was extremely important, and continues to be useful, in providing the theoretical impetus for initiating research into gender in a critical and unessentialist fashion. However, an impasse has been reached in

that research and it is necessary to move beyond the binary conception of sex/gender if we are to continue to critically explore gender in the past.

Beyond sex/gender: post-structuralist feminism

The body remains under-theorised by the postulation of a radical distinction between sex and gender. In such a formulation gender is culturally and historically specific, subject to manipulation and change, whilst the body remains a transcultural, transhistorical common denominator, a blank slate onto which culture is inscribed. Cultural constructivism would appear to allow for a freeing-up of gender from the constraints of essentialist, 'biology-is-destiny' type arguments. The substance of the blank slate, however, is not subject to variability, and gender becomes a free-floating index, with no actual meaning other than as the social embellishment of an androgynous body. Thus, sex and gender fit neatly within a metaphysical dualistic structure, in a similar way to the mind/body dualism; sex being the positive, or 'masculine' side of the equation whilst gender is equivalent to the negative or 'feminine'. Feminist critiques of Western knowledge have exposed such thought as culturally contingent (e.g. Strathern 1980), and dualisms such as culture/nature and mind/body have been challenged, and demonstrated to be complicit in the denigration of women (see Lloyd 1984). Influenced by this critique, and in part by post-structuralist theorists such as Lacan, Foucault and Derrida, feminist theorists (including Irigaray, Kristeva, Cixous, Butler and Grosz) have attempted to reconceptualise the body in non-essentialist terms, whilst maintaining the specificities of sexual difference. Crucially, the sex/gender argument put forward by cultural constructivists is based on *sex* difference (perceived biological differences between the sexes), and not *sexual* difference. The concept of sexual difference, as used by the above theorists, is an attempt to think in terms other than those of established Western tradition. The notion of an 'undifferentiated man', central to liberal thought, is challenged by feminists, drawing from de Beauvoir, who see such a model for humans as being intrinsically about the 'Subject' man. If the subject in Western thought and language is male, then women must

either concede their 'Otherness' and become masculine, or they must accept their Otherness and remain outside of discourse. The post-structuralist feminists, although differing radically in many aspects of their work, all attempt to undermine the dominant Western discourse on sexual difference by embracing women's Otherness and celebrating their difference. Difference, in this sense, refers to woman's differences from man, as well as cultural, racial and sexual differences *between* women. Sexual difference refers to the anti-essentialist project of thinking about women's specificities, rather than thinking of woman in relation to man. The idea of woman being equated with the negative side of the metaphysical equations, and hence with body, nature and sexuality, is exposed and explored.

The Western discourse on woman and the body can not be deemed 'outside' of the power relations which maintain it, thus language and signifying practices are central to post-structuralist feminists' analyses. Difference is rooted in discourse, not biology (Gatens 1992: 135). Irigaray (e.g. 1993: 29—36), Kristeva (1986: 24—33) and Cixous (e.g. 1976, 1994: 27—33) are all concerned with language, how woman is positioned within it, and what possibilities for critique that positioning offers. Irigaray's discursive tactics aim to restore particularity and sex-specificity to discourse, against universalising claims. She sees in sexual *in*difference the basis of masculine logic—to reduce everything to the same, to the One (Braidotti 1994: 66). Therefore, she employs deconstructive and reconstructive tactics in order to expose masculinist discourse for what it is, whilst simultaneously offering alternative meanings for women. Similarly, Kristeva and Cixous isolate aspects of language which they perceive can potentially represent woman: Kristeva (1986: 90—136) recognises poetry as supporting a feminine structure in language, whilst Cixous (1976: 875) claims that 'woman must put herself into the text ... by her own involvement'.

Whilst differing in their strategies on how to combat phallologocentrism, the post-structuralist feminists conceive of the body in a similar way. According to Gatens (1992: 136), Irigaray uses the female body as an alternative to masculine logic, which relies upon phallic imagery in language. Irigaray writing about ...

> ... the "two lips" of feminine morphology is an active engagement with the construction of what here has been called the imaginary body. It is not an

> attempt to construct a 'true' theory of sexual difference, starting from the foundation of female biology. Rather, it is a challenge to the traditional construction of feminine morphology where the bodies of women are seen as receptacles for masculine completeness.
>
> (Gatens 1992: 136)

The 'natural' female body does not figure in Irigaray's writings; rather, as concepts of the body are contingent upon current Western discourse, women must find an alternative from within that discourse. According to Tong (1989: 255), Cixous uses feminine sexuality to contrast masculine and feminine modes of writing; the masculine mode, fearing that which lies outside the 'Symbolic'[2], is written in a rigid, carefully structured fashion, whereas the feminine is fluid and uncontained. Kristeva believes the alternative lies with the maternal body, as that is what is repressed by the child's entry into language and the Symbolic. An important distinction between Kristeva, on the one hand, and Irigaray and Cixous, on the other, is that Kristeva believes children of both sexes have a choice on entry into the Symbolic, depending on whether they identify with their father or mother; either can write as a masculine subject or as the feminine other.

The position of the subject within Western discourse is also of importance to Grosz and Butler, although their work differs from the 'French feminists' in that they explicitly study gender and its relation to bodies in an analytical way within that discourse. Grosz (1994: ix) is concerned with displacing the centrality of mind within the mind/body dualism, and declares that '[t]he body is the ally of sexual difference'. She states that an exploration of bodies will help to problematise the universalist assumptions of humanism, through which women's specificities are rendered irrelevant or redundant (Grosz 1994: ix). Both Grosz and Butler deny the existence of a 'real', material body on the one hand, and various cultural and historical representations on the other; rather, bodies come to assume the status of 'natural fact' through discourse.

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[2] The 'Symbolic' refers to the structure of sexual difference in the unconscious, formulated primarily in the psychoanalytical writings of Jaques Lacan.

The critique of constructivism

Butler's (1990a, 1993) analysis of sex and gender takes a radical departure from the concept of gender used in archaeology. Her position is, broadly speaking, constructivist, but central to her thesis is a critique of the way 'social construction' is understood to occur. In arguing that sex is also constructed, Butler demonstrates previous models of 'social construction' to be based on the premise of a pre-discursive sex; yet the status of sex as pre-discursive means we have no access to it, as it is always already gendered in society. Therefore, Butler reformulates 'social construction' as 'materialisation' to understand how both sex and gender come to be understood as ontological facts of the body.

Underlying the sex/gender distinction within archaeological writing on gender are various models of, or understandings of construction, of the way in which gender is conceived of as being constructed. These models are not discussed by archaeologists, nor are their theoretical implications. It is important that archaeologists be aware of the critiques of such models if we are to continue using gender in interpretation. This is equally the case if we are to better understand its meaning and the implications of the formulations of construction implicit in our use of the concept of gender.

At a basic level Butler (1993: 4) asks if models of gender construction in which the social acts upon the natural (gender inscribed onto sex) is not tacitly masculinist—the picture is of an active agency (the masculine) acting upon a passive surface (the feminine). She asks: 'Is sex to gender as feminine is to masculine?' (Butler 1993: 4).

Butler goes on to discuss the feminist critique of the distinction between nature and culture. She argues that although the distinction between sex and gender was crucial for the 'de Beauvoirian' version of feminism, it can be criticised for degrading the natural. Such a binary formulation casts the natural as that which is 'before' intelligibility, in need of the mark of the social in order to acquire meaning and value. Therefore, the natural assumes its value at the same time it assumes its social character; in other words, when nature relinquishes itself as the natural. According to this view, Butler (1993: 5) argues, the social construction, and therefore transformation, of the natural presupposes the cancellation of the natural by the social. The sex/gender

distinction, relying on the same reading, can be similarly criticised: if gender is the social significance that sex assumes within a given culture, then what is left of sex once it has assumed its social character as gender? In other words, sex does not accrue social meaning, but rather is replaced by the social meanings it takes on. Therefore, if sex is replaced by gender, and consequently the only access to sex is through its form as gender, then sex becomes a fantasy to which there is no direct access. In other words, how is it possible to know what sex is, what the 'natural' state of sex is, if it is always already subsumed by gender? The idea of a 'natural' sex is produced as an effect of gender. Consequently, tasks such as Whelan's (1991) to find an origin to gender are nonsensical. Similarly, the idea that one can know the 'true' sex—the 'natural' state—of past peoples through their skeletal remains or depictions in art, but have to determine their gender, is meaningless. However, Butler (1993: 5) argues that sex does not vanish altogether: sex is a fiction, but a necessary one without which there would be no gender. Sex is necessitated, produced and naturalised by gender (see below).

Butler (1993: 6) outlines the main positions in the debate over construction, in which either linguistic construction is understood to be deterministic (everything is produced by discourse); or, construction presupposes a subject who is doing the constructing, which leads to the question: 'If the subject is constructed, then who is constructing the subject?'. In the first case construction takes the place of a 'figure of God' type agency. In the second case a voluntaristic subject is presupposed who manipulates construction. In the first case, Butler (1993: 7) states that it is unclear whether there can be an 'I' or 'we' who has not been subjected to gender, and that the subject neither precedes nor follows the process of gendering but emerges as the matrix of gender relations themselves. Such a position, she claims, does not do away with the subject, but rather asks after the conditions of its emergence. She argues that such gendering cannot be an act of human agency as it is the matrix through which agency becomes possible, its 'enabling cultural condition'. Therefore, the matrix of gender relations is prior to the emergence of the human.

Furthermore, the existence of a matrix of gender relations does not mean to say that the matrix acts in a singular, deterministic way to produce genders as effects. That would be to install the matrix in the subject position, a simple reversal of the subject and discourse, a personification of such edifices as 'discourse', 'culture' or 'power'. In

such a case construction is still understood as a unilateral process initiated by a prior subject: it is an act which happens once and whose effects are firmly fixed.

Butler (1993: 5) considers all the above views of construction, broadly separated into the subject as agent and discourse as agent camps, to be inadequate and essentially circular arguments. Archaeologists have tended to implicitly follow one or other of these approaches, especially in relation to gender. In place of such conceptions of construction, Butler urges a return to the notion of matter, to the idea of materialisation. She stresses that she understands matter not as a site or surface, but as, '*a process of materialisation that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter*' (Butler 1993: 9, original emphasis). Therefore, the question is no longer, 'How is gender constituted as and through a certain interpretation of sex?', but rather, 'Through what regulatory norms is sex itself materialized?' (*ibid.*: 10). According to Butler, construction is neither a single act or a causal process initiated by a subject and culminating in a set of fixed effects: it is a temporal process which operates through the reiteration of norms.

Critics argue that, minimally, there are differences (sexual, hormonal, chromosomal) in bodies that can be acknowledged without recourse to construction. However, Butler points out that to concede the undeniability of 'sex', its materiality, is to concede *some version* of sex and materiality. If the concession occurs in discourse, which it must, then surely the discourse must be formative of that concession? Butler argues that to claim that discourse is formative is not to suggest that it originates or causes that which it concedes, but rather that there is no reference to a 'pure' body unadulterated by discourse. She goes on to argue that the moderate critic might concede that some portion of 'sex' is constructed, but some is not: but how are we to draw the boundaries? Surely, once the 'not discourse' is demarcated it is defined and signifies from a position created for it by the 'anti-constructivist' (Butler 1993: 11). Essentially, the extra-discursive has always to be defined by the discursive, and therefore cannot escape it.

Butler's concept of materialisation, therefore, avoids the essentialism and determinism inherent in many conceptualisations of constructivism. Butler uses the concept of materialisation in conjunction with her 'performative' theory of gender (see below) to understand how gender operates. There are similarities between her theories

and the views of some archaeologists and anthropologists on how best to proceed in gender archaeology. Marshall (1995: 6) argues that: 'The splitting of sex from gender is problematic for archaeology because archaeology's material evidential base demands that it deal with sex and bodies'; and further, that: 'The materiality of the archaeological record means that we can only build an archaeological theory of gender if we build a concomitant theory and methodology of sex and bodies' (1995: 6). Butler's theory, with its emphasis on materialisation and bodies, can go some way towards providing the theoretical basis for such a theory of 'sex and bodies'.

Heterosexual hegemony

The ways in which contemporary discourses compel a particular understanding of bodies as fixed within a binary structure male/female, and how gender 'naturalises' those understandings, has been exposed by Butler. She uses a Foucauldian genealogical critique (see Foucault 1986b) to expose how psychoanalysis and feminist theory employ a concept of gender that maintains sex as a cultural 'truth' to identity. Butler (1990a: viii—ix, original emphasis) writes: 'A genealogical critique refuses to search for the origins of gender'; instead, genealogy 'investigates the political stakes in designating as an *origin* and *cause* those identity categories that are in fact the *effects* of institutions, practices [and] discourses'. Butler (1990a) argues that within contemporary Western theory sex, gender and desire must follow causally from one another. The separation of sex and gender is one means by which that causality is hidden, so marking 'sex' as pre-discursive and natural. The matrix of gender relations which are maintained through the causality of sex, gender and desire is characterised by Butler (1993: xii, 1994a: 36) as an 'heterosexual hegemony'. She understands an heterosexual hegemony as one of several 'regulatory regimes' through which contemporary discourses are regulated. Other regulatory regimes include the apparent prohibition against miscegenation (Butler 1993: 20, 167—85). These various modalities of power do not work in an hierarchical way; rather, it is in the zones of their interaction that their effects are felt (Butler 1993: 20).

Through an engagement with Freud, Butler demonstrates how modern theories of identity formation which draw from psychoanalysis rely upon an implicit prohibition of homosexuality which precedes the incest taboo. Even though Freud postulates primary bisexuality as a complicating factor in the process of character formation, the boy sustains a primary cathexis for the mother. Freud gives no reason why desire for the father is denied (Butler 1990a: 59, 1990b: 332—3). Freud (1984 [1923]: 372—3) later suggests that the ambivalence displayed in relations to the parents results from bisexuality rather than from the Oedipal process. Butler proposes that the reason for the boy usually taking the heterosexual choice is not through fear of castration by the father, but the fear of the 'feminisation' associated with male homosexuality in heterosexual cultures. Therefore, it is primarily the homosexual cathexis that must be repudiated, *before* the heterosexual lust for the mother. According to Butler, Freud himself is unsure of what constitutes the 'primary' dispositions that decide gender identification. The consequences of the doubts surrounding the issue are stated by Butler (1990a: 60):

> In other words, to what extent do we read the desire for the father as evidence of a feminine disposition only because we begin, despite the postulation of primary bisexuality with a heterosexual matrix of desire?

The conceptualisation of bisexuality in terms of two different dispositions which have heterosexual aims as their intentions suggests to Butler (1990a: 61, original emphasis) that, '... for Freud *bisexuality is the coincidence of two heterosexual desires within a single psyche*'. Neither disposition is effectively directed towards the opposite sex, with the consequence that desire

> ... can only issue from a male-identification to a female object or from a female-identification to a male object. Granted, it may well be a woman, male-identified, who desires another woman, or a man, female-identified, who desires another man, as it may also be a woman male-identified who desires a man, female-identified, or similarly, a man, female-identified, who desires a woman, male-identified. One either identifies with a sex or desires it, but only those two relations are possible.
>
> (Butler 1990b: 333)

Therefore, with the thesis of primary bisexuality, 'there is no homosexuality, and only opposites attract' (Butler 1990a: 61).

Through the Freudian mechanism of assumed internalisation, dispositions—considered by Freud to be constitutive facts of sexual life—are the effects of an internalised law which produces and regulates discrete gender identity and heterosexuality (Butler 1990a: 64). Butler claims that these dispositions are a result of a process which then disguises itself: they are fixed by a prohibition which arrives *later* to restrain the disturbances caused by an unrestrained homosexual cathexis. Butler (1990a: 64—5) maintains that:

> In order to conceal the genealogy of the law as productive of the very phenomenon it later claims only to channel or repress, [by] instating itself as the principle of logical continuity in a narrative of causal relations which takes psychic facts as its point of departure, this configuration of the law forecloses the possibility of a more radical genealogy into the cultural origins of sexuality and power relations.

Consequently, the taboo against incest produces heterosexual desire through the repressive displacement of an original homosexually orientated libido. The original desire is deflected upon entry into culture which effects a series of displacements.

Even though Butler uses Foucault's genealogical critique as a useful means for tracing the inconsistencies and false ontologies within theoretical discourses, she is nonetheless suspicious of his own configuration of gender construction and desire. In the majority of his theoretical work on the topic, Foucault maintains that the category of 'sex' and its apparently causal relationship to sexuality is false. The concept of desire and sexuality are politically manifested and have a history in which they become instated as natural, where in fact they are the effects of the discourse which claims this of them. However, through an analysis of Foucault's (1980) work on the hermaphrodite Herculine Barbin, Butler notes certain inconsistencies within his work, as well as a latent emancipatory ideal. Foucault (1980: xiii) argues that Herculine's hermaphroditic morphology enables her/him to experience a multiplicity of pleasures which are outside the jurisdiction of the law, and therefore constitute a non-identity. If this were the case,

then Foucault is contradicting his own observation that there is no sexuality without power. Butler (1990a: 104) points out that the pleasures that Herculine feels are still the effect of a power which constructs and enables a constitutive 'outside' to itself. Butler (1990a: 105) remarks on the irony of the position Foucault has adopted, in relation to Herculine's own observations:

> Herculine's ambivalence here implies the limits of Foucault's theory of the "happy limbo of non-identity." Almost prefiguring the place Herculine will assume for Foucault, s/he wonders whether s/he is "not the plaything of an impossible dream".

In suggesting a thesis of 'non-identity' for Herculine, Foucault is toying with the idea of a utopian, pre-social state of being. Such a position re-instates the idea of a pre-discursive, or natural, foundation for gendered identity, which Butler demonstrates establishes sex, or in Foucault's case sexuality, as an extra-social category of identity. Hermaphrodite children in contemporary society cause a great deal of anxiety and reveal the complicity of the 'expressions' of gender in hiding the causality between sex, gender and desire (see Chapter 3, pp.58—9). That anxiety is a consequence of the effort to 'fix the site of the sexed body' (Butler 1993: 16), and cast that particular type of body—male or female, with no in-betweens—as central and foundational to gender and identity. Male and female, however, are not necessarily primary to identity; understanding them as such, Butler argues, is a result of the discursive production of particular morphologies. Butler understands gender as complicit in the process of establishing and maintaining the ontological integrity of the categories male and female. The mechanism of that complicity is revealed through understanding gender as performative.

A performative theory of gender acts

> Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being.
>
> (Butler 1990a: 33)

Butler (1993: 22) argues that gender identities must be understood as effects of multiple discourses, practices and institutions, rather than as expressive of a single repressive symbolic order. The way these discourses, practices and institutions maintain heterosexual hegemony is by positing gender as expressive of a natural sex. The hidden causality that is maintained between sex, gender and desire in our conceptual structures ensures that heterosexual hegemony appears natural. Rethinking gender and the expressions of gender as 'performative' exposes that causality and enables gender to be reformulated as productive of the idea of sex as natural and pre-discursive. The expressions of gender produce the 'false' ontological status of sex and gender. Understanding gender as performative dismisses the priority of the categories 'male' and 'female', 'man' and 'woman' as abiding substances. The expressions of gender, therefore, cannot be subordinated to an ontologically intact category of gender.

Butler's thesis of performativity involves a move away from the idea of an 'interior' space which contains a person's gender core (e.g. Stoller 1964: 225). She argues that the body mobilises psychic action in the first place; a gendered identity and a sexed body are produced by processes that occur on the surface of the body. The repeated stylisations of the body—everyday acts and gestures—produce the gendered identity of which they are thought to be the expressions. Because there is no transcendental inherent quality to gender, the stylisation of the body must be continually repeated. Through that repetition the acts of gender congeal over time and give the appearance of a substance—of ontological integrity—to gendered identities. Gender is performative in that it constitutes the identity it is purporting to be (Butler 1990a: 25).

Butler's (1993: 13, 224—6, 1994a: 33) use of 'performative' and 'performativity' derives from speech act theory. She describes her project as attempting to understand performativity as, '*that aspect of discourse that has the capacity to produce what it names*' (Butler 1994a: 33, original emphasis). An example of a performative speech act is "I pronounce

you …" (Butler 1993: 224), where the relation it names is put into effect. The force or authority of the performative is derived from its reiteration, or citation, of a prior set of practices. Furthermore, the authority of prior usage is also established through its performative citation. Butler (1993: 225) gives the example of a judge who cites the law that s/he applies: the citation gives her/his performative enunciation its power; but it is also by the 'invocation of convention' that the prior authority—'the figure of the judge's "will"'—is established. A performative, therefore, works at once to produce that which it names *and* to maintain the authority of the source of its citation. The effect of a performative is to hide the mechanism whereby it both *draws from* conventions and *constitutes* those conventions.

A common miscomprehension of Butler's work (e.g. Joyce and Claassen 1997: 4; Power and Watts 1997), and one which she distances herself from, is the idea that gender performativity can be equated with gender performance. Performance, she argues, presumes a subject, whereas performativity contests the very notion of a subject (Butler 1994a: 33). Butler argues that 'performance' as a bounded act is distinguishable from performativity because the latter involves the citation and repetition of norms which precede and constrain the 'performer'. Performativity, unlike performance, does not originate from a person's 'will', but rather is the enabling condition of a 'subject' and 'will' in the first instance (Butler 1993: 230—4).

Butler (1990a: 134—5; 1990b: 335) argues that the figure of an interior essence to a person is in fact produced on the body; she asks, 'How does a body figure on its surface the very invisibility of its hidden depths?' (Butler 1990a: 134). Foucault (1977: 30) used the example of prisoners' bodies to criticise the 'doctrine of internalisation'. He argued that rather than repress the desires of the prisoners, their bodies came to signify the law as their very essence (*ibid.*). Foucault uses the figure of the soul to describe this process: 'The figure of the interior soul understood as "within" the body is signified through its inscription on the body, even though its primary mode of signification is through its very absence, its potent invisibility' (Butler 1990a: 135). By maintaining an interior location for the authentic 'self' of a person, then the mechanisms which produce that coherent gender are effectively displaced from view. Rather, Butler (1990a: 135) argues that 'words, acts, gestures and desire' produce the illusion of an internal core on the surface of the body. Butler takes Foucault's critique of the idea of an interior

'soul' further by arguing that the 'soul' is conceived as that which the body lacks—it is an internal signification that signifies its absence on the body. The idea of an interior space which is obscured from view but signifies its lack on the body suggests that the soul is a surface signification that perpetually renounces itself as such. Therefore, the idea of an interior space, an essence to gendered identity obscures the production of that soul on the surface of the body. The absent soul—an 'interior', 'authentic' gender identity—is marked through presences on the body: thus, the body can be understood as a signifying lack (Butler 1990a: 135).

> In other words, acts, gestures and desires produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this *on the surface* of the body, through the play of signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organising principle of identity as a cause.
>
> (Butler 1990a: 135, original emphasis)

Butler's critique of an interior space and its displacement onto the surface of the body exposes the idea of a coherent, internal gender identity as a fiction. Furthermore, the surface play of acts and gestures are performative insofar as gender identity is understood by Butler (1990a: 138) as a 'history of received meanings' which constructs the illusion of a 'primary and interior gendered self'. This implies that the acts and gestures of gender are constitutive of gendered identity and the idea of an interior, authentic gendered identity. Butler (1990a: 135, original emphasis) argues that:

> Such acts and gestures are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other means.

The effect of such performative acts and gestures is to make gender identity appear as a natural fact of the body, as an ontological foundation, and the process through which that occurs is hidden. The acts, gestures, words and desires of gender gain their status as fact through the imitation, or citation, of prior practices; at the same time those prior practices are given authority by those imitations or citations. Performativity, therefore, is 'the discursive mode by which ontological effects are installed' (Butler 1994a: 33).

Butler (1990a: 136) suggests that the gendered body has no ontological status apart from the acts and gestures which constitute its reality. The reality of the body, its naturalness, consists of the *stylisation* of the body. Butler's thesis denies the possibility of a 'real' body, of a 'pure' body untouched by discourse or language. Her argument, however, does not entail that the body disappears altogether, that 'vagina' or 'penis' are entirely imaginary. Rather, the body sets limits to its conceptualisation, but does not govern the system of meaning that it precipitates. The conceptualisation of the body cannot be understood in relation to a 'real' body; it can only be understood in relation to another cultural idea of the body (Butler 1990a: 71). Butler does not deny biological differences, but questions the way they are thought of and how certain features become perceived as central to sex. For example, men's bodies cannot be impregnated and cannot produce children[3]. However, positing impregnation as a foundational difference between men's and women's bodies ignores the fact that children, older women and other women for a variety of reasons also cannot be impregnated (Butler 1994a: 33—4). Rather, Butler (*ibid.*) asks why it is that certain biological differences become the salient characteristics of sex and not others.

A body in contemporary Western society, Butler (1990a: 8) argues, is always already gendered; it gains intelligibility through that gendering. There is no recourse, therefore, to a natural, sexed body as distinct from a culturally elaborated gender. Arguing that gender is performative does not mean that 'sex' becomes meaningless; neither does arguing that sex is constructed result in gender being superfluous. Sex is a fiction (Butler 1993: 5—6); but it is a *necessary* fiction upon which the intelligibility of gender depends. Through the performative workings of gender, sex and the body are established as immutable facts. The acts and gestures of gender hide the production of sex, therefore rendering it beyond culture. Furthermore, the constitutive link between sex and gender is hidden in this process; hence, Stoller (1964: 220—1, 225) was able to suggest a discontinuity between the two. That suggestion of discontinuity, however,

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[3] Some male bodies do get produced as child-bearing, even if children are never actually born. Mohave male berdache, or *alyha•*, carried out elaborate mock pregnancies, followed by the birth of a stillborn foetus. The foetus was then buried with all the appropriate mourning rites (Roscoe 1996: 360—1). The perceived differences that we consider 'biological' may not in fact be such constraints to the performative enactment of bodies.

works to reinforce the gendered production of sex by denying access to the body, by casting it beyond the social.

In order for gender to function as a performative, to create the illusion of a substance, it must be continually repeated. Gender, therefore, is not an 'act', but rather a series of 'acts', a constant citation of prior practices. De Beauvoir (1988 [1953]: 295) argued that, 'One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman'. Butler (1990a: 8, 1989) takes this formulation further by proposing that this becoming is a constant process, one that cannot be said to have a beginning or end. Gender has no teleology, but rather is 'an activity incessantly renewed' (Butler 1989: 255). 'Man' and 'woman' cannot be thought of as nouns, as descriptions of a substantive being (Butler 1990a: 24). This constant imitative reiteration of acts, gestures and words Butler (1990a: 34) describes as a 'ritualised repetition'. Gender reality is created through sustained social performances; the acts of gender are public and collective actions (1990a: 140—1).

Butler argues that gender imitations can never achieve a true identification with what they are copying, because that too is a copy: there is no 'original' formulation of gender to be imitated. Butler is arguing in contradistinction to sexual difference theorists who believe that the Lacanian 'Symbolic' is an intransigent structure. Butler (1993: 22—3) understands the Symbolic as the making immutable of sexual difference; rather than a single symbolic order, she argues for the existence of multiple, over-lapping symbolics. Furthermore, current heterosexual hegemony is not a transcendental, a-historical structure[4]; it is open to rearticulation (Butler 1994a: 36). Moreover, according to Butler (1993: 14), the regulatory powers that produce intelligible ideas of the body—intelligible morphologies—are not 'timeless structures', but rather are 'historically revisable criteria of intelligibility which produce and vanquish bodies that matter'.

[4] In her earlier work, Butler (1990a: 35—78) referred to heterosexual hegemony as 'the heterosexual matrix'. 'The heterosexual matrix' was a description of the effect of current conceptual systems; she changed to 'heterosexual hegemony' in *Bodies That Matter* (Butler 1993) in order to emphasis that this was a culturally and historically specific system, not an inevitable one (Butler 1993: xii, 1994a: 36).

Conclusions

Some archaeologists working with gender have recognised the limitations for archaeological application of the concept of gender as radically separate from sex (e.g. Marshall 1995; Sørensen 1992; Claassen 1992b). That recognition has partly fuelled the recent spate of articles in the archaeological literature on the body (e.g. Asher-Greve 1997; Gilchrist 1997; Knapp and Meskell 1997; Meskell 1996; Yates 1993). Butler, amongst other post-structuralist feminists, has been cited in several such articles (Gilchrist 1997: 43; Joyce and Claassen 1997: 4; Knapp and Meskell 1997: 185—6; Meskell 1996: 2—3, 5), usually in the context of sex and gender and the relationship between the two. However, the implications of Butler's critique of the sex/gender split and theorising gender as performative have not been explored. Moving beyond the sex/gender split means that what archaeologists are exploring, or have access to, is the materialisation of a particular concept of sex through normative regulatory powers, rather than a cultural code placed onto an ontologically intact, 'natural' sexed body.

Butler's critique of interiority releases gender archaeology from a particular dilemma: that of the presumed methodological problem in recognising gender in the past. The concept of gender employed by archaeologists sees gender identity as a core feature of, and intrinsic to, the body. That identity is understood as an interior feature of the body, which Butler exposes as relying upon an identification with a male or female body. Consequently, once the 'living' body—its fleshy component—has disappeared, decayed, or been replaced by imagery which does not allude to male/female in an explicit way (see Part 2), then archaeologists are compelled to replace that flesh (physical sexual characteristics) in order to gender the body. If no sexual characteristics are visible, then material culture (clothing, ornamentation) or skeletal remains are used as stand-ins for gender (and hence sex). Such characteristics are understood to express the interior and coherent gender identity—the figure of the 'soul'—that has vacated the body when it changes (through decay or representation). What is revealed by the lengths that archaeologists go to in order to gender and sex a body (for example, the subjective sexing of skeletal remains (Claassen 1992b: 4); see also Chapter 5) is that gender identity relies upon an association with a male or female body, defined by the absence/presence

of penis, vagina or breasts. For example, the bones of past people take the place of the body in signifying the absent 'soul' or gender identity which is in fact based on male and female bodies. Skeletal remains are examined by increasingly sophisticated means to determine which sex they 'are'. In effect, the bones themselves become gendered (see Lucy 1997: 154—5; Joyce and Claassen 1997: 7). The result of conceiving of male/female as interior and central to identity is that material culture, skeletal remains and representations of bodies are simultaneously understood as the *expressions* of gender and as *evidence for* that gender.

Understanding gender as performative turns the above formulation on its head: material culture can be understood as constitutive of categories of gender identity, rather than being expressions, or elaborations, of the male/female dichotomy. Further, those categories need not rely upon an original or primary association with a male or female body. Once male and female have been challenged as abiding categories of identity, then archaeological inquiry need no longer be constrained by trying to recognise them or assuming their existence. Instead, material culture, especially that associated with bodily ornamentation and clothing, including grave goods assemblages and figurative imagery, as well as space and 'every-day' material culture, can be understood as complicit in the production of gendered identities. Such manifestations are evidence of the discursive production of particular bodies and parts of bodies; evidence of the performative production of gender ontologies. Moreover, contesting the foundational status of the male/female dichotomy for identity opens up the possibility of exploring masculinity, its relationship to 'male', and whether or not masculinity can be recognised in the archaeological record.

Chapter 3: Male Bodies and Masculinity

Introduction

This chapter develops the post-structuralist feminist concern with bodies and Butler's performative theory of gender outlined in Chapter 2 in order to explore the relationship between masculinity and a 'male' body. The post-structuralist feminist arguments are used to examine two points: firstly, the relationship of men to their bodies in a contemporary Western context; and, secondly, anthropological examples of other ways the body may be understood. The former point reveals that male bodies in contemporary society are *produced* in a particular form which is neither natural nor pre-ordained. The latter point shows how a 'male' body can be conceived of in different ways, which is a particularly valuable insight for archaeologists who often interpret material from disparate cultural contexts.

Until the last two decades, men and masculinities were not often explicitly an object of study. Implicitly, however, men's writing, from the *Odyssey* to Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, has frequently been obsessed by masculine identity. Similarly, theoretical approaches purporting to represent the totality of human experience from a rational, objective position have been plagued by the subjective nature of a particular form of masculinity. Even when the object of study necessarily came into contact with the question of the construction of masculinity, such as Freud's discussion on sexuality (1977 [1905]), or early sex-role theory (see below), the dominant form of masculinity was considered the norm from which all else deviated.

Men study and write about the past, and until relatively recently they dominated the discipline of archaeology (Lesick 1997: 32)[1]. The analytical structures archaeologists use are embedded in a post-Enlightenment way of conceptualising and categorising which is deeply complicit with ideals of masculinity (Baker 1997: 183—4; Connell 1993: 606; Hearn and Morgan 1990: 4; Middleton 1992: 118; Seidler 1987, 1989: 2—4, 1994). Ideas of what masculinity is, and how men learn to act and think as men, produce a particular mode of writing about the past. The connection between structures of masculinity and the pasts that are written is in most cases implicit, but the outcome can

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[1] Although not as completely as histories of archaeology (e.g. Trigger 1989) suggest (see du Cros 1993; Kehoe 1992: 24—5).

be explicit. Bodies are designated as 'male' in the past and given attributes of masculinity in much the same way as archaeologists believe men to 'be' in the present. Reflexively postulating particular types of men and masculinity for the past is part of the means whereby the category 'male' is legitimised and naturalised in the present.

The splitting of sex from gender has important implications for the study of men and what we understand by masculinity. It would appear that maintaining such a split binds gender irrevocably to a dichotomous, heterosexual concept of sex. The implication of Butler's (see Chapter 2) critique of 'heterosexual hegemony' is that masculinity as it is conceived relies upon the primacy of heterosexual desire and sexed differences to the identity it describes. Masculinity, therefore, cannot be dissociated from a male body defined as having a penis. The categories 'masculine' and 'feminine' produce a binary structure to identity. Men and women in contemporary Western society, therefore, are conceived of within that structure. Feminists have challenged the rigidity of the feminine side of the binary (see Chapter 2), and a similar level of critique must be levelled at the 'masculine' in order to expose the mechanisms of production of male bodies, in order to understand them as other than an inherent, universal category of sexed identity. The most important aspect of such a project is the dismantling of the idea of a unitary masculinity, not only in popular culture, as has been done previously in various analyses (e.g. Easthope 1986; Horrocks 1995), but more crucially within the canons of Western thought (see Middleton 1992: 152—9; Seidler 1994). Feminist studies have been explicitly concerned with exposing the mythical positioning, or non-positioning, of woman within Western philosophical discourse. It is extremely important that a similar level of critique is brought to bear on the positioning of man within discourse, especially considering the status of his representation. If the lived experience of women contradicts their representation within contemporary Western society, then a similar level of analysis should expose the fictive nature of masculine representation. Research has been carried out on the variegated nature of masculinity within the West, with terms such as 'hegemonic masculinity' (see Carrigan *et al.* 1987: 89—100) describing the varieties and hierarchical positioning of men within contemporary Western society. Furthermore, work by Black, Asian and Chicano men (see Almaguer 1991; Berger *et al.* 1995b: 3; Franklin II 1987; Rogoff and van Leer 1993: 739) has lead to the recognition that masculinity is always about more than just sexed

differences. However, in order to truly explore the actual lived experience of men, and to expose the non-inherent character of an unattainable, ideal masculine type it is necessary to explore alternative ways of categorising and expressing gender. As such the fluid and non-universal feminist re-working of the post-structuralist subject (Moore 1994a: 57), based in difference, provides a basis for such an exploration. A non-universal subject, grounded in difference is based on the bodily experiences of actual people who live through the 'regulatory powers' (Butler 1990a: 2—6) of a particular symbolic order.

The emphasis on the specific bodily experience of women is a means of allowing for the multiple inter-relations of many discourses which offer often contradictory subject positions. The unique position of women, bodies and sexuality within such a symbolic order offers the possibility of a positive re-articulation of women's subjectivity by allowing for an alternative basis for the representation of difference. Lived, bodily experience is used to challenge discursive tropes; a particular discourse and an individual's experience or understanding of that discourse are often radically different (Moore 1994a: 83).

If it is possible to understand masculinity and avoid charges of phallocentrism, then such a position must be centrally informed by feminist theory that takes sexual difference seriously, but which also refuses to be tied to the positions provided for by discourse. Men's position within society is obviously radically different from that of women. The effect of discourses on men positions them in different ways. However, the experiences of individual men are likely to be distinct from that of the discursive construct, especially when various discourses offer a variety of potential subject positions. The conceptual system of modern Western society not only defines man in opposition to woman, but also excludes particular people and bodies from legitimate representation. The fiction of an inherent quality to the monolithic male subject is exposed through recourse to cultural forms which mimic maleness, and cross-cultural social meanings which highlight alternatives. Once these forms of critique are turned inwards, onto the source of our own 'folk model' (Moore 1994a) for understanding masculinity, then masculinity can be seen as always about more than just sexed differences. Cross-cultural comparison provides evidence of how bodies can be produced and conceptualised other than through recourse to the binary male/female.

The exploration of masculinity in the past, therefore, is about more than assuming the existence of, or actively looking for, physical sexual characteristics, and may involve an inquiry into a completely different understanding of the body.

This chapter proceeds with an examination of theories of masculinity which have been prominent in the literature. Sex-role theory has been especially influential within the study of masculinity, but it can be criticised for failing to consider the unequal position of men and women within contemporary society and the social structures that maintain that inequality. The concept of gender employed most frequently in the archaeological literature (see Chapter 1) has a genesis common with sex-role theory and shares many of its short-comings. Both rely to a degree on Stoller's (1964) formulation of gender and the importance of the sex/gender split. Similarly, object-relations psychoanalysis, especially in the work of Chodorow (1978), has been drawn upon extensively by Men's Studies [2] authors. She has been criticised, however, for casting men as the injured party and failing to take seriously the effect of institutional power which has invariably been in the hands of men (Segal 1993: 627—9; McMahon 1993: 676—81).

Issues of power have informed some of the more recent writing on gender and masculinity (e.g. Brittan 1989; Connell 1987, 1995; Segal 1990). There is controversy, however, on how much such theories can help explain masculinity and how much they in fact hinder that project. The writing on power draws from male theorists, who, like Freud, Foucault or Wittgenstein, often offer a description of the structure of male thought and of patriarchy, rather than an analysis of social or psychic structures (see Brittan 1989: 148; Middleton 1986; Mitchell 1974; Seidler 1994).

Such criticism makes it problematic whether one can explore 'masculinity' within current social theories. Therefore, the work of sexual difference feminists can, and must, inform such an exploration. Previous accounts of masculinity have rarely critically examined the concept of the 'male body'; rather, it has been taken as a basis and foundation for such accounts. Therefore, the work of Theweleit (1987, 1989) on the men of the *Freikorps* of pre-Nazi Germany is used to demonstrate that a monolithic,

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[2] Men's Studies denotes a field of enquiry that, following the lead of Women's Studies, self-consciously attempted to critically analyse masculinity (Stacey 1993: 712; see Brod 1987a).

unitary type of masculinity is a discursive ideal which produces certain bodies as male. Once the meaning given to male bodies is recognised as constructed and variable, it becomes possible to examine the fixity of the category 'male' itself. Consequently, this chapter concludes by examining cross-cultural evidence for ways in which bodies that we understand as 'male' are afforded different weight in the construction of identity. A cross-cultural perspective is essential for an archaeological enquiry into masculinity in cultural contexts which may be radically different from that of the West.

Role theory and object-relations psychoanalysis: 'masculinity' without power

Academic research into masculinity began in the 1920s with attempts at measuring 'masculinity' and 'femininity', leading to the development of role theory in the social sciences in the 1930s (Pleck 1987: 23). From its incipience this framework was, 'motivated by the desire to demonstrate that females are inherently inferior to males' (Carrigan *et al.* 1987: 66). Pleck (1987: 21) comments that it is only once conventional social scientific wisdom came under criticism during the 1980s that it has become clear how much the social sciences have been dominated by sex-role theory. Although most of the sex-role research concentrated on 'dysfunctional' women, there was some that alluded to the contradictions and 'strains' within male roles. Most cases studied were of juvenile delinquents and educational underachievers, for which the popular explanation in the 1950s and 1960s was 'father absence' which lead to cases of 'hypermasculinity' (see Pleck 1987: 30—4).

Segal (1990: 65) notes that the amount of research into sex roles increased as psychologists were unable to find significant sex differences in cognitive and temperamental tests. There was a further marked increase in research concurrent with the impact of second-wave feminism in the sixties and seventies. Research on men within the framework also increased dramatically as it was pointed out that much of the previous work had been done by men on women whose roles were seen as problematic, whereas the male roles were considered stable. Sex-role research into men and masculinity was concerned with the difficulties of living in a male sex role, which was

considered 'oppressive' as well as physically and psychologically damaging to men (hence, for example, higher death and illness rates amongst men). Men, as well as women, needed 'liberating'. Bem (1974) developed a masculinity-femininity scale, which became the most popular measure of role internalisation by the mid 1970s. By means of separate scores for both masculinity and femininity, so allowing for 'androgynous' scores, the scale supposedly indicated how comfortable a person was in their role. The more androgynous the result, the better adjusted they were[3].

By the late 1970s there were arguments for the abandonment of sex-role theory, as it implied, 'that men and women were separate but equal' (Carrigan *et al.* 1987: 72). Any tension, or 'dysfunction' in the roles was recognised as 'role strain', and was most usually associated with women's roles (Segal 1990: 67). Carrigan *et al.* (1987: 79) point out that 'race roles' or 'class roles' are never talked about, precisely because the relations of power are so obvious. Bem's (1974) work, which was considered to demonstrate the extent in variation of conformity to traditional gender roles, still fails to take into account tension and conflict. Segal (1990: 67; see also Grim 1991) argues that: 'What we learn is what we know: people seem to feel there ought to be differences between the sexes; sometimes they themselves fit the stereotypes and sometimes they don't'.

Carrigan *et al.* (1987: 77) point out that the idea of a 'role' implies a normative standard which does not relate back to real people's lives. Segal (1990: 65—9) also notes that there seems to be little consensus of what a 'role' actually is. Any variation or conflict in roles is attributed to a non-social category of deviancy. Alternatively, conflict is attributed to a variation in masculinity due to personal experience which, when it is at the wrong end of the scale, produces role conflict. Consequently, the framework can be used diametrically to explain the same thing. Furthermore, Segal (1993: 627) argues that it is impossible to account for the diversity of men's and women's experiences from within sex-role theory.

The psychological framework of sex roles had its counterpart in object-relations psychoanalysis in influencing work on masculinity. The work of the group *Men Against Sexism*, who were very active in Men's Studies and politics throughout the 1970s and until

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[3] For a reformulation of Bem's sliding scale, see Sedgwick (1995: 15—6) on the '*n*-dimensions' of identity.

the mid 1980s, was heavily influenced by the work of Chodorow (Rutherford 1992: 32; Segal 1990: 74—5) and culminated in the publication of *The Sexuality of Men* (Metcalf and Humphries 1985). Developing the findings of Hite (1981) on men's sexuality the authors explore the idea that all is not well with men, 'that beneath the macho posing and the bedroom performance, many men have unsure and conflicting feelings about their sexuality' (Metcalf 1985: 1). Metcalf (1985) describes the two broad themes within the book as: the idea that male sexuality can only be understood in terms of a psychoanalytic understanding of the relation of the child to the family; and the changing place of women in the world in the last thirty years. In these terms, the book explores the conflict between the outward show of masculinity and the 'true' inner life of men in which they are vulnerable, fearful and insecure. Most of the authors in the book accept the mother-son dyad as central to the construction of masculinity and men's identity. For example, Ryan (1985: 15) argues: 'There is reason to believe that the intersexed nature of the mother-son relationship is a key to the understanding of men's fragile gender identity and the related problems of fear of commitment and intimacy'.

As can be seen, there is a tendency in object-relations psychoanalysis to imply that women are the powerful sex, as no mention is made of gender relations of power. As Segal (1990: 77) has written:

> We are presented with a psychic reductionism which neglects, where it does not deny or invert, the relevance of men's social power and (except in the case of childcare) the sexual division of labour and its dynamics.

Among other difficulties with feminist object-relations theory Segal (1990: 81—2) points out a circularity in their argument: it presupposes the existence of a society in which male dominance was already established. Furthermore, the analysis is based on the assumption of a normative standard by which mothers relate to sons, and as such does not account for the differences between men, or the influence of race or class on the construction of masculinities. Furthermore, the discussions of masculinity which rely on object-relations psychoanalysis characterise men as non-nurturing. McMahon (1993: 68) argues that this may be a relevant description of current Western practices, but it does not account for the potential in men to be nurturers.

Masculinity and Power

The object-relations approach to masculinity remains implicit in many Men's Studies writings, as men vie to establish a legitimate and independent field of study. A great deal of such literature ignores recent feminist writing and occasionally sets itself up in direct opposition to such work (e.g. Brod 1987b: 6; Kimmell 1987: 10). Cornwall and Lindisfarne (1994: 30) criticise Brod (1987b) for justifying the foundation of a new discipline (Men's Studies) by implying that only men can truly understand men. A similar strategy of discipline-building through exclusion is evident in Knapp's (1996; Knapp and Meskell 1997) 'masculinist archaeology'. Knapp (1996) outlines an area of study within gender archaeology and then names it. He argues that 'masculinist' writers have been exploring gender-related topics for at least the past decade and that it is important to include their work and a 'masculinist' perspective in archaeology in order to avoid a 'gynocentric', 'exclusionary, feminist world-view' (Knapp 1996: 1). By the end of the article 'feminist and masculinist perspectives' appears comfortably in the text (Knapp 1996: 7); by the later article the formulation has changed to 'masculinist and feminist' (Knapp and Meskell 1997: 183). The argument that a masculinist perspective must be employed in order to counter a 'gynocentric, feminist world-view' re-establishes 'masculinist' and 'men' as relevant objects of study and as the arbitrators of balanced accounts of the past. The implication is that a 'masculinist' perspective can challenge both androcentric and gynocentric accounts of the past, whereas a feminist perspective merely replaces an androcentric account with a gynocentric account. Furthermore, Knapp cites 'masculinist' authors to counter gynocentrism, but relies entirely on feminist critique in his account of archaeology. Neither does he outline what a 'masculinist' archaeology actually is, or how its approach would benefit archaeology. He argues that men must become involved in gender archaeology, but implies they must do so through a 'masculinist' archaeology, whilst simultaneously he acknowledges the indebtedness of 'masculinists' to feminists. Such confusion arises, I suggest, because of Knapp's implied need to establish, to 'name', a field of endeavour from which to work. A critical study of masculinity in the past can be accomplished within a feminist framework, and does not necessitate the establishment of a 'masculinist' archaeology. Solomon-Godeau (1995: 76; see also Canaan and Griffin 1990; Hanmer 1990; Solomon-Godeau 1997: 20) writes of the study of masculinity in general:

More disturbingly, the very appeal of approaching masculinity as a newly discovered discursive object may have less to do with the "ruination" of certain masculinities in their oppressive and insubordinating instrumentalities than with a new accommodation of their terms—an expanded field for their deployment—in which the fundamentals do not change.

Knapp's (1996) article is a graphic example of the practices that maintain the structures of power which sex-role theory and object-relations psychoanalysis cannot account for and which many Men's Studies authors steadfastly ignore. Both sex-role theory and object-relations psychoanalysis can be criticised for ignoring, and even reifying, the asymmetry of power between women and men. McMahon (1993: 687) argues that object-relations theory makes it easy for men to deny agency in the maintenance of patriarchy. Similarly, sex-role theory treats men's and women's 'roles' as complimentary and equal. Both theoretical frameworks ignore similarities between men and women and also ignore differences between men, instead relying on normative standards of White masculinity (Segal 1993: 629). Sex-role theory, Connell (1993: 599) argues, 'squeezes out the dimension of social structure' and ignores the institutional organisation of men's and women's positions in society and the unequal distribution of power.

The concept of sex roles and the findings of object-relations psychoanalysis are paralleled by the understanding of gender in much of the archaeological literature. Stoller was influential in both sex-role theory and object-relations psychoanalysis (Segal 1993: 628), where his work on transsexuals suggested that men had more problems with their gender identity than women. These theories do not take into account the asymmetry in relations of power between men and women; neither, on the same grounds, can the archaeology of gender adequately address the issue of masculinity. Knapp's (1996; Knapp and Meskell 1997) 'masculinist' archaeology, whilst recognising differences between men, treats 'masculinist' and 'feminist' as equal partners in the exploration of gender. The two positions are both situated practices and therefore cannot be equal. Feminists work in opposition to structures that position women in a particular and damaging way; 'masculinists', however, start from the position of dominance. The term 'masculinist' reinstates the binary opposition masculine : feminine, but leaves out the asymmetry of the equation. In a similar way to the use of the term 'gender studies' in archaeology (see Chapter 1), the assumed equivalency of 'masculinist'

and 'feminist' perspectives, 'directly contradicts the political impetus of feminist analysis—to mark the constitutive asymmetry of sexed positions by which language' and identity emerge (Butler 1994b: 17).

Such short-comings have lead to the adoption of theories of power in various forms by writers on masculinity. The development of a theory of 'hegemonic masculinities' (Carrigan *et al.* 1987) has been the most influential (Connell 1987, 1993, 1995; Donaldson 1993; Lindisfarne and Cornwall 1994: 20; Messner 1993). Hegemonic masculinity refers to how, 'particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth, and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relations that generate their dominance' (Carrigan *et al.* 1987: 92). Hegemonic masculinity, therefore, is constructed not only in relation to women, but also in relation to 'subordinated' masculinities (Messner 1993: 724). The concept allows the recognition of the variegated positioning of different men in society, the interrelations between class, race and masculinity, and takes into account the structures through which power maintains particular men in positions of authority. Lindisfarne and Cornwall (1994: 20) develop Carrigan *et al.*'s formulation to include the co-existence of various hegemonic models of masculinity.

Foucault's (e.g. 1977, 1982) writings on power have also been used by writers on masculinity to describe the ways in which power is productive of certain types of masculinity and how particular men are maintained in positions of authority (e.g. Brittan 1989; Nixon 1997: 302—4, 322—3). Furthermore, a weakness of the theory of hegemonic masculinities in that power is falsely naturalised (Lindisfarne and Cornwall 1994: 23) can be contested through Foucault's emphasis on the power of the 'oppressed'. However, there are problems in using Foucault's formulation of power. Seidler (1992) argues that through Foucault's theory we are left with a strangely disembodied notion of power. Furthermore, Foucault's failure to address gender, or his own gendered standpoint, has been criticised (Lindisfarne and Cornwall 1994: 23; Seidler 1987: 106; Ramazanoglu 1993: 2).

Masculinity, sexual difference and bodies

An exploration of masculinity must be informed by feminist work on sexual difference if the study is to be grounded in the contemporary political reality of the unequal positioning of men and women within society. However, there is no simple correlation between the positioning of women and men, which correspondingly makes it a pertinent question whether one can study men at all using the insights of sexual difference feminist scholarship. As discussed in Chapter 2, theories of sexual difference take that positioning seriously, basing analysis on this crucial difference, as well as the difference between women. Braidotti (1994: 39) has remarked that the relation between 'Subject' and 'Other' is not one of reversibility. Although Braidotti is referring to the representation of men and women within the 'Symbolic' order, her point is valid for an attempt at using the 'Other' to explain the 'One': the positions are radically different.

Similarly, Middleton (1992: 158—9) warns of the dangers of attempting to use available theory structures for understanding masculinities, stressing that more often than not such theories conceal structures of meaning and explanation that describe rather than explain modern males (see Middleton 1986; Seidler 1994). Whilst feminism can work in opposition, due to women's traditional exclusion from theory, and therefore can offer incisive criticism and develop strategies of representation for women, men must be wary of any direct appropriation of such theories. Middleton (1992: 131) points out that some men's studies authors conflate feminism and post-structuralism, situating the former within the latter and thereby guaranteeing themselves understanding of feminist theory. He further argues that the use of psychoanalysis by sexual difference theory is misleading because psychoanalytical theory is treated as foundational rather than as a developing field without due notice being paid to recent developments (Middleton 1992: 133). Feminism is able to use psychoanalytical theory oppositionally, to critique patriarchy, whereas an attempt to use psychoanalysis for studying masculinity would involve a recognition of its complicity with issues of male domination and power, and would need to begin by 'challenging its evidential, structural, institutional and ideological formations' (Middleton 1992: 133). The critical semiological use of psychoanalysis within sexual difference by feminists cannot be simply extended or reversed to include men and masculinity, due to the asymmetries in

power and knowledge, without 'reinstating the very authoritarianism that feminism was challenging' (*ibid*: 136). Middleton (1992: 164—5), however, is arguing from the position of developing an 'emancipatory discourse' for men which would require a 'transfigurative' type of critique. In order for actual changes to be made to the structures of masculinities (such as needs and pleasures), outside the influence of patriarchy, then 'transfiguration' would need to take place. However, it is the very fact that asymmetrical relations of power do exist between men and women (amongst many other social intersections) in contemporary society that sexual difference has to be taken seriously in any discussion of masculinity.

Although for some feminists psychoanalysis offers emancipatory potential as a theory of the psyche in itself, within sexual difference theory psychoanalysis is acknowledged as being a description of patriarchy, and not a recommendation for it (see Mitchell 1974; Middleton 1992). A similar point is made by Butler (1994b: 6), who states that: 'the recourse to sexual difference within feminist theory is at its most productive when it is taken not as a ground, foundation, or methodology, but as a *question* posed but not resolved'. It is this critical potential of sexual difference theory that is most useful for studying and developing a greater understanding of masculinities in contemporary Western contexts, rather than using it in an emancipatory project. In support of Irigaray's ideas on sexual difference, Theweleit (1989: 107) states:

> What Irigaray is demanding is that multiplicities be explored - though never as a basis for formal legal distinctions - and that they be explored in men as well as women - in men who may no longer desire wholeness, nor the unity in which "consciousness" struggles to conquer the "drives". Men, she suggests should begin to dismantle the "form" they have always wished to be, to make fluid its contours, to take pleasure in contradictions (death to logical consistency), openness, powerlessness (no longer to live as killers) ...

A similar strategy is proposed by Braidotti (1994: 54) who calls for a 'melt-down' of the male symbolic in order to provide for the 'radical refreshment' of men and women. Recent work on masculinity that stresses the multiple interpolations, mediations and expansiveness of the term are informative of the inability of the category to exhaustively describe what it is taken to represent (see contributions to Berger *et al.* 1995a). Such work, furthermore, highlights the non-monolithic status of masculinity in practice. An

aspect of the project of recognising the performative production of the ontological category 'man' (see Chapter 2) is an emphasis on the variety of men's experiences of their bodies, and how these experiences differ from the ideal/s of masculinity.

The fundamental question of the ontological status of a male body has not been explored in the literature on masculinity. An uncomplicated association is often made between a male body and masculinity (e.g. Brod 1987b: 2; Morgan 1993: 67—87; Seidler 1997: 186—8), where that male body is implicitly or explicitly understood as defined by the presence of a penis. That association is then used to universalise about masculinity in other historical and cultural contexts (e.g. Connell 1993; Kimmell 1987: 123—53)[4]. Seidler (1997: 186—8) demonstrates an influential trend in men's writing on masculinity which is a return to the body as the site of 'true' knowledge. Seidler (*ibid.*) inverts the mind/body dualism, claiming that men have traditionally disregarded bodies due to their association with the 'feminine' side of the dualism. Therefore men must re-value their bodies as the source of emotion and feeling. Those bodies, however, are still understood as a 'male' body defined by the presence of a penis. The importance of bodies to identity has been explored by feminists. Butler (1990a: 136) describes the body as that which mobilises psychic action from the start; Moore (1994a) maintains that one comes to understanding of social distinctions through one's body; whilst Connell (1995) develops his theory of 'bodily-reflexive practice' in opposition to both social constructivists and biology-as-destiny arguments. Theweleit, Butler and Moore are to some extent all attempting to relocate 'interiority' on the body; to reconnect the psychic and the social by denying an essence to identity located in some interior place. By denying the hold of an interior place, these ideas are extremely useful in re-thinking men's relationships to their bodies, and are in direct contradiction to Seidler's argument that the body is the site of true feelings. Discourses are acted out on the surface of bodies, and the idea of an 'interior' space is similarly a discursive construct (see Chapter 2, pp.33—5). Theweleit (1987, 1989) provides important insights into how the men of the *Freikorps* constructed an idea of their own interiors which had to be protected (both from being engulfed, and from engulfing them) by the maintenance of their 'body-

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[4] The idea of a transcendental male body is especially prevalent in the 'hairy man' of Bly's (e.g. 1990) 'mythopoetic' men's movement. Bly relies upon culturally diverse myths to postulate an internal, manly

armour'. Furthermore, Moore (1994a: 71) argues that bodies take metaphors seriously. This is an extremely powerful notion—as discussed below, the *Freikorps* make numerous associations between their bodies and machines. Connell (1995: 48) states that the power of the biology-as-destiny type arguments lies not in their evidence, but in their use of the body-machine metaphor. Through an analysis of Theweleit's writings the status of ideas about men's bodies as discursive productions is made explicit. Moreover, the constant need to reiterate those ideas demonstrates that a sense of the body is constructed by those ideas and does not rest on a 'natural' male body.

Contesting monolithic masculinity: men's experiences of their bodies

There has been research into the dominant cultural conception of what a man is supposed to be, and the social pressures exerted on men by that concept, as well as the ways representations of men are promulgated through popular culture (e.g. Easthope 1986; Horrocks 1995; Middleton 1992; Nixon 1997). However, an important distinction must be made between the 'ideal' type of man—the abstract subject—and the experiences of individual men which is often contradictory when compared to that ideal. As Moore (1994a: 83) has pointed out, the reality of lived experience is that the subject of discourse cannot be experienced in a pure form. The unitary ideal of the masculine is fractured by the alternative subject positions offered by a variety of discourses. The concept of hegemonic masculinities and Butler's (1993: 167) suggestion that sexual difference is articulated 'through or *as*' other vectors of power highlight this fractured dimension to masculinity. The experience of individual men is in contradiction to the ideal type they attempt to assume through the power of regulatory discourses (Butler 1990a.); that contradiction being expressed by re-doubled efforts to effect unity and wholeness, often through the repression of others.

A graphic example of the way in which bodies are produced as having specific meanings through discourse is Theweleit's (1987, 1989) account of the men of the

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'essence' which contemporary men do not usually have access to due to the lack of older men to initiate them.

Freikorps of pre-Nazi Germany. Theweleit uses a post-structuralist psychoanalytical framework to examine what turned these men into killers. A central postulate in his analysis is that through the 'psychodynamics' of early life, and the transformative institutions to which these men went (the military academy), the men of the *Freikorps* attempted to consolidate an ideal type of unitary masculinity. Theweleit examined a large number of writings by these men, from novels to personal accounts, and treats them as a primary source on how the *Freikorps* men attempted to effect closure on their form of masculinity. For Theweleit the material is not a secondary source, but rather it is direct evidence of the necessity for the men to constantly infuse their worlds with evidence of the unassailability of their position; to literally create the symbolic domain that fosters their identity through an engagement with the outside world and re-signifying that world in accordance with their own fears. Benjamin and Rabinbach (1989: xxii) describe the writing of the *Freikorps* as a 'written "form" of experience', in which the 'threat is neutralised by discourse'. The evidence put forward by Theweleit can also be read as a powerful example of both what can happen when a unitary ideal, a monolithic form to masculinity, is acted out; and the inherent violence involved in attempting to do so.

Theweleit insists on the primacy of violence in his analysis, which he sees as originating from a hatred of women. The ultimate aim of these men was to maintain their wholeness; in this context the 'woman within' constitutes the biggest threat. Theweleit describes a set of opposing metaphors which constitute what the men aspire to be, and what they see as most threatening to achieving their wholeness. Women are associated with desire, softness, liquid, floods, and by extension the revolutionary masses, the 'Red Flood'. The men of the *Freikorps* despise desire and aspire to hardness and wholeness. Benjamin and Rabinbach (1989: xvii) describe the process by which the men attempt to achieve this state: 'The self is mechanised through a variety of mental and physical procedures: military drill, training, operations which Foucault identified as "techniques of the self".

Theweleit is extremely concerned with killing and warfare as a symbolic system of desire; the symbolic system and encoding employed are consciously over-explicit. Such symbolic over-explicitness is employed because: 'They offer us precisely the kind of exchange ... in which the possibility of experience is exchanged for a meaning, for

an objectifying concept' (Theweleit 1989: 6). The codes and symbols used by fascism were employed to create a mythic world of unity and wholeness, a symbolic order in the image of the 'ideal' man, in which experience is replaced by a meaning derived from that symbolic order.

If the symbolic order called upon were in some way pre-ordained, natural or self-evident, then such extreme methods would be unnecessary. The 'technologies of the self' described by Theweleit were necessary in order to fabricate a world which was threatened from every angle, which there was no hope of achieving. The actual experience of these men is what threatened their wholeness most, what constantly undermined their attempts to achieve the ideal. In this sense the ideal is just that, an ideal which cannot be realised. The contradictions of experience of the men of the *Freikorps*, the repeated attempts to dissipate their actual bodily experiences in the face of what they desire to be, can be seen a gross failure of the symbolic order in which they are enmeshed. Furthermore, such contradictory experiences need only be seen as contradictions if one considers an essential, unitary identity to be the ideal, or 'natural' type of masculinity, as the *Freikorps* obviously did. Although the accounts that Theweleit draws from are primarily concerned with constructing the symbolic domain for the fascist man, there is much evidence to support the view that maintaining wholeness is an impossible task, full of contradictions.

Drawing from the account of Salomon, Theweleit examines the induction of young men into the fascist symbolic economy. The following excerpt from Salomon's writing is used by Theweleit (1989: 149) as evidence of a person semi-integrated into the fascist 'machine':

> It was, I believed, my own inadequacy that erected an iron barrier between myself and my comrades. I tried repeatedly to break it down; but even the most forceful expression of my lost yearning for human warmth and clumsy intimacy would have been useless. Even outside the academy, an air of sordidness surrounded such gestures; inside, they were still more likely to offend sensibilities. My pitiful efforts to struggle free of my cocoon rebounded against rubber walls; yet I continued to search for some escape. The futility of my efforts was made bitterly clear to me; yet at the same time, doors were opened as wide, at least, as they were able.

Although this excerpt must be taken in the context of the narrative structure of the account, and as such is a necessary part of negating what Salomon saw as his previous weak characteristics, it nonetheless exposes the need for a conscious reformulation of one's previous experiences. It is a conscious effort at self-representation within the bounds of a perceived discursive ideal. A further extract from Salomon's account shows the force of his defence against contradictory feelings and past experiences:

> A deep chasm divided me from the habits and customs of my so-called parental home, a chasm I felt neither the desire nor the compulsion to bridge. I found any kind of solicitous care quite intolerable, and the broad stream of my mother's empathy only made me wish to breathe the harsher air of the corps again.
>
> (Theweleit 1989: 151)

Theweleit (*ibid*) argues that the fact that Salomon is still able to feel his mother's empathy is evidence of the incompleteness of the process he is undergoing. It further suggests that he must repudiate the experience of having allowed himself to feel his mother's empathy by stressing his dislike for it; he *was* able to feel such 'solicitous care' but must deny it.

Theweleit (1989: 225) describes isolation as one of the situations in which *Freikorps* men found it most difficult to maintain themselves, even Lieutenant Erhardt, an 'older man' (nearly forty) who still feels the threat of dissipation when in hiding ('underground'):

> Each day held the threat of renewed humiliation. But I kept a grip on myself. Though every evening presented me with some new source of revulsion, I fended off every urge to vomit. Any man who has successfully conquered seasickness must equally remain impervious to the nausea of life. I kept myself from slackening by issuing myself my own orders.

Theweleit's is a complex account of the specific masculine symbolic economy of fascist Germany, and as such is historically and culturally specific. The inevitable outcome, and in fact the desired outcome, of the type of masculinity he describes is bloodshed: the 'soldier male' has only one outlet for his constantly repudiated

'contradictory' desires and experiences, which is to kill or be killed. Although Theweleit does not explicitly say so, neither does he deny the possibility that what he is describing is an extreme example of the consequences of a phallologocentric symbolic order. In a discussion of the use of referential language, Theweleit (1989: 54) states: 'What is expressed in the concepts we currently use is above all a fear of the experience of difference'. What Theweleit describes in his account is just that fear being acted out by men in an extremely explicit and devastating form. With this evidence it is apparent that any collapse of sexual difference into sex and gender, and the consequent liberating of gender from the bounds of sexual difference does not take seriously the political reality of the asymmetry of power based in a phallologocentric symbolic order. Furthermore, the constant need of the men of the *Freikorps* to repeat and reiterate certain acts and gestures, and the large volume of writing they produce, is evidence of a performatively enacted masculinity. The need to repeat exposes the tenuous and fictitious ontological status of such a type of 'man'.

Throughout Theweleit's account the men's bodies are the main sites of the struggles of maintaining their unitary identities. The *Freikorps* writings are inundated with metaphors of the body, such as the common opposition between women's bodies as liquid, watery and associated with 'the mire', the 'mass' and 'dirt', whilst the 'soldier male' bodies are supposedly 'hard', 'armoured' and 'machines'. Metaphors of men's bodies as machine-like are extremely common in popular culture (see films such as *Terminator*, *Total Recall*, *Robocop*) which feed off the idea of the transcendental, unfeeling, disembodied man (see Seidler 1994: 19—22). Braidotti (1994: 38) has remarked that the price men pay for their position as the universal subject is precisely this disembodiment. However, the idea of the machine-man, or the disembodied man able to withstand extreme pain and hardship, is a discursive ideal, an abstract idea. As Theweleit's study shows, such ideas can be extremely lethal; but they are by no means 'natural', nor do they match the experiences of individual men. Such discrepancies make both theorising the relationship between masculinity and bodies, and making explicit the culturally specific status of the idea of the 'male' body, extremely urgent tasks.

Alternative bodies: 'male' in cross-cultural perspective

Most studies of masculinity have either set up a distinction between masculinity and a male body, arguing that the two are distinct, or they have infused the two. Sexual difference feminists have used the site of women's bodies to explore difference and alternative understandings of women's identities. The concept 'masculinity' or 'masculinities' relies upon an acceptance of an uncomplicated male body defined by the presence of a penis as the basis of identity. However, there are many ways in which men experience their bodies and live through them. Contemporary male bodies are lived through a binary conceptual system male/female; those bodies, however, exceed their representation and production within that system. Furthermore, the examples that are brought out through anthropology enable us to recognise alternative ways of conceptualising bodies which do not rely upon the primacy of the male/female dichotomy. Therefore, not only does the experience of being male in contemporary culture expose the fiction of the ontological category 'male' (although that 'fiction' has very real effects), but cross-cultural comparisons also hint at other ways that bodies are brought into being.

Men's Studies has been accused of being 'anthropologically naïve' and relying upon universalist notions of sex and gender (Lindisfarne and Cornwall 1994: 29, 35). Although most studies of masculinity by men have an emancipatory objective, or are motivated by a desire to see men change and as such are concerned above all with analyses of current practices, the naturalisation of biological categories in the literature is a serious impediment to that project. Furthermore, the exploration of masculinity in the past necessitates that the category 'male' be examined in a cross-cultural perspective if that exploration is to avoid projecting current normative standards of gender onto the past.

Within the contemporary West 'sex' is central to a person's identity (see Chapter 2). People who cannot be identified as either male or female cannot, therefore, be assigned a correct category of identity, which exposes the limits of such categories. For example, the distress caused to parents of babies with ambiguous genitalia was demonstrated in the BBC's 'Dark Secrets' documentary (BBC2, April 1996). The program documented two couples who had had hermaphrodite children. The perceived

need for a child to have an unambiguous sex as soon as it is born was illustrated by the surgical reconstruction that the doctors immediately discussed. They advised the parents not to gender their children until they could ascertain whether to surgically create a boy or a girl. The parents, however, felt instant pressure to dress their children as 'boys' or 'girls', to have them express their 'sex', even though the children were obviously not male or female. One couple ignored the doctors' advise and proceeded to gender their child 'blue' in accordance with the father's desire for a son. Once the decision had been made the child could be dressed in blue for the photographer at the hospital, could be bought a blue pram and trimmings, etc. However, the doctors eventually decided the baby could most easily be reconstructed as a girl. The parents were so distressed at the prospect of explaining to their friends and family that their little boy was in fact a little girl—that blue should have been pink—that they moved house and area.

The sexual physiology of the babies caused the initial provocation in the case of the hermaphrodite children. The manner in which the children were gendered, however, demonstrates two points: that the so-called 'expressions' of gender must follow the sex of the child; and, that those expressions create the illusion of a coherent sexed identity, posited on the dichotomy male/female. Usually, the production of sexed identities is less apparent: a male baby is dressed in blue and learns the acts and gestures of its gender; those acts and gestures are then used as evidence of a 'natural' masculine identity. Until the doctors decided to reconstruct the baby as a girl, that baby had 'passed' successfully as a boy: the physiology of the child was of secondary importance to its appearance. However, s/he[5] was eventually forced by the surgeon's knife to conform to one or other of our recognised sexed categories, male or female.

The exposure of our gender regime provided by the case of the hermaphrodite children can be taken further by examining anthropological examples of how bodies are produced by, and productive of, different meanings. In general, anthropology used and still uses the male/female dichotomy in the exploration of issues of gender, in which 'western distinctions privilege the presence of male genitalia in categorising the two 'sexes' on which two 'genders' are culturally elaborated' (Lindisfarne and Cornwall 1994:

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[5] The expression 's/he' does not adequately describe the children. They are neither 'he' nor 'she'—the language does not exist to 'name' them. That linguistic impossibility exposes the deep complicity between language and categories of identity.

37). However, some anthropological writing reveals the non-primacy afforded to physical sexed differences in particular cultural contexts. It is likely that bias in previous writings, as well as the increasing globalisation of Western conceptual systems, has obscured further exceptions to the production of sexed bodies in the male/female model. The exceptions are growing as the literature expands (Broch-Due 1993; Busby 1997; Furth 1993; Nanda 1993; Moore 1994a: 23—4; Moore 1994b: 82; Strathern 1988). For example, Strathern (1988: 182—7) argues that Melanesians define persons in terms of their 'capabilities', and that these capabilities, 'are made manifest through an internal differentiation between male and female' (Strathern 1988: 182). A child is the consequence of the 'acts' of its parents and is therefore a composite of male and female elements (Strathern 1993: 47—8). In order to become a parent, the child must replace its androgynous body with one that is single sexed: 'the composite child is thus divested of part of a gender identity: part of a whole becomes one of a pair' (Strathern 1993: 48). Moore (1994a: 23—4) argues in that case of the Hua of New Guinea that male and female are not discrete categories, nor are they premised on the categorisation of 'biological sex differences evidenced by external genitalia' (*ibid*: 24). A further example is that of the female body amongst the Gitanos of Spain, which is defined by the *honra*—a tangible, physical feature of women's identity, located inside women's vaginas (Gay-y-Blasco 1997: 519). Gay-y-Blasco (1997: 531) argues that the *honra* is central to a women's identity: 'Among the Gitanos, a woman is a woman because she has – or has had – the *honra* inside her body'.

The recognition that male/female sexual dimorphism is culturally specific does not necessarily challenge the centrality afforded to physical sexual characteristics in the constitution of identities. Male/female and masculine/feminine may still be taken as the principle means of differentiation, with a third sex or gender merely replicating key aspects of the assumed primary categories male/female. A further step must be taken to dissociate identity entirely from a necessary predication on genital differences.

The anthropological literature on the berdache of North America illustrates how early gender anthropology interpretations maintained the centrality of sexed differences to identity. Further work, however, reveals that the berdache are identified primarily by the tasks they perform and that they may constitute other gender categories. The first Western accounts of the berdache described them as men dressed in women's clothing

who went around with the women and practised sodomy (see Whitehead 1993 [1981]: 502; Roscoe 1996: 329—30). 'Berdache' is the generic name given by ethnographers to anatomical males who dressed and acted as women in many Native North American groups; cases of female-male crossing are far less common (Whitehead 1993 [1981]: 503). Whitehead (*ibid*: 504) argues that the defining features of gender in Native North American societies were anatomical sex and behaviour or social role. She considers anatomical sex to have been the '*prima facie*' basis of a person's 'social destiny'. She argues that although anatomical sex was never 'forgotten' by the berdache or their community, a berdache could be socialised either as a man or woman irrespective of anatomy (*ibid*). Whitehead explains the acceptance of such cross-gendering in those societies in which it was practised as part of the complex division of labour in which men as berdache were therefore allowed access to 'female prestige'. As such, gender and prestige are understood by Whitehead to be related to a dichotomous division of labour based on two distinct genders or sexes. According to Whitehead, the berdache exceptions are therefore anatomically male 'females' who take on all the roles of women, including having sexual intercourse with men.

Whitehead's (1993 [1981]) analysis relies on a basic premise of a binary categorisation of genital differences being central to the cultural elaboration of identity[6]. Roscoe (1996: 343) criticises Whitehead's account on similar grounds, arguing that she takes the correspondence between sex and gender roles for granted. The result is a 'hierarchisation' of sex and gender in which gender is merely a reiteration of sex (*ibid*: 345). Furthermore, Whitehead's 'gender-crossing' model in which all the attributes of the opposite gender are taken on by the berdache, including desire, merely reinstates a heterosexist 'gender system' (*ibid*: 346; see Chapter 2). Roscoe argues for the acceptance of male and female berdache as third and fourth gender categories, occupying distinct and autonomous statuses from men and women. He states that cross-dressing or sexual preferences are not reliable indicators of berdache status: some male berdache dressed distinctively from both men women; some did not cross-dress at all; often, female berdache only wore men's clothing for war and hunting; and, heterosexual, homosexual

[6] In archaeology, Gilchrist's (1997: 43) use of the berdache example can be criticised on the same grounds.

and bisexual practices occurred with both long and short-term partners (Roscoe 1996: 335). Furthermore, some words for berdache bear no relation to the words for 'man' and 'woman' and cannot be etymologised (*ibid*: 339; see above, pp.59, n.5). Moreover, the 'life-cycle rites' of the berdache, rather than mimicking those of men or women, paralleled them whilst being specific to the berdache (*ibid*). It is clear from Roscoe's account, and hinted at in Whitehead's (1993 [1981]: 504), that physiological differences were not as important as activity and dress in determining *any* person's identity in Native American society and not merely the berdache. The berdache are the most explicit example of such a system to Westerners because of the Western reliance on a male/female dichotomy and its perceived primacy to identity. Roscoe (1996: 341—2) writes that one cannot assume that physiological differences between bodies will be interpreted as dichotomous and fixed, nor that 'they will be viewed as behavioural or social determinants (as opposed to, for example, a belief that behaviour might determine anatomy)'. It is clear from his text, however, that Roscoe is still reliant on 'women' and 'men' as the normative categories from which the berdache categories differ. However, interpreting the categories 'men' and 'women' starting from the position of the berdache may expose the manner in which all identities were predicated on activity and dress rather than primarily on anatomy. Roscoe (1996: 359—60, emphasis added) alludes to the possibility of such an understanding of the constitution of identity amongst Native North Americans when he writes:

> Clothing and ornament in most North American societies constituted a semiotic system for signalling not merely gender but social standing, kinship status, religious status, personal accomplishments, age and so forth. *Cross-dressing itself often occurred in ritual and mythological contexts with little or no reference to berdache status.*

The berdache sometimes dressed distinctly from 'men' or 'women'; on other occasions they dressed similarly, such as the 'male' Crow berdache Osh-Tisch who dressed as a man for a day to join a war party (Roscoe 1996: 334). Some berdache took on capabilities that were associated with both men and women, such as the Navajo berdache ('*nádleehé*') Hastíín Klah who became both a 'medicine man' and a skilled weaver (*ibid*: 337). Roscoe (1996: 370) concludes that amongst Native North Americans, 'physical differences were not accorded the same weight as they are in Western belief'. I

concur with Roscoe, but rather than taking the berdache as evidence of third or fourth 'genders', it seems more pertinent to stress the generalised performative production of identities in the societies which included berdache. The adoption of certain activities, dress, knowledge, as well as physical differences, constituted the basis of differentiation amongst all members of society, not just the berdache. It appears that identity in general was not restrained by sexed differences, even in the normative categories of 'man' and 'woman'. Such categories would appear to be as various and fluid as the berdache, as Roscoe alludes to when he refers to the frequent occurrence of cross-dressing amongst men and women. There would appear to be plenty of room for movement within the normative categories 'man' and 'woman', conditioned more by rules governing appropriate behaviour and the semiotics of clothing and ornamentation than by genital differences. Physical sexual characteristics were not foundational to identity, nor used as the primary means of differentiating between persons.

Conclusions

The sex/gender split reinforces the idea of sex as pre-discursive and natural. Consequently, it disallows the examination of masculinity in other cultural contexts other than as the referent of a male body, defined by the presence of a penis. Both archaeology and Men's Studies writings on masculinity have a common genesis in their use of the concept of gender as radically free from anatomical sex; a use which reifies the idea of an internal, inherent quality to gender identity. However, Butler (see Chapter 2, pp.29—32) has demonstrated that within contemporary Western society gender must follow from sex: the idea of an internal, core identity hides and reinforces that connection. The concept 'masculinity' when applied to the study of men, can only refer to a male body. A 'male' body, however, is not a natural fact, but rather is produced and contoured by discourse. Drawing from the insights of post-structuralist feminists, it becomes apparent that masculinity is constituted through many interpolations in discourse. Consequently, 'men' always exceed their representation as a unitary, ideal

type. Contemporary Western men's experiences of their bodies demonstrate that production and the false ontological foundations of 'male' as a category.

Furthermore, the literature on masculinity often fails to recognise that bodies can be thought of and produced in different ways in different cultural contexts. The example of the berdache demonstrates that in some contexts the male body disappears as the basis, or foundation, for identity. The sexed body is afforded a different weight in the categorisation of persons. Roscoe's (1996) account of the berdache alludes to this possibility, but is constrained by an adherence to the normative categories of male/female. The difficulties in describing, or 'naming', an identity which is not based on male/female illustrates the foundational status sex and gender have within Western concepts of identity. Such difficulties further demonstrate that when male and female are used to describe categories of identity within other cultural contexts they will subsume potential differences in perceiving bodies, as male and female will always have to refer back to penis/no penis. In such cases, physical sexual characteristics are again assumed to determine identity.

The strength of Roscoe's (1996) argument is the stress he places on the distinctiveness of berdache identity: they are neither men in women's roles, nor women in men's roles. However, the use of the normative categories male/female assume that those two categories are based on physical sexual characteristics. His 'third' and 'fourth' genders, therefore, can only ever be understood as deviances from that system, as 'empty' genders. However, if the stress is placed on the performative basis for identities within the whole community of which the berdache are a part, then the necessity of any identity category within those communities being based primarily on physical sexual characteristics dissolves. Furthermore, the frequent cross-dressing to which Roscoe (1996: 359—60) alludes may indicate a fluid and non-exclusionary basis for differentiation amongst persons in those communities.

The diverse cultural contexts that archaeology explores necessitate that archaeologists examine alternative ways in which bodies express and generate identities. Within contemporary Western society the penis is represented as 'the sacred sign of the masculine' (e.g. Monick 1987). As such, identity is posited on an asymmetrical relationship based on the presence or absence of a penis. Men's experiences may exceed the power of the ideal representation, but ultimate value is always referred back to it.

The structuring power of masculinity and its effect on thought, language and writing cannot be overestimated. If alternative 'masculinities', or alternative ways of conceiving of the relationship between physical sexual characteristics and identity, are to be explored in the past then the archaeological evidence must be critically examined for the absence of the corporeal premise—a penis—on which masculinity is based. There is no necessary, *a priori*, reason that the evidence will comply with that premise.

Part 2: *An Analysis of the Figurative Imagery from Late Bronze Age Knossos (MM IIIB—LM III)*

Chapter 4: Introduction to the Archaeological Material.

The material under consideration in Part II consists of the MM IIIB—LM III figurative imagery from the Palace[1] site at Knossos, which includes frescoes, relief frescoes, relief vessels, figurines, sealings and sealstones. The associated depositional material and the spatial layout of the Palace site are also taken into consideration in the discussions in Chapter 7. This chapter gives an outline of the archaeological material, including an indication of its chronology, and where in the Palace the finds were made (see Fig. 4.1).

Previous analyses of Aegean figurative imagery have included the material from Knossos in order to generalise about Aegean imagery as a whole (see Chapter 5). However, it is clear that different areas of the Aegean contained societies with distinct administrative, economic and artistic traditions. Such distinct societies are likely to have had different conceptualisations of bodies and gender (e.g., see Olsen 1998). Furthermore, the independence and local development of different 'states' centred on the palaces in Crete, until at least LM IB, is becoming increasingly apparent (Bennet 1990: 194—8; Cherry 1986; Crowley 1995: 490; Dabney 1995: 44; Dickinson 1994: 178—9; Weingarten 1986: 283, 294, 1988: 14). An important part of the project of post-structuralist feminism (see Chapter 2) is the recognition of difference, which includes combating the universalising and generalising tendencies in theory. Therefore, the analysis in Part II concentrates on the imagery from the Palace site at Knossos and its archaeological and architectural contexts in order to allow the specificities of that imagery to emerge. Such an approach further avoids subsuming possible differences in types of imagery from distinct locations in the Bronze Age Aegean. The possibilities of interpreting material from Knossos' immediate and wider contexts in light of the analysis conducted on the Knossian material are discussed in Chapter 8. The chronological span was chosen because most of the Knossian figurative imagery is dated to the MM IIIB—LM III periods[2]. A number of authors (e.g. Cameron 1975, 1978) have attempted to designate certain 'schools' of artists active at Knossos in

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[1] I use the nomenclature 'Palace' throughout the text to designate the major site at Knossos for conveniences sake, and not because of any belief in the site necessarily having had a 'palatial', or 'royal' function.

[2] The chronology is based on MacKenzie's pottery chronology, which he divided into early, middle and late Minoan. These divisions are subdivided into I, II and III, which have been further divided in some instances into A and B, and A1, A2, etc.

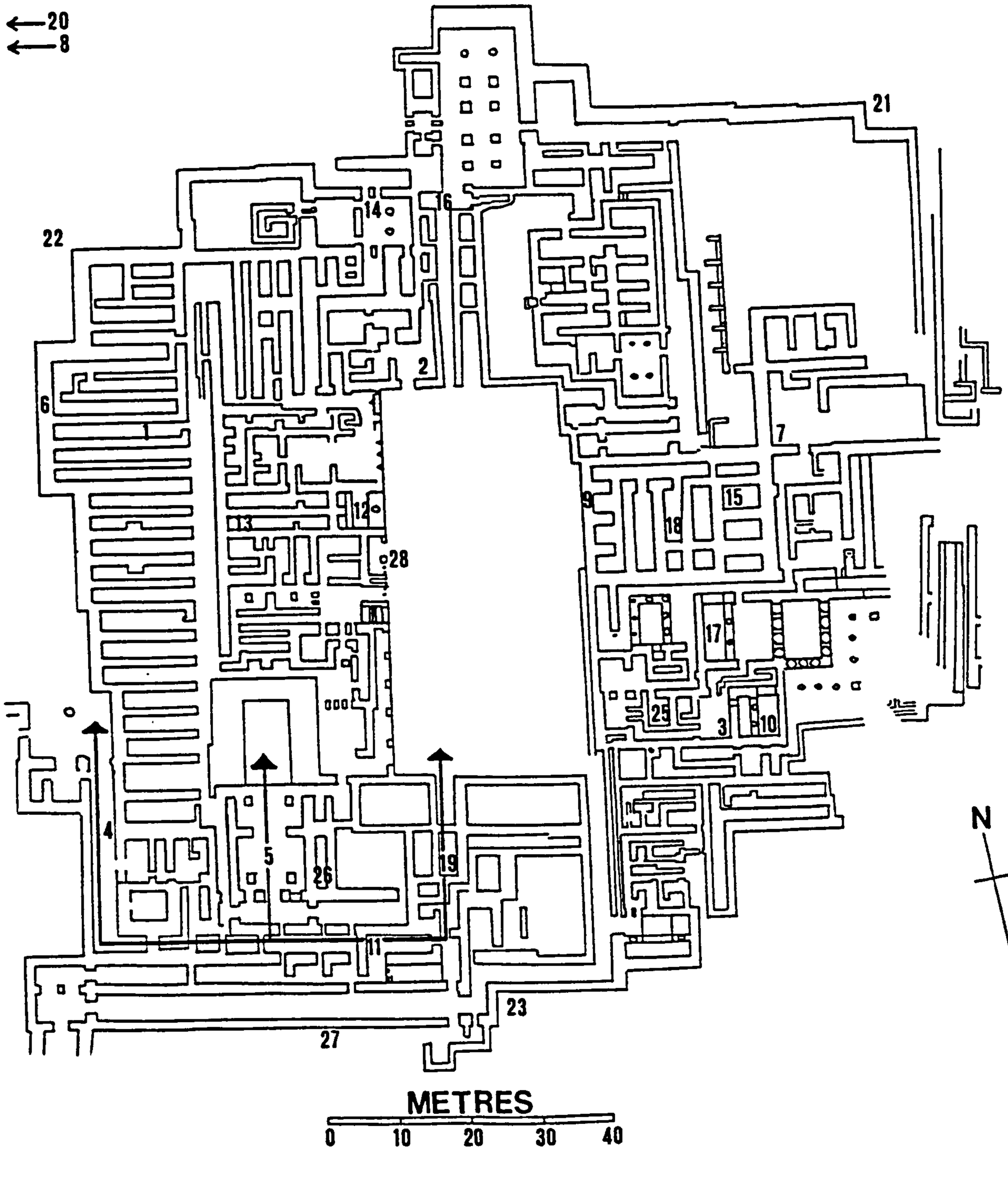


Fig. 4.1: Plan of the Palace site at Knossos with the findspots of figurative imagery, MM IIIB—LM IIII.

Key to Fig. 4.1: Plan of the Palace site at Knossos with findspots of figurative imagery, MM IIIB—LM III.

Arrows indicate the hypothetical route of the 'Corridor of the Procession', with access to the '*Piano Nobile*' via the 'South Propylaeum'.

1. XIIIth 'West Magazine'. Miniature fresco fragments.
2. North-west area, off the Central Court. The 'Sacred Grove and Dance', 'Grandstand' (Figs 5.12, 6.15—6.18, 6.20—6.23) and 'Beleaguered City' miniature fresco fragments.
3. 'Queens Megaron'. Bull-leapers miniature fresco fragment. 'Archive Deposit' and scattered deposits of sealings.
4. 'Corridor of the Procession'. The 'Procession' fresco (Figs 7.1—7.3, 7.5).
5. 'South Propylaeum'. The 'Cup-bearer' fresco figure (Fig. 6.12).
6. Either side of the west wall of 'West Magazines' XIII—XVI. The 'Camp Stool' fresco fragments Figs 5.10, 5.11, 6.10).
7. 'Court of the Stone Spout'. The 'Bull-leaper' panels fresco fragments (Figs 5.6, 5.8, 6.24, 6.25). Fragment of dark steatite pyxis with a carved 'boxer'. Seal impression (Fig. 7.19).
8. Area of the 'House of Frescoes'. Fresco fragments of black and red figures (Fig. 5.13).
9. North wall of the 'Royal Magazines'. The 'Ladies in Blue' fresco fragments.
10. Eastern light-area of the 'Queen's Megaron'. The 'Dancing Lady' fresco fragments.
11. South basements area. The 'Palanquin' (Fig. 5.5) and 'Chariot' frescoes. Deposits of sealings.
12. 'Grand Staircase'. Fragment of procession fresco (Fig. 6.14).
13. 'Magazine of the Vase Tablets'. The 'Jewel Fresco' relief fresco. Two different seal impressions with figures.
14. 'North-West Portico'. Fragments of 'Seated Lady' relief.
15. 'Loom Weight' basement. Relief fragments of human figures and bulls.
16. 'North Portico'. Life-size relief fragments of human figures and bulls.
17. Light-well of 'Hall of the Double Axes'. Relief fragment of loin-cloth.
18. Area of the 'Great East Hall'. Relief fragments of human figures.
19. Basement space below hypothetical north-south corridor. The 'Priest-King' fresco relief fragments (Fig. 5.7).
20. Area of 'Little Palace'. Fragment of steatite rhyton depicting two embracing figures (Fig. 6.5). Deposit of sealings.
21. North-east of the Palace. Fragment of steatite vessel depicting an 'archer'.
22. North-west of the Palace. Fragment of steatite rhyton depicting a figure pulling a goat. Black steatite mould of a hand (Fig. 6.8).
23. Southern border of the Palace. Fragment of steatite rhyton with two figures in procession (Fig. 6.6).
24. 'Temple Repositories'. Faience figurines and clothing (Figs 6.19, 7.13—7.17). Deposit of sealings.
25. 'East Treasury' and 'Stair closet' deposits. Fragments of ivory figurines (Figs 7.7, 7.10—7.12).
26. Eastern edge of earlier 'South Propylaeum'. Four faience figurine 'plaques' (Fig. 5.2) and a bronze figurine (Fig. 6.11).
27. Southern slope. Fragment of ivory arm and foot.
28. 'Central Shrine'. Numerous impressions of single figurative seal.

different periods. Such work, however, is dependent upon criteria such as the 'style' of the fresco art, or the 'brush marks' of a particular artist, which are hard to corroborate archaeologically. Furthermore, several of the frescoes from Knossos were found still adhering to the walls of the site at the time of excavation, and sealstones may have been used and re-used over a long period of time. There is no sure means, therefore, of dating the frescoes to a specific period (for discussion and over-view of the chronology of the frescoes, see Hawke Smith 1976; Immerwahr 1990: 172—8; Kontorli-Papadopoulou 1996: 39—49; Niemeier 1994: 83—4).

The periods from MM IIIB—LM III included a number of changes at Knossos, including changes in architecture, pottery, decorative styles, administration, storage capacities, and burial practices. MM IIIB is generally considered the change-over point from protopalatial to neopalatial. It is clear, however, that the change was not an 'event', but rather a gradual process. A more decisive change in the use and administration of the Palace site at Knossos appears to have been between LM IB and LM II. At the end of LM IB the majority of the major sites on Crete were destroyed, except the Palace site at Knossos. There is considerable debate whether Knossos subsequently came under the control of Mycenaeans (Hood 1996; Niemeier 1983), or whether the destructions indicate a Knossian 'take-over' of Crete, or both (Cherry 1986: 23). It is clear, however, that Knossian society became increasingly 'Mycenaeanised' from LM IB onwards, with the replacement of Linear A with Linear B for record keeping, and changes in type and quality of crafts produced (see Rehak 1997a). The possible changes in practices associated with the Palace site at Knossos are considered in Chapter 7. However, the difficulties in assigning precise chronological boundaries to much of the imagery and the continuity in types of bodies represented means that the general arguments in Chapter 6 will include discussion of all the material from MM IIIB—LM III.

The figurative fresco imagery from Knossos from MM IIIB—LM III includes fragments of various scales of composition, from the miniature frescoes, with figures 6cm high, to the near life-size procession frescoes. Some of the frescoes were combined with low relief sculpture in plaster. Most of the fragments in relief that were recovered are of near life-size arms and legs. Only a few indications of clothing have been recovered from the relief fresco figures. Furthermore, no heads have been found in relief, indicating that they may have been painted on the flat.

A number of fragments of stone vessels with human figures carved in low relief have been recovered from around the Palace site at Knossos, although contexts are often insecure. The finds are often isolated, with little indication of the full extent of the vessel to which they belonged.

The figurines found at Knossos include, most notably, the faience figurines from the 'Temple Repositories' and the ivory figurines from the 'Domestic Quarter' (see Chapter 7). Other figurine finds include a steatite mould of a hand, part of an ivory arm and a foot from the south slope, four small faience figures with flattened backs, and a single bronze figurine.

Approximately sixty sealings and sealstones with figurative imagery were recovered from MM IIIB—LM III strata at Knossos, many of which were poorly preserved. The potential mobility of sealstones, and the occurrence of the same or similar impressions at Knossos and other sites on Crete, mean that they are not relied upon heavily in the following analysis.

Figure 4.1 indicates the findspots of the figurative imagery from MM IIIB—LM III at the Palace site at Knossos (for more detailed information of the findspots of the sealings and sealstones, see Gill 1965; Weingarten 1988).

Chapter 5: Images of Bodies at Late Bronze Age Knossos

Introduction

Previous interpretations of gender at Knossos have relied upon a corpus of comparative material from throughout the Aegean and further afield to create a structure to gender relations in Minoan society as a whole. Such an approach obscures subtle differences in the content and form of images that could otherwise reveal the specific mechanisms for representing gender at the neopalatial Palace site at Knossos. The use of pictorial conventions to distinguish between genders in the images from Knossos are fraught with uncertainty. The resultant confusion in interpretation is informative of the ways in which a binary structure male/female has been extrapolated from, and projected onto, the images. The obsession with having to sex a figure before anything meaningful can be said about it is indicative of an assumption that gender attributes express an internally coherent and primary gender identity.

This chapter outlines how the images have been gendered by previous interpreters and the assumptions that have guided their interpretations. The images have usually been taken as representations of real-life; or at least as illustrative of the structure of gender relations in Minoan society. That structure has been commonly assumed to have taken the form of a matriarchal society in which the roles of men and women are clearly defined in opposition to one another. The images of bodies from frescoes, relief frescoes, figurines, sealings and sealstones, and relief vessels are the primary evidence for gender at Late Bronze Age Knossos. The only secure means of determining the physical sex of the figures in the images are the representation of breasts, as genital imagery is completely absent. However, breasts appear in relatively few of the images. Consequently, the figures in the images are assigned a gender by a variety of other means, including the use of a colour convention and associations between clothing and physique. There are, however, many logical inconsistencies in the use of such associated variables in sexing the images. As a result, sex and gender are conflated, and maleness is assumed on the basis of the absence of breasts. Yates (1993) has argued that a similar methodological mistake occurs in the way figures in the rock carvings from Göteborgs och Bohuslän, Sweden, have been interpreted. The figures from Sweden include some with penises and a majority without; those without have been assumed to be female

because they lack penises, even though there are several other variables that cross-cut those two particular categories of figures. Yates (1993: 47—8) states that what is important in the images is the juxtaposition of a male identity to one of ambiguity, where the figures may be either male or female. The assumption has been that such ambiguity is a methodological problem rather than a 'tangible aspect' of the meaning of the carvings (*ibid*: 48). Similarly, the inconsistencies in the way the images from Knossos have been gendered by various authors, and the lack of a clear, distinct means of distinguishing between genders in the images, other than those figures with breasts, suggest that gender was understood and represented other than with recourse to the binary, foundational categories male/female.

This chapter proceeds with an overview of how previous writers have envisaged the structure of gender relations to have been in Minoan society. Evans' ideas form the basis for work in the area; more recent accounts have not deviated far from his original postulations, other than to reinforce the polarisation of gender roles. The specific arguments used by Minoan authors in gendering the images from Knossos are then critically examined. The paucity of physical sexual characteristics in the images means that such arguments rely on a self-referential set of attributes which consistently fail to designate two clear-cut genders. The need for the images to be sexed and gendered is indicative of an inability to think beyond sex and gender as primary to identity, and as expressing an internally coherent gender 'core'. The consequence has been to obscure the possibility of interpreting the images in ways that do not rely upon the primacy of sex to identity.

Gender in Minoan society

The ideas promoted in the imagery at Knossos need not represent real-life; however, the reconstructions of Minoan society often rely upon a direct correlation between the images and how the Minoans actually lived or structured their relationships (for example, see Fig. 5.1, the frontispiece to Evans' (1930) *The Palace of Minos at Knossos*, Vol. III). The images are taken as illustrations, rather than objects that are involved in a

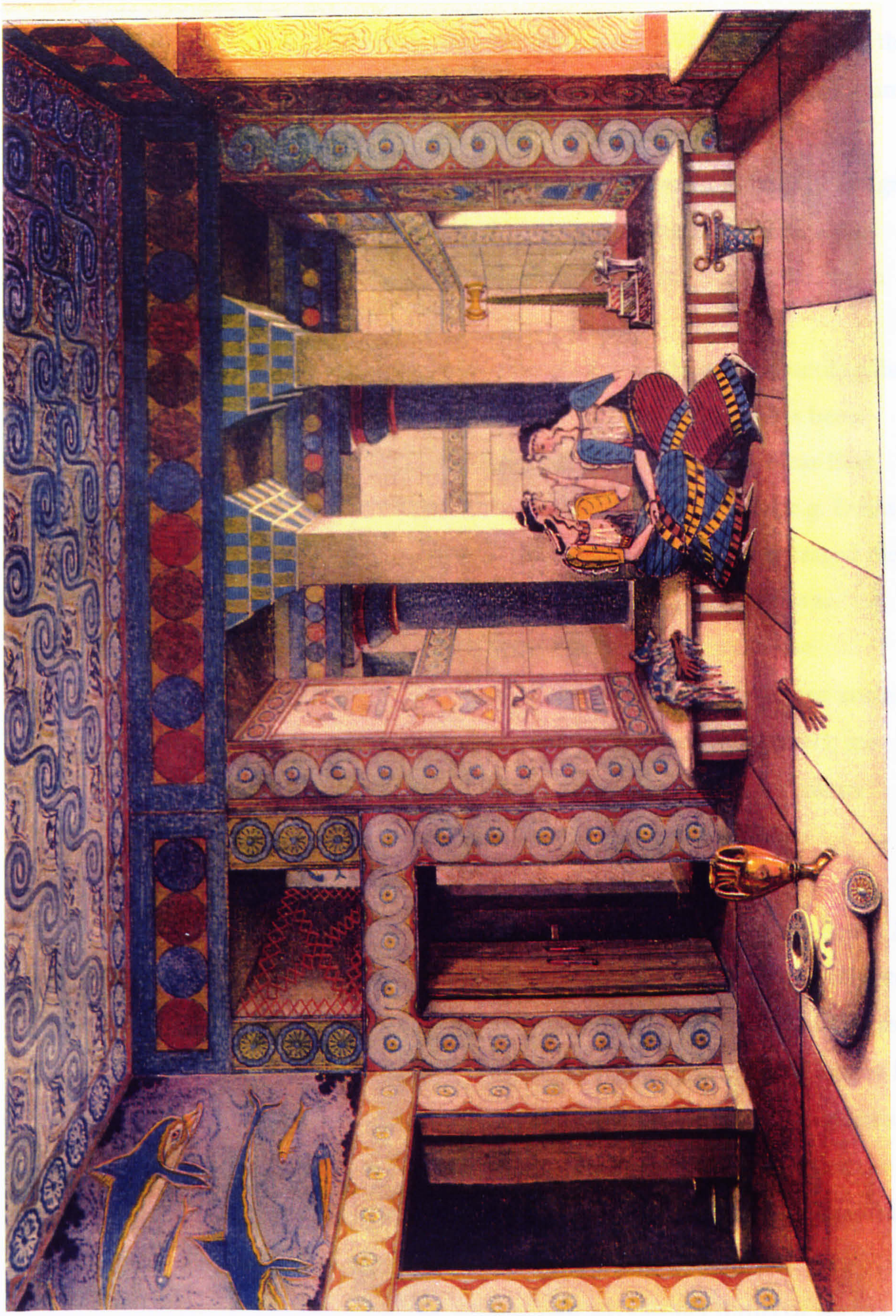


Fig. 5.1: Frontispiece to *The Palace of Minos*, Vol. III (Evans 1930).

relationship with their viewers and social relations. Molyneaux (1996a: 1) points out that the idea that representations of natural things convey information as directly as 'nature' itself is very seductive. That seduction, however, also indicates how the images are especially powerful in promoting an idea of how things are, or ought to be. The imagery from Knossos is used by Aegean archaeologists in an uncomplicated manner, along with images from throughout the Aegean, as a stand-in for the structure of Knossian and Minoan daily-life.

Since its incipience at the turn of the twentieth century Minoan archaeology has taken its place amongst the prehistories of the Aegean. The material data has been compared and contrasted with that from the Mainland, the Cyclades, the Near East, Egypt, and as far afield as the Western Mediterranean and the British Isles (e.g. Evans 1928: 23). The invention of the term 'Minoan' by Evans (1928: 1—3, 13) presaged the carving out of a separate and distinct area of study. Much of Evans' writing was concerned with establishing the place of the Minoans in the prehistory of the Mediterranean and north Africa, and above all, with demonstrating the Minoan ancestry of much of Mycenaean, and hence ancient Greek, culture (e.g. Evans 1928: 693; see Bintliff 1984 for a general discussion). The extent of the impact of Minoan culture outside Crete (Cameron 1978; Davis 1990), the existence or not of a 'Minoan Thallassocracy' (e.g. Hägg and Marinatos 1987; Knapp 1990, 1993), and whether Minoans, Mycenaeans or 'Minoanised' Mycenaeans were resident at Knossos from LM II (e.g. MacDonald 1990; Niemeier 1983, 1994; Popham 1994), continue to be subjects of debate. The issue of whether the Minoans or Mycenaeans were the cultural ancestors of the ancient Greeks appears to have been resolved by the decipherment of Linear B as an early form of Greek, and its appearance in Crete after the LM IB destructions and the contemporary disappearance of Linear A, a non-Greek script. The similarities in form of much of Minoan and Mycenaean material culture have complicated the above debates. The differences in type of material culture, and the subjects of imagery, however, have led to a characterisation of them as radically distinct forms of society. The frescoes excavated at Knossos are almost devoid of scenes of martial activity; many of the images are of plants and wild-life. The apparent proliferation of images of women and the complete lack of evidence of a king or important male person further convinced Evans that Minoan society had been matriarchal and peace-loving, in

opposition to the Mycenaeans, a patriarchal warrior society similar to those which are thought to have dominated much of Europe during the Bronze Age (see Treherne 1995). Interpretations from Evans to the present have envisaged Minoan society as being dominated by, or lead by, important women who were supported by an order of priestesses, beholden to a 'Great Goddess'. Such a monotheistic interpretation has not been accepted by all writers (e.g. Dickinson 1994), although the dominant position of women is usually accepted or not discussed. The relationship between women and men, and their separate roles in society, are characterised by an opposition between aggressive, active, men and women who are steeped in the ritual sphere. The views expressed use the images to substantiate their claims. However, there appears to be a contradiction between the non-martial scenes in the imagery, the acceptance of women as the central protagonists in Minoan society, and the interpretation of men as aggressive and active. Such interpretations still rely upon a binary opposition of men and women, and the centrality of genitalia to an individual's identity: the inversion of the binary structure simply serves to reinforce it.

Views of Minoan society have not remained static since Evans' original interpretations: increased data from more extensive excavations in Crete and abroad have affected interpretations of issues such as the relationship of Knossos to the rest of the Aegean, Near East and north Africa, and the form of Minoan society. For example, the lack of images of military feats has been countered by the discovery of probable fortifications (Manning 1986: 284), caches of arms, and the extensive sword workshops at Knossos (see Evely 1996; Littauer and Crouwel 1996; MacDonald 1987) and other sites. Furthermore, evidence of ritual sacrifice (Catling 1979—80: 50—1) and the cannibalism of children (Wall *et al.* 1986; Warren 1982—3) has shaken the 'peace-loving' characterisation of the Minoans. Nonetheless, the interpretation of gender has remained firmly within the bounds of binary sexuality. Opinions on the respective activities of women and men differ, but the images continue to be used as evidence for their radically opposed symbolic and material positions within society.

Evans' views on Minoan society were a consequence of a dialogue between the material he excavated and the place of the Minoans within the general discourse on Aegean prehistory current when he wrote. The images from the frescoes, reliefs, figurines and glyptic were used by Evans to firstly postulate a non-martial, matriarchal

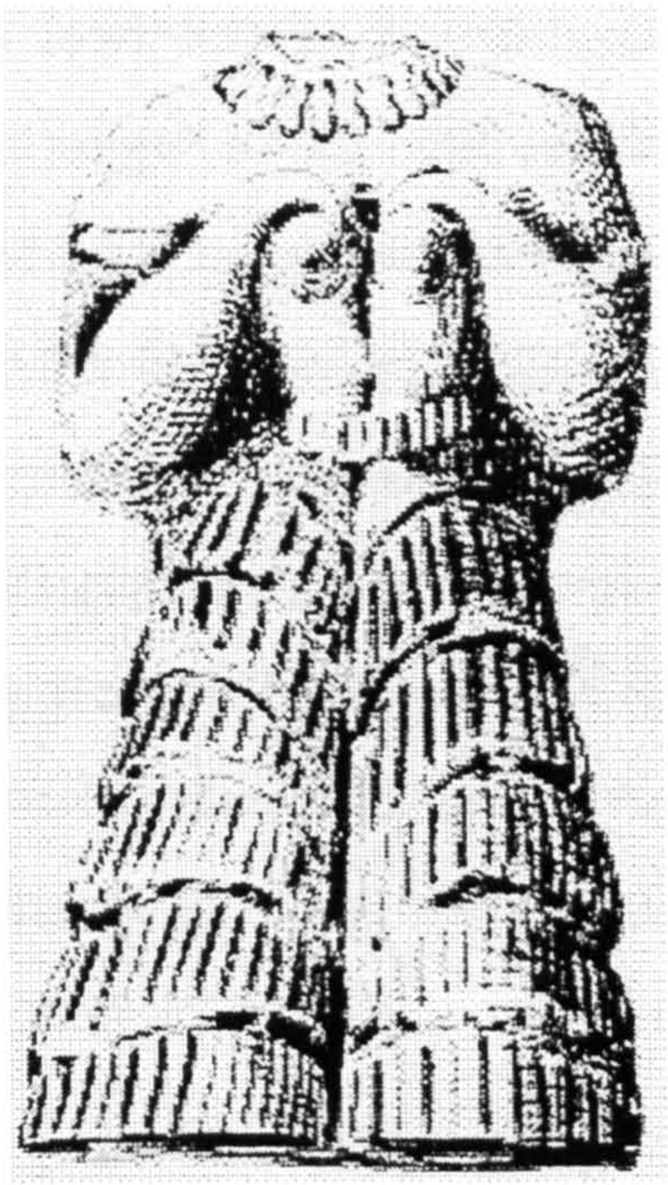


Fig. 5.2: Small faience plaque.

form to Minoan society, and to secondly situate Minoan women and men within mutually exclusive roles in the sacred and profane spheres. For Evans, therefore, the gender of a person was crucial to the place that person occupied in society; activities and roles were first and foremost gendered practices. Within the sacred sphere, Evans interpreted many of the images of women as either the 'Great Minoan Goddess' in her various guises, or one of her priestesses. The larger faience figurine (Fig. 7.13) was interpreted by Evans (1928: 500) as 'the Underworld form of the Great Minoan Goddess', or simply the 'Snake Goddess'; similarly, the small faience plaques (Fig. 5.2) from the 'South Propylaeum' have their hands laid over their breast in the 'attitude of the Mother Goddess' (Evans 1928: 702). A pair of white feet below a patterned hem in the 'Procession' fresco (Fig. 7.1) were argued by Evans (1930: 711—2) to have belonged to a representation of the 'Goddess' herself, reconstructed with her double-axe symbol in either hand. Evans writes of the 'Goddess' as supreme, whether she was terrestrial or celestial. She took many forms: as 'Earth Goddess', as 'Huntress', as 'Goddess of Sports' and, above all, as 'Mother Goddess'. Other women in the images are usually assigned the role of priestess or votary of the 'Great Goddess'; hence, the smaller faience figurine (Fig. 7.13) is a 'votary or double of the Snake Goddess' (Evans 1928: 503), and the women in the lowest register of the 'Sacred Grove' miniature fresco (Fig. 6.18) dance in honour of the 'Minoan Goddess' (Evans 1930: 74).

According to Evans, the 'Goddess' had a male counter-part, but he was relegated to the status of a 'Boy God', or 'male consort', of the 'Goddess'. When in association with the 'Goddess' he was always subservient, in a type of mother-and-child relationship (Evans 1930: 468; Platon 1966: 148). The roles of men were largely confined to the terrestrial sphere in Evans' account. The 'Goddess' could be 'Huntress', or 'Mistress of the Hunt', but man was the actual hunter. Similarly, the 'Goddess' and her priestesses would look on as men conducted sports in the arenas, such as boxing and bull-jumping, in their honour (e.g. Evans 1928: 692—3). The white figures in the 'Bull-leaper' frescoes (e.g. Fig. 5.6) were accepted by Evans as representing women (see

below); he was, however, careful to explain their presence in an activity that logically belonged to the male sphere, as 'the natural outcome of the religious organisation in which female ministers of the Goddess took the foremost place in her service' (Evans 1930: 232). Although Evans believed in an aggressive archetype for the Minoan male, he continually defined that archetype in opposition to the warlike Mycenaeans. The Minoan male excelled in the arena, but the Mycenaean male turned that sports-like aggression into the actual 'Berserker fury of combat' (Evans 1928: 692). Evans strove to prove cultural continuity from the Minoans to the Greeks, but simultaneously attributed change in the peaceful character of society to the intervention of the Mycenaeans (e.g. Evans 1928: 693).

For Evans the roles of men and women were distinguished by activity and religion. Furthermore, their physical locations within the Palace were separated into distinct 'quarters'. Whilst recognising that a certain degree of intermingling between the sexes took place in public places, as evidenced by the miniature fresco (Evans 1930: 349—50), he was careful to maintain distance between them in private. The 'Domestic Quarter' was named for the location of women, and was characterised by strictly controlled accesses and circuitous routes into the living quarters and *en suite* bathroom (Evans 1930: 353).

Evans' account of Minoan society as peaceful and monotheistic has been challenged (e.g. Dickinson 1994; Quinlan 1993; Wedde 1995). Nonetheless, the structure of gender relations which derived from his beliefs in the religious practices of the Minoans has been left largely intact. The rigidity of gender differentiation established by Evans has been strengthened further by accounts of Minoan religion (e.g. Marinatos 1987a, 1993) and palatial authority (e.g. Alexandri 1994). The most tangible difference between such accounts and Evans', and linked to the lessening of the credibility of a *pax minoica* and the corresponding increase in popularity of the concept of 'Minoan Thallassocracy' (Knapp 1993; and see contributions to Hägg and Marinatos 1984), is a greater belief in the supposed warlike activities of Minoan men (see Manning 1986; Marinatos 1987a, 1993, 1995). The dominance of women, the existence of a 'Mother Goddess', and the matriarchal structure of Minoan society continue to be common interpretations of the material. The idea of a 'Mother Goddess' is part of a discourse that runs from the Neolithic through the Minoan material. The effect of that discourse

on the interpretation of gender differentiation in the societies to which it has been ascribed is to define women by their supposedly timeless, reproductive capacities and men as the sole producers of cultural change (see Fedigan 1986; Landau 1984; Meskell 1995; Talalay 1994: 179). The discourse on the 'Mother Goddess' is intimately linked to the assumption of powerful or dominant women at Knossos and matriarchy; both ideas are still very much prevalent (e.g. Cadogan 1976: 9; Castledon 1990; Immerwahr 1983, 1990; Michailidou 1989; Weiner 1987). The binary structure to gender relations is given an origin in the apparent matriarchal past of the Minoans; the supposed psychic and expressive distinction between men and women becomes the primary and formative difference of such past societies.[1]

The existence of a binary opposition male : female in Minoan society is most vociferously argued for by Marinatos (1987a, 1993 and 1995). She draws from material which is stylistically Minoan as evidence of such a structure to gender relations. Marinatos (1995: 578) argues that the 'ideal Minoan man' is presented as youthful and muscular, with stress placed on bodily strength, and his penis emphasised by a 'pronounced phallus sheaf'. The activities of 'the Minoan male' centre around 'athletics, hunting and war' (*ibid*). Furthermore, the formula used to present images of men hunting make the hunter into a hero (*ibid*: 580); and 'warrior status' can be attributed to men on the basis of analogy with Egyptian models (*ibid*: 581). In conclusion, Marinatos (*ibid*) states that, 'Minoan male prototypes stress those aspects of manhood that are primary and elemental. Indeed, the role of warrior and hunter are interchangeable and may have originated in the Paleolithic development of *homo sapiens*'. According to Marinatos (*ibid*: 582), the Minoan woman, in contrast, is primarily a mother and nurturer; her womanhood is stressed in the images by the 'slender waist, broad hips, exposed breasts' (*ibid*: 582). The characterisation of Minoan women as primarily mothers has been contested by Olsen (1998: 390), who points out the complete absence of *Kourotrophoi*, or woman-child images, from Minoan contexts.

Contrary to Evans, Marinatos (1987a) believes that a definite separation in the roles of women and men is recorded in the miniature frescoes from Knossos. She

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[1] It is of note in this context that Freud (1985: 286, n. 313) used Evans' finds at Knossos as evidence for his psychoanalytic account of the historical development of sexual difference.

claims that women and men usually do not appear together as the central protagonists in ritual or festival scenes. Such a segregation of the sexes suggests to Marinatos (*ibid*: 23) that pre-existing role divisions in Minoan society were accentuated in the ritual sphere. The glyptic imagery from the Late Bronze Age Aegean is used by Alexandri (1994) to postulate a similar separation of female and male in the religious and secular domains. Gender differentiation, she argues, is used in the glyptic as a metaphor for aspects of authority. According to Alexandri (1994: 171), female imagery was slowly appropriated in the neopalatial period by the palace authorities and used as a general symbol of palatial power. Alexandri (1994: 65) argues that female figures always carried a religious message. Male figures, in contrast, are evidence of the need for males to prove their authority (*ibid*: 172). 'Maleness', as such, is defined by agnostic scenes. A clear set of defining characteristics for men are recognised by Alexandri (1994: 141) as, 'agility, aggression, competition, control, and provision or protection', which are retained as the 'basic idiom of maleness' over a long period of time (*ibid*: 142).

The use of binary gender categories as a differentiating principle for Minoan society, and the characterisation of the activities of men and women, is uncritically accepted in much of the literature on the Minoans. Most texts do not explicitly discuss gender, or the relationship between gendered images and real-life, but implicit assumptions are continually made of the type and structure of gender relations that are described in the explicit accounts of Marinatos and Alexandri. The images from the Bronze Age Aegean are discussed within the above structure for gender (e.g. Cameron 1975: 52—4; Castledon 1990; Crowley 1995: 489—90; Evasdaughter 1997; Immerwahr 1983, 1990: 62; Quinlan 1993: 177—8; Morgan 1988: 116). Notable exceptions are the works of Hitchcock (1994a, 1994b, 1997), which include gender as an 'analytical concept' (1997: 115), and Nixon (1983, 1994) who stresses the lack of evidence for Evans' 'special role' attributed to Minoan women.

The evidence that is used to substantiate the above interpretations includes a free use of anthropological analogy and comparison with images from throughout the Aegean Bronze Age. Little or no attempt is made to contextualise the evidence either through chronological and spatial specificity, or by association with archaeological material. Alexandri's (1994) analysis of glyptic imagery, although restricted to a specific medium of representation, and whilst recognising the particular usages of that medium,

includes material from throughout the Aegean. Furthermore, the specific architectural and social contexts of the frescoes are ignored in discussions of gender in Minoan society. The result is a confusion of data—often only stylistically linked—that is out of any specific context. Even when a fresco is considered in relation to its specific architectural location, such as the interpretation of the figures from the Xeste 3 images from Akrotiri, and their location around a 'lustral basin', as evidence for female initiation (Marinatos 1993: 201—12), the interpretations made are subsequently projected unproblematically onto other material from other sites. Immerwahr (1990: 54), therefore, is able to claim of the frescoes from Thera, that: 'These paintings, richly detailed and for the most part well preserved, form a good beginning for an investigation of the way in which women and young girls were depicted throughout the Minoan world'. Much of the evidence of the 'aggressive' and 'warlike' character of the Minoan male is likewise extrapolated from images from the Mainland. The clearest example of a weapon from the Knossian images under consideration is a sword held by a figure with a 'skirt' and single breast on a sealstone (Fig. 5.3).[2] The validity of conclusions reached on the basis of analogy is not under question; rather, it is the uncritical use of anthropological vagaries and the under-contextualised interpretations made of stylistically similar material from spatially and temporally distinct data which lead to generalised accounts of gender in Minoan society that needs to be re-examined.



Fig. 5.3: Sealstone of figure with sword and snake-frame.

Gender is left under-theorised and uncomplicatedly accepted by the authors discussed above within the terms of a binary structure male/female. Minoan scholars use the supposed contemporary binary structure to sex and gender as, simultaneously, a framework for, and the conclusions of, the interpretation of the material.

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[2] Although Younger (1993: Fig. 73) classifies the figure as a 'Robed Priest' and a 'Chanting Priest'.

How the images are gendered

The interpretations outlined above are argued to be based primarily on empirical observation of the image data. Gender is assigned to the figures in the images using a collection of variables and the associations between them. Physical sexual characteristics are used whenever possible to substantiate claims. Gender is therefore immediately conflated with sex; in the absence of physical sexual characteristics gender is conflated with the absence of an assumed sex. Furthermore, the only actual markers of male/female are breasts. All other figures are non-specified in their anatomical sex, in that they portray neither male nor female physical sexual characteristics. Such 'ambiguous' cases are interpreted by associations between a supposedly 'male' physique, the colour convention, and 'associated variables' (Alexandri 1994: 27—8), such as clothing, hairstyle and activity. Table 5.1 lists the 'normative' correspondences between

References	**Male**	**Female**
Cameron 1970, 1975, 1978, 1987a; Davaras 1976; Davis 1986; Evans 1928; Hitchcock 1994a; Immerwahr 1990; MacDonald and Thomas 1990; Morgan 1988; Rehak 1994, n.d.	Red	White
Alexandri 1994; Immerwahr 1983, 1990; Rehak n.d.; Younger 1993		Breasts
Alexandri 1994; Cameron 1975; Damiani-Indelicato 1988; Marinatos 1995; Niemeier 1988	Muscular	
Damiani-Indelicato 1988	Broad-shouldered	
Alexandri 1994; Evans 1930; Immerwahr 1983; Marinatos 1993; Wedde 1995		'Flounced skirt'
Alexandri 1994; Evans 1928; Hitchcock 1994a; Marinatos 1987a, 1993, 1995; Morgan 1988; Rehak 1996; Younger 1995	Loin-clothing	
Cameron 1975; Evans 1930	Less detailed patterning on clothing	More detailed patterning on clothing
Rehak n.d.; Younger 1995	Short hair	
Evans 1930; Ehrenberg 1989; Immerwahr 1990; Marinatos 1993; Rehak 1996; Younger 1995	Less elaborate hair	More elaborate hair
Cameron 1975; Evans 1930; Rehak n.d.; Younger 1995	Less elaborate jewellery	More elaborate jewellery
Cameron 1975; Evans 1928; Marinatos 1993; Rehak 1994, 1996, n.d.	'Priestly robes'	
Cameron 1975; Immerwahr 1990; Rehak 1996	'Kilts'	

Table 5.1: Attributes used to gender figures in the Knossian imagery

male, female and particular attributes of the figures. In the absence of, or ambiguous use of the principle attributes—either colour or breasts—then those attributes further down the table are drawn upon to substantiate claims about the sex of a particular figure or groups of figures.

Gender is usually assigned to the people in the frescoes on the basis of colour: white figures are taken to represent women, and red to represent men. The convention was established soon after the discovery of large numbers of fresco fragments from Knossos. However, Evans (1900—1: 15) originally supposed the 'Cup-bearer' fresco (Fig. 6.12) to represent a women. Evans (1928: 151) applied the convention after the ancient Egyptian practice of distinguishing men and women by colour. He maintained that the convention was adhered to throughout the Minoan periods. The usefulness of the convention in enabling even the smallest fragment of fresco to be successfully sexed has been stressed (Cameron 1975: 50; Morgan 1988: 93). Nonetheless, Cameron (*ibid.*) disagrees with Evans on the origins of the colour convention, maintaining that it was more likely a local development reflecting the different roles of men and women in Crete. Cameron hypothesises that men would have spent a great deal more time outdoors—hence their reddish hue—and women a correspondingly large proportion of time indoors. Other authors accept the Egyptian influence (e.g. Davaras 1976: 103; Immerwahr 1990: 54; MacDonald and Thomas 1990: 123), although increasingly no mention is made of the convention in texts on Minoan frescoes, as it is merely accepted as fact. The colour convention is used, above all, for the identification of gender in the frescoes and especially the relief fragments where little of the original figures remain.

In cases where colour is lacking, such as the sealings and sealstones and the relief vessels, or unclear, then other criteria are used to determine the sex of the figures. The sealings, sealstones and relief vessels are assigned a sex, and hence gender, primarily on the basis of physical appearance. The relief vessels under consideration are all taken to be men on physical criteria, although none are distinguished on the basis of physical sex. Alexandri (1994: 27) describes two basic prototypes—male and female—for images of people in glyptic art, for which physical sexual characteristics are the primary identifying variable, but other variables are also used. She writes: 'A number of elements contribute to gender differentiation in human representations, and they can be arranged

in a hierarchical order of strength, resulting in variables of primary and secondary importance, and associated variables' (*ibid.*: 29). In summary, Alexandri (1994: 171) argues that women are identified by breasts and men by the absence of breasts, although the basic human form, according to her, is constructed around the male body.

The use of criteria other than the colour convention or physical sexual characteristics is common in interpreting a fragment of fresco for which the colour is unclear or no part of the body survives, and for uncoloured images in which sexual attributes are not clearly shown. Alexandri (1994: 27—8) calls these 'variables of secondary importance', and states that they 'are gender-specific elements derived from the strength of their association with the primary variables, but retaining a degree of flexibility'. Clothing and physique are the most common variables used in such cases, although hairstyle, jewellery, activity and associated pictorial information are similarly called upon as corroborative evidence. A repertory of clothing types enables scholars to determine the sex of a figure without any physical sex markers being present. The majority of glyptic images of people do not have clear physical markers of sex, but are nonetheless gendered according to associations between physique and the associated variables (e.g. Alexandri 1994; Younger 1993).

In the glyptic images the majority of women wear 'flounced skirts' and sometimes jackets that leave the torso bear (Alexandri 1994: 29). A similar convention has been observed for the frescoes and figurines (e.g. Evans 1930: 426; Marinatos 1993: 136—45; Wedde 1995). From the conventions of dress so established a fragment of fresco (Fig. 5.4) from the north-west fresco heap at Knossos was attributed to the figure of a woman when all that remained was part of the design of the clothing (Evans 1930: 37—8, and f. 22; Immerwahr 1990: 172; Marinatos 1993: 63). Some authors argue that women occasionally wore cod-pieces as part of their activity wear, and gendered significance has been accorded to the pointed cod-piece of the red figure and the more

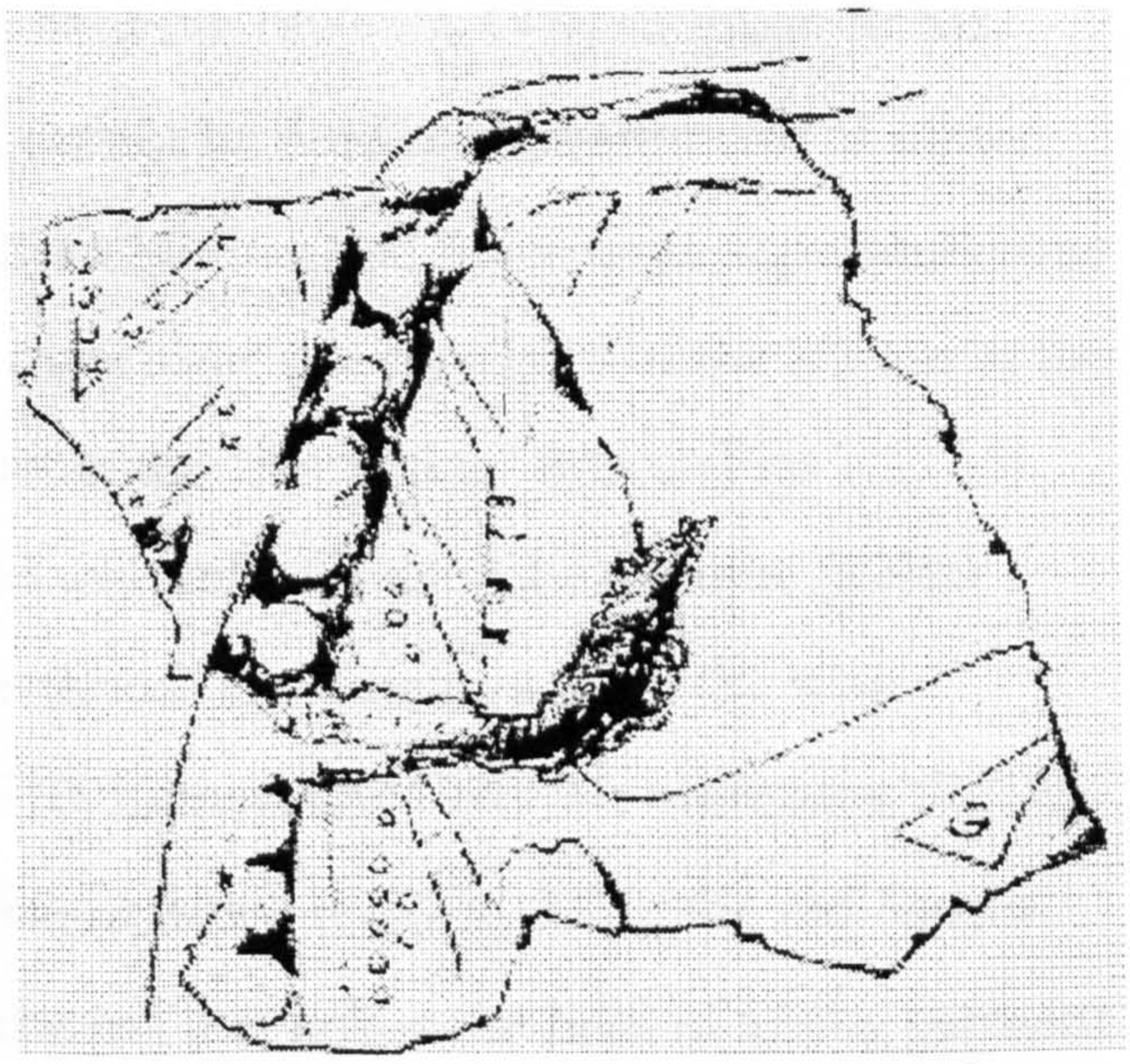


Fig. 5.4: Fresco fragment from north-west fresco heap.

rounded cod-pieces of the white figures in the restored 'Bull-leaper' panel (Fig. 5.6; e.g. Younger 1995: 515).

Men in glyptic images are recognised by belts and loin-cloths, short kilts, or belts on their own (Alexandri 1994: 29). The association of loin-clothing with male figures is usual throughout the art, from the earliest recorded association of red painted Middle Minoan figurines from Petsofá with loin-cloths and daggers (Evans 1928: 152).

According to Evans (1928: 750—2) the association continued into the Late Minoan era. The loin-clothing is common in the frescoes, as is the 'kilt' for red figures. Evans (1928: 752) believed, on the basis of the white figures in the 'Bull-leaper' panels, that loin-clothing was common to both males and females in the bull-ring. The loin-cloth is usually associated with active men (e.g. Morgan 1988: 116) or as 'activity wear' (Rehak 1996: 41; Younger 1995: 515). Rehak (1996: 39—41) has described the range of loin-clothing worn by figures that have been designated as men, including a plain breech-cloth, breech-cloth with back or front flaps, cod-piece, breech-cloth with rigid cod-piece (also worn by women bull-leapers) and shorts.

An allegedly male garment which has caused some controversy over its ethnic associations is the kilt: many authors believe it to be specifically Mycenaean (e.g. Barber 1991: 31; Cameron 1975: 63, 1987a: 324; Immerwahr 1990: 89, 174), although Rehak (1996) has convincingly argued that the kilt cannot be used as a determinant of ethnic origins as it is common to both pre-Mycenaean Minoan and Mycenaean representations of men (see also Niemeier 1987: 328). The most elaborate examples of the kilt are in the 'Cup-bearer' fresco and on the red figures from the 'Procession' fresco (Figs 7.1, 7.5).

A further item of clothing associated with males is the robe or tunic (Rehak 1996: 42), usually taken as representing priesthood (e.g. Cameron 1975: 56, who classifies the robes as cloaks; Evans 1928: 770; Immerwahr 1990: 94; Marinatos 1993: 127). The red, robed figures in the 'Camp Stool' fresco (e.g. Fig. 5.11), the red figures from the 'Palanquin' fresco (Fig. 5.5), and the red feet below the hem of a long garment from the 'Procession' fresco (see Fig. 7.1a) are taken to be members of this class. The four examples of robed figures on Late bronze Age seals from Knossos are assumed to be men on the basis of their clothing and short hair (Rehak, n.d.: 5). The robes of the priests are distinguished from the skirts and dresses of female figures by the thick band down the middle of the garment, and the general lack of decoration.



Fig. 5.5: Fragment of the 'Palanquin' fresco.

Articles of clothing thought to be common to both men and women include: boots (Säflund 1987: 232); the shoes of the bull-leapers (Younger 1995: 516); and 'hide skirts', of which a hem has been recognised on a red figure from the 'Procession' fresco (Wedde 1995: 494).

On occasion, the considerations of clothing or physique over-ride the colour convention: for example, the ivory bull-leaper figurine (Fig. 7.10) is most frequently interpreted as male. Furthermore, in the case of glyptic images, Alexandri (1994: 29, original emphasis) states that 'there is little variation in the ***type*** of clothes worn, and in most cases they appear to be gender-specific to the extent that they are used as shorthand to refer to a particular gender'.

Other aspects of appearance are frequently used as corroborative evidence, or as primary evidence, for gender where no other distinguishing characteristics are visible. Evans' (1930: 522) discovery of some huge bronze curls of hair lead him to postulate the existence of a giant wooden statue of a goddess in the 'Great East Hall' at the Palace of Knossos. The differences in hair fringe length between male and female figures enabled Evans to confidently sex the curls: 'Happily, the curling bronze locks of its fringe of hair supply a decisive argument as to this' through analogy with the 'greater exuberance of the locks, especially over the forehead' (Evans 1930: 523—4) of the white figures from the 'Bull-leaper' frescoes. The same distinction is used by Evans (1930: 181 f. 124, 182 f. 125) to distinguish between male and female 'taureadors' on the carved Vapheio Cup A (although others disagree, e.g. Younger 1995: 508). Differences in hairstyle are generally taken as indicative of male/female sex in the frescoes, even when the colour of the figures is clear. The side-lock was considered by Evans (1928: 33—4) the most distinctive feature of men's hair. Of women's hair, Morgan (1988: 103) states: 'Aegean women, like those of the majority of cultures prior to the modern era, always wore their hair long'. The ribbons in the hair of the white figures in the 'Bull-leaper' frescoes, combined with their loin-cloth and cod-piece, convinced Evans (1928:

35) that the women were of a high social standing. Short hair is used to identify robed figures in neopalatial glyptic (Rehak n.d.: 5) and the bull-jumper images (Younger 1995: 516) as men.

Jewellery is often used as corroborative evidence for a figure that has already been gendered. For example, the red and white figures in the 'Bull-leaper' frescoes both show evidence of jewellery, but interpretations stress the apparently greater detail in that of the white figures (Evans 1930: 212). The men wear a loose necklace, whereas the women wear both the loose necklace and a beaded necklace (Younger 1995: 516). Cameron (1975: 68) notes that men have no head ornaments (except headbands) until LM II. Headbands can be worn by either sex (*ibid*: 55), although Rehak (n.d.: 5) states that they are more often worn by women. Younger (1995: 515) also identifies the headband on one of the bull-leapers as solely belonging to women.

Finally, symbolic associations are used as evidence of the gender of the figure. For example, the association of the 'lily crown', reconstructed by Evans as part of the 'Priest-King' relief fresco (Fig. 5.7), has caused problems in interpretation due to the usual association of lilies with women (see Hitchcock 1994a: 3).

Problems with gendering the images

In discussing the relative positions of women and men, or the assumptions concerning the structure of gender relations in Minoan society, the material is referred to as evidence. However, the theories put forward often exceed that evidence, or ignore unresolved ambiguities in the gendering of the images. The tendency of authors to generalise an interpretation from a conglomerate of images from throughout the Aegean, often spanning long periods of time, exacerbates the problem of interpreting gender in the images. Considering only the material from MM III—LM III Knossos there are many instances of inconsistency in the way the images have been gendered. Several ambiguous uses of the colour convention in frescoes—cases that have been discussed extensively by Minoan scholars—serve as a means of exposing an array of logical inconsistencies in the way the material is interpreted. The use of the attributes

listed in Table 5.1 to substantiate claims that a particular figure is of a particular gender exposes the arbitrariness of such supposedly gender-specific attributes. By comparing what happens to the use of particular attributes as gender specific when the more frequently used attributes are disputed it becomes clear that it is only possible to consistently gender those figures in the representations that include breasts. Furthermore, the absence of breasts cannot be used as evidence for men in the images. The problems of interpretation are not caused by the application of the colour convention, but rather, by the attempt to see in it a clear delimitation of a binary categorisation of gender which is seen as the primary means of signifying identity. The existence of a third colour and the so-called ambiguous cases are clear signs that the use of colour in the images exceeds a simple binary explanation. The failure of the material to consistently and clearly distinguish between two genders, and its refusal to demonstrate an original connection between physical sexual characteristics and clothing, have lead to a circularity in interpretation. Clothes become 'shorthand' for a body (especially a male body) that is identified on the basis of its association with a type of clothing. The deciphering of the pictograms for 'girl', 'boy', 'woman' and 'man' in the Linear scripts demonstrates the 'leap of faith' that is required to recognise gender when such an original association is lacking. The signs are easily translatable, according to Chadwick (1987: 13), because of their 'pictorial quality'. However, the pictograms must be translated and given meaning by the interpreter. They are 'gendered' on the basis of pre-conceived ideas of the body, gender and the structure of gender relations, not on some inherent signifying quality of the pictures themselves.

The circularity in interpretation of gender in the images is further complicated, or reinforced, by acts of restoration; all of the frescoes, the figurines and some sealings have been restored to some extent. The colour convention is assumed to determine gender, and certain attributes are assumed to follow from and signify that gender. Restoration, therefore, follows an assumed binary structure to gender and the images so restored then become used as evidence for that structure.

The 'Bull-leapers' frescoes (Fig. 5.6) and the 'Priest-king' relief fresco (Fig. 5.7) are the most commonly discussed examples of the colour convention being used in an



Fig. 5.7: Evans' reconstruction of the 'Priest-King' relief fresco.

apparently peculiar way, or of its not being applicable to gender all the time, possibly referring to another category. They are not, however, the only ambiguous cases in the fresco art, as is commonly assumed. The difficulty with the 'Priest-king' relief revolves around the colour of the figure (off-white, with a hint of red in the torso), the clothing (the trace of a loin-cloth) and the figure's 'lily crown', and the reconstruction of the figure. The various interpretations of the figure have included: a 'Priest-king' leading a griffin (e.g. Cadogan 1976: 54; Evans 1928: 774—85); a 'crowned girl athlete' (Cameron 1975: 122, n.2); or a 'Priestess-Queen' having herself depicted as a male (Hitchcock 1994a: 6). When Evans (1900—1: 15—6) first published the fragments he believed they belonged to as many as three separate figures. More recent accounts (e.g. Cameron 1975; Coulomb 1979; Marinatos 1993; Niemeier 1988) have challenged the reconstruction of the fragments as a single figure (for an outline of the changing interpretations of the figure/s, see Hood *et al.* 1994: 142—6).

The interpretation of the 'Bull-leaper' frescoes allows less room for speculation on the original composition of the frescoes due to the relative completeness of at least one panel. The panel clearly contains three figures—two white and one red—arranged around an over-sized bull. All the figures from the frescoes wear loin-cloths with rigid cod-pieces (following Rehak's definition, 1996: 39—41), jewellery, and have long hair. Evans (e.g. 1928: 35, 1930: 212) had no apparent difficulty in accepting the existence of female bull-leapers. Other authors who have accepted the white bull-leapers as female explain the cod-pieces as being part of the protective element of Minoan activity wear (e.g. Rehak 1996: 41; Younger 1995: 515). Several authors argue that the apparently male physique of the bull-leapers is more akin to pre-pubescent women (e.g. Immerwahr 1983: 145; Rehak, n.d.: 2). The figures are consequently occasionally referred to as 'maidens' (e.g. Younger 1995: 515). Physical sexual characteristics have been spotted on the figures, such as 'budding breasts' (Rehak, n.d.: 2) and compared to the apparent fine-tuned distinction between various stages of breast development in the Xeste 3 figures from Akrotiri (Rehak, n.d.: 2—3). Immerwahr (1990: 91), however, stresses the lack of breast development in the figures, and interprets them as 'highly trained adolescent girls', with 'no softness of female flesh'.

Notwithstanding the colour convention, the white figures have also been interpreted as men, principally on the basis of their cod-pieces. Such interpretations



Fig. 5.6: The restored 'Bull-leaper' panel.

include: the white figures are feminine boys being trained for the bull-ring (Marinatos 1993: 219); the figures represent privileged men whose lives have been spent indoors, and, following Cameron's explanation of the colour convention (see above), they have accordingly been painted white (Hitchcock 1994a: 7); that the figures represent different stages in the bull-jump—the colours are experimental narrative effects (Damiani-Indelicato 1988); or, that both colours represent 'gender neutral' adolescents, based on their long hair and cod-pieces (Rehak 1996: 41).

Whether the white figures in the 'Bull-leaper' frescoes are accepted as men or as women, there are important implications for the gendering of all images and the use of extrapolated variables such as clothing and hairstyle. All the authors support their interpretations by observations of the physique of the bull-leapers. If the figures are considered to be women the evidence is examined for indications of femaleness; and, the conclusion usually reached is that due to the absence of explicitly depicted breasts adolescent girls are being represented. Rehak (n.d.) has recently re-examined the restored 'Bull-leaper' panel for evidence of 'femaleness' on the white figures. He argues that the white figure on the left of the reconstructed panel has a 'curved but undeveloped breast'; the white figure on the right represents 'a different stage of breast development that has not been discussed before'—the figures chest 'curves outward at a sharp angle, indicating the beginning of a budding breast' (*ibid*: 2). Furthermore, Rehak (n.d.: 2) interprets a detail in red paint on the chest of the right hand figure as the 'aureole of the nipple'. Rehak's and other interpretations of the white figures as women counter-balance the cod-pieces and lack of obvious male/female distinctions by analogy to the Theran frescoes, where white figures have been argued to be represented in various stages of breast development (e.g. Davis 1986). However, the 'Bull-leaper' frescoes are far less detailed and less clearly depicted than the Theran frescoes.

Furthermore, the theory by Davis (1986) that long hair on the white figures at Thera represents womanhood is contradicted in the bull-leaper panels. Younger (1995: 516) infers that a 'different hairstyle development' was therefore taking place at Knossos and Thera. More importantly, a similar means of distinguishing between figures has not been recorded on other frescoes from Knossos. The cultural affinities and differences between Thera and Crete is a matter of debate (e.g. Cameron 1978; Davis 1990), and a considerable time-gap may have existed between the execution of the two series of

frescoes. There are only two clear representations of breasts on figures in frescoes from Knossos, both, significantly, in the miniature 'Grandstand' fresco (see Figs 5.12, 6.20). Admittedly, there is a similar time gap to the Theran examples; but the scale of the figures indicates that there was no difficulty in depicting breasts clearly. Furthermore, a further white figure from the 'Bull-leaper' panel (Fig. 5.8) is painted with torso *en face* (although Evans argues that what is shown is the back of the figure), but there is no indication whatsoever of nipples or breasts. If the red marks are indications of nipples, it would be the only case in all the representations of breasts from Knossos: the miniature fresco breasts do not have red marks; neither do the relief breasts, executed on a far larger scale, where other fragments of bodies in relief were commonly coloured red.

The attention given to minute physical details of breasts in assigning a female gender to the white bull-leapers has serious implications for the assignment of gender to non-coloured images. The most obvious implication is that images of figures in loin-cloths, especially those interpreted as bull-leapers, cannot be assumed to be male on the basis of the lack of obvious breasts. The use of purely physical criteria, such as musculature, which does not involve the obvious depiction of breasts, becomes invalid for designating the figures as male. Therefore, if the white bull-leapers are taken to represent women, and the use of cross-media image analogy is accepted, then none of the glyptic images can definitely be said to represent men. All the images could, using the accepted criteria for assigning a female gender to the white bull-leapers, conceivably represent women. At the very least, it would be impossible to securely sex any of the images of bull-leapers if one argues that white figures are only dressed in cod-pieces in the context of the bull-ring (although the majority of the figures with cod-pieces or loin-sheaths are depicted with bulls). If the lack of breasts on the white bull-leapers is media-dependent, then it would indicate that no glyptic images of bull-leaping included women, for there are no depictions of bull-leapers in cod-pieces with breasts, which would be the only secure way of representing women bull-leapers in non-coloured media. The only figures in non-coloured images that could be securely gendered would be the figures with clearly depicted breasts. The loin-sheath loses its sex-specific association and therefore cannot be taken as a marker of masculinity in any context or in any media.



Fig. 5.8: Bull-leaper figure with torso *en face*.

Similarly, if the white bull-leaper figures are considered to represent men, evidence from the bodies of the leapers is used to indicate that maleness. Damiani-Indelicato (1988: 40) argues that Evans over-emphasised the differences between the red and white figures and ignored their obvious similarities. The physical characteristics of the figures are taken to be conclusive of their gender by Damiani-Indelicato and the other authors who support an interpretation of the figures as male. The most obvious implication if their position is accepted is that the colour convention itself is completely undermined as a secure means of designating gender. Other white figures in the frescoes may, logically, also represent men, or red figures may represent women. Once the colour convention is challenged as a universal convention there is no evidential reason to dismiss the possibility that it also does not apply to other frescoes. The 'Camp Stool' figures (see Figs 5.10, 5.11, 6.10), who are as equally undifferentiated by style of clothing as the bull-leaper figures, may represent all men or all women. If the colour convention does not hold in all instances then it ceases to be a convention, it ceases to be a reliable determinate of gender in the frescoes. The possibility of both white and red figures representing women in some circumstances is not discussed; the option of cross-colour representation is assumed to apply only to men.

The interpretation of the white figures as men on the basis of evidence, rather than assumption, relies on the association of loin-clothing (specifically the rigid cod-piece) with male, due to the lack of clear physical sexual characteristics. The assignment of gender, therefore, becomes a matter of clothing and not the colour convention. However, postulating clothing as the designator of gender must rest on an original association between physical sexual characteristics and that clothing, otherwise it remains an assumption, not an empirical observation. However, there are no clear instances of male physical characteristics in the images from Knossos; the assignation is a matter of physique, not physical sexual characteristics. The assumption is that a 'male torso' is identifiable in the images[3]. However, the glyptic imagery and the evidence of the faience figurines demonstrates that broad shoulders and breasts are not mutually exclusive. Furthermore, if definite musculature is used as a variable for determining male

[3] The desperate measures required to securely gender physique are taken further by Cameron (1975: 329) who argues that, 'a powerful masculinity is evident also in the treatment of the heads'.

gender in the images, then the red figures in the frescoes that do not show clear musculature cannot be securely assigned a male gender (neither, for that matter, can some of the bull-leapers). The association only works because the cod-piece is implicitly associated with a male body, naked from the waist up, which is defined by the absence of breasts (see Alexandri 1994, who uses these criteria exactly).

The implicit assumption by authors who define the white bull-leapers as male is that male figures may be designated by white or red, but female only by white. There are a number of possible ramifications of such a formulation: any figure naked from the waist up with no breasts must be male, and any with breasts must be female. Hence, Evans' classification of a sealing (Fig. 5.9) from the 'Temple Repositories' as a 'Goddess with Lion' does not hold; neither does Younger's classification of a seal (Fig. 5.3) as a 'Robed Priest' work. If Younger's classification is accepted, then other figures with one breast, or unclear breasts, cannot be assigned a female gender.



Fig. 5.9: Sealing of figure with lion from 'Temple Repositories'.

Problems are encountered in assigning clear genders to many figures. For example, the 'Camp Stool' red figures cannot be securely assigned a male gender on the basis of the criteria established above. If one accepts that red always represents men, then either all the figures are men, or the red are men and the white are women, neither of which can be demonstrated by association. The same holds for glyptic representations of robed figures, as well as for the feet of the 'Procession' fresco figures where either the pattern on the hem does not directly relate to a pattern on the dress of a breasted figure, or the style of garment is unclear.

A consequence of relying upon a direct association between body type, clothing and colour to identify gender in the images is that the 'Camp Stool' fresco figures must be of the same sex because their clothing is indistinguishable. If only men are allowed to occupy red and white in the images, it follows that all the figures must be men. The logical consequence is that males are not identified solely by an association between



Fig. 5.10: White figure from the 'Camp Stool' fresco.



Fig. 5.11: Seated red figure from the 'Camp Stool' fresco.

physique and cod-pieces, as men may therefore also be identified by a second type of clothing and a different physique (not naked from the waist up). Therefore, they may occupy any position which is not represented by figures with breasts, irrespective of clothing, depending on the perspective of the author.

If the type of clothing worn by the 'Camp Stool' figures is non-gender-specific, as most scholars assume, then gender cannot be confidently identified by recourse to the physique-clothing association of male body and cod-piece. However, if the association is insisted upon, as it is implicitly by designating the white bull-leapers as men, then the interpretation of the white 'Camp Stool' figures as women contradicts that association. If the association does not hold in all cases then the cod-piece–male association cannot be used as a secure means of gendering the figures. Furthermore, assigning a female gender to the white figures, and maintaining an association between clothing and gender, results in both white and red figures being assigned female genders. The result is that any figure of either colour not wearing a loin-cloth can represent a women, and any figures without breasts could be men. There would, therefore, be many instances in the images in which it would be impossible to securely differentiate the figures on the basis of gender. Consequently, nearly all the figures in all the images would be placed in an 'ambiguous' gender category. Furthermore, any figure in the fresco art without breasts could potentially be female: it has never been considered, for example, that the red and white bull-leaper fragments may represent only women. The association of breasts with the particular garment worn by the seated white figures with breasts in the miniature 'Grandstand' fresco (see Figs 5.12, 6.20) and in the glyptic is based on a stronger association with actual physical sexual characteristics than the basis for recognising males by a physique–cod-piece association

Another means of gendering the images has been by combining variables, or using hairstyle and details of the clothing to support interpretations. Hence, the femaleness of the white bull-leapers has been stressed by association with more elaborate curls and the more elaborate patterning of the cod-pieces (e.g. Evans 1930: 212; Immerwahr 1990: 91). However, there is no major discrepancy in the hairstyles of the red and white bull-leapers (see Damiani-Indelicato 1988: 40). Furthermore, the use of the headband on one figure to distinguish sex becomes untenable in the light of the even distribution of headbands amongst red and white figures in the miniature frescoes.



Fig. 5.12: Seated white figure with breasts from the 'Grandstand' fresco.

The idea that the cod-pieces of the white figures have more elaborate patterns that those of the white can be dismissed by reference to the unelaborated cod-piece of another white figure from the series (Fig. 5.8). If the distinction by pattern or hairstyle does not hold for all instances in the same series of compositions then it cannot be used as a secure means of distinguishing between genders.

The various ways of gendering the images affect the way in which gender can be assigned to specific images in specific media. The acceptance of the ivory bull-leaper as a man based on the figure's physique, implies a media-specific means of signifying gender. However, if males are represented in glyptic by physique, then women are not clearly represented as bull-leapers in glyptic imagery. Therefore, if one assumes that the white figures in the 'Bull-leaper' frescoes are women, then cross-media analogy would have to be applied in order to determine the existence of female bull-leapers in the glyptic. There would be no reason to mark out a female bull-leaper in the frescoes as female unless it was relevant to the activity; in which case there would be some means of marking a women in the glyptic imagery (for example, by the presence of breasts). Similarly, if the white bull-leapers represent adolescent or pubescent girls, then there would also need to be a way to signify that in the glyptic, otherwise the assignation in the fresco art is meaningless.

Each understanding of how the colour convention was applied in signifying the gender of the figures has a different implication for which figures cannot and can be confidently assigned as female/male. If the fixity of the colour convention is maintained, then the glyptic images cannot be securely gendered unless breasts are obviously shown and the ivory bull-leaper must represent a woman. If both colours can represent either men or women, then only figures with breasts, in any medium, can be confidently sexed. If men can be represented by both colours, but women only by white, then all the images except for figures with clearly depicted breasts could be male. If women can be represented by both colours, but men only by red, then there is no secure means of assigning a male gender to any of the figures because of the absence of definitive male sexual characteristics.

The uncertainty in interpretation created by the bull-leapers in the application of the colour convention is further complicated by a consideration of the original impetus for that code. The use of a similar convention in Egypt was not itself unambiguous: red



Fig. 5.13: Fragments of fresco with black and red figures.

was sometimes used for both genders, and distinct ethnic groups may have been marked by various shades of brown (Rehak n.d.: 6). Fragments of fresco from Knossos (Fig. 5.13) showing the leg and head of black figures is rarely considered in the context of the use of the colour convention. The figures have been interpreted as African mercenaries under the command of a Minoan 'Captain' (Evans 1928: 755), although there is no reason to assume that some of the fragments of black figures did not precede the figure in red. Furthermore, the existence of a third colour may have implications for how the colour convention was applied to gender, as the implication is that colour does not signify gender exclusively. Moreover, if colour is used to designate both gender and ethnicity, then the question remains of how women from other ethnic groups were being represented.

Sex/gender and the problems in interpretation

At the Fourth International Symposium at the Swedish Institute in Athens, in 1984, the proceedings of which were later published (Hägg and Marinatos 1987), a short comment was made by Mark Cameron during the discussions, addressed at Gösta Säflund:

> If the colour conventions for determining the sex of the figures don't apply, then we are in real trouble with restoration.
>
> Cameron (1987b: 243)[4]

Säflund (1987) had given a paper in which he suggested that the subjects of the 'Boxing Boys' fresco from Akrotiri were girls, even though they are coloured reddish-brown. He argued that boys at Thera are shown with penises, for which there is no evidence on the boxers, and on the basis of their earrings and girdles they must be girls (Säflund 1987:

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[4] Cameron (1975: 50) made the same point more fully, when he stated that: 'Alleged exceptions to the universal adoption of this important [colour] convention are all doubtful or ill-founded, and in this writers opinion there are no permissible exceptions. The point is stressed because distinction of the sex of figures in the broken compositions which have survived is often of paramount importance to issues of interpretation'.

233). Cameron's comment was not responded to and the discussion continued on other matters.

As noted above, there are difficulties with many 'restorations' in attributing gender; such difficulties have not gone unnoticed as the differing opinions on how gender was represented show. However, the uncertainties caused by such difficulties are not thoroughly discussed. Rather, data that do not conform are either ignored or re-interpreted to 'fit' a particular interpretation as required. The inability to satisfactorily account for the ambiguous representations is indicative of a perceived necessity to attribute gender to the images in order to be able to say anything meaningful about them. Therefore, Cameron's comment is a reaction against, or fear of, the chaos in interpretation that would ensue if colour no longer stood for 'sex': the interpretative task would be far more difficult. Cameron's comment is further indicative of a central problem in the interpretation of the images: gender is conflated with sex. Researchers are referring to attributes of the people in the frescoes that are understood as 'gender', especially by more recent accounts. Most interpreters agree that 'gender' may somehow have been different, although perhaps only at the level of activity: the writers who accept the white bull-leapers as women are a case in point. However, when interpretations are made of the images, signs of physical sexual characteristics are always taken as the most secure means of establishing the gender of a figure. Rehak (n.d.) clearly demonstrates such a tendency by attempting to clarify and solidify the colour convention by basing his argument on close examination of apparent sexual characteristics in the bull-jumpers fresco. It would appear that in order to say anything about the images, a gender must first be attributed; and in order to gender an image, 'sex' must first be recognised on the basis of physical sexual characteristics. When such characteristics are either unclear, or clearly not there, then other variables are used as substitutes, or signs of that sex.

When describing the 'Camp Stool' fresco, in which neither sex is distinguished on the basis of anatomy or clothing, Evans (1935: 386) made the following observation:

> Simple bands here take the place of the usual close-fitting belts, and the long skirts are composed rather of broad diagonal bands than of flounces. Such garb may well have been worn over the normal belt and loin-clothing of the men's costume.

Although the suggestion has not been taken up by other authors, and seems a little ridiculous, it indicates the prevailing desire to establish a coherent, solid, gendered identity for the figures, especially in cases where there is little or no distinction between the red and white figures. The accounts all begin from the premise that gender is organised in a binary relationship of male/female. However, many of the images do not fit neatly into such a categorisation. Therefore, the embellishments of the image, such as hairstyle and jewellery, become extremely important in establishing a difference between the images. Where even those details are missing, Evans postulates a difference that we cannot see, an internal difference which is central to the figure's gender and identity. In such a formulation, the external features of the figures become mere expressions of the internal 'truth' of gender; the details—clothing, hairstyle, activity—have to be seen to refer back to that internal truth. However, Butler (1990a: 135—6; see Chapter 2) suggests that the idea of an internally coherent gendered identity is an illusion; she argues that words, acts and gestures 'create the illusion of an interior and organising gender core'. Minoan scholars assume such a 'gender core' for the people whom the images are supposed to represent. Evans apparently needs to be assured that the red figures in the 'Camp Stool' fresco are wearing cod-pieces underneath their robes, even though in other contexts he accepts that white figures sometimes wear that garment. A similar need to know that a penis is present, even though external codes hide that fact, is recognised as part of the structure of transvestisism; one's appearance speaks of femaleness, but the whole point to that appearance is the 'masking' of a male body (see Ekins 1997: 49—50). In the 'Bull-leaper' panel (Fig. 5.6) the apparent differences in hairstyle and jewellery are taken as signs that there is an abiding difference between the figures, whereas the 'Camp Stool' figures show no such signs of differentiation. Evans' uncertainty with the red 'Camp Stool' figures derives from their lack of clear male characteristics; they are perfect 'imitations' of the white figures. The uncertainty is a result of a confusion created between a supposed natural sex and a cultural gender. In order to make a statement about gender, the figure has first to be sexed. The confusion in interpretation arises precisely because sex is not evident in the images and the relationship between sex and gender is implicitly assumed to be one of causality. To Evans, and others, their appearance is distinctively feminine: Immerwahr

(1990: 95) remarks on the likeness of their dress to women's attire; Castledon (1990: 140) suggests they are a subordinate caste of transvestite eunuch priests. However, because of their colour, they are assumed to have male anatomy. The effect of the red figures in the 'Camp Stool' fresco can be compared to the 'double subversion' that drag enacts (Butler 1990a: 137). The red 'Camp Stool' figures have a feminine outside appearance, yet their inside (essence) is masculine (the assumed cod-piece/penis). At the same time, however, the figures symbolise the opposite inversion: their appearance outside (the colour of their body) is masculine, yet their 'true' inside, that which they are 'expressing' through their appearance, is feminine. Butler (1990a: 137, original emphasis) argues that drag creates a unified picture of 'women', but also reveals those aspects of experience which are falsely naturalised within that unity: '*In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself—as well as its contingency*'. The notion of drag as parody reveals the assumption of an internally coherent core to identity behind Evans' interpretation of the 'Camp Stool' fresco; it further reveals that the idea of an original, abiding essence to gender identity is an illusion.

Evans, in effect, demonstrates that illusion by directly linking the cod-piece with internal male identity. The cod-piece is taken to signify an absent penis. That absence is signified on the body, for Evans, by the cod-piece. However, the cod-piece is not a penis, but is taken as a sign, a surface signification, of the absent penis (e.g. Marinatos 1995: 578). As such, the illusory nature of the internal, penis-dependant gender core is revealed: there is no core, only sign on the surface of the body that signifies an absent yet assumed internally coherent gender. The Knossian images have been understood by previous writers to be signifying that absence through the acts, gestures and clothing of the figures. The images, such as the 'Camp Stool' fresco and the 'Bull-Leapers' panels, however, continually refuse to signify an internally coherent gender core in such a way. Once the illusory nature of that mode of signification is exposed, it becomes possible to re-examine the way the images can represent identity other than by recourse to 'sex', and hence gender, as primary to identity.

Erasures

The hidden causality between sex and gender, the assumed signifying truth of a timeless body, and the reliance upon the primacy of sexual difference for gendered identity, have all contrived to 'erase' the potential of the images to signify alternative forms of identity. The incongruencies in the colour convention have forced those who do not think it applies in all cases to explain why. Hitchcock (1994a: 1), for example, understands the 'Bull-Jumper' panels and the 'Priest-King' fresco relief as 'notable exceptions' to the usually clearly defined 'gender roles' that are depicted using rules of representation such as the colour convention. The exceptions are characterised by Hitchcock (1994a: 5) as being indicative of a society in which, 'sexual ambiguity, multiple genders, plurality, and difference played a sanctioned role in the dominant social order', and that as a consequence, 'Minoans chose to privilege certain images as different and distinct from their own cultural norm' (*ibid*: 7). However, if the colour convention is maintained as a means of ascertaining the normative gender of the figures, and the ambiguous cases are seen as playing a 'sanctioned role' distinct from the cultural norm, then Hitchcock is maintaining a primary binary structure male/female from which the examples she sites are deviances. In which case contemporary cultural norms are being maintained. Butler (1990a: 13, original emphasis) has argued that:

> The effort to *include* "Other" cultures as variegated amplifications of a global phallologocentrism constitutes an appropriative act that risks a repetition of the self-aggrandizing gesture of phallologocentrism, colonizing under the sign of the same those differences that might otherwise call that totalizing concept into question.

Hitchcock, whilst offering a new interpretation of the images, is 'colonising differences' as different under the sign of the *same*, the differences must still refer to a set of rules which maintain a binary structure for gender and the primacy of that relationship for identity.

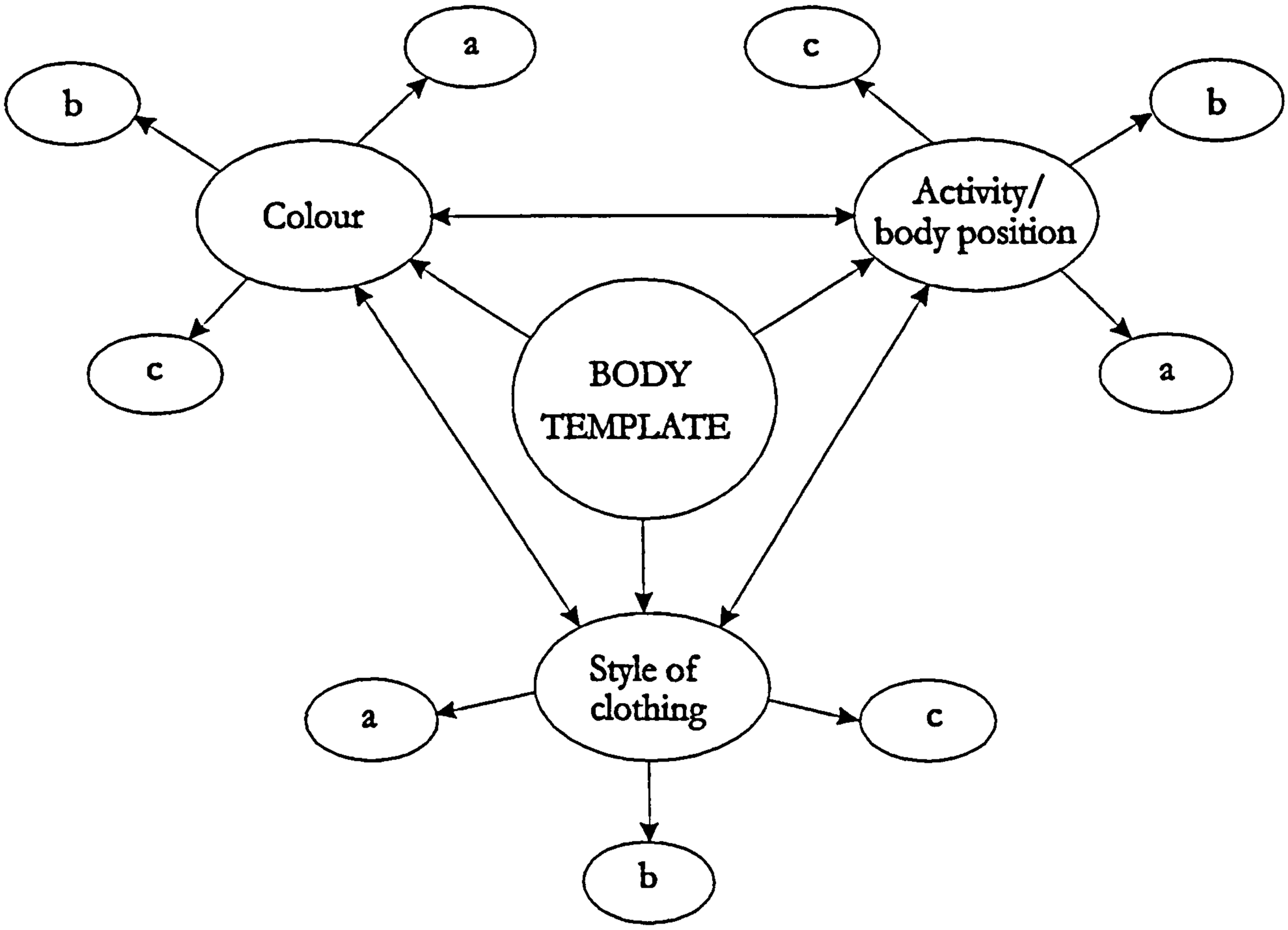
The same strictures are placed on the other interpretations of the colour convention when it is not taken as exclusively representing gender. The result is often a contradictory interpretation: for example, Marinatos (1993: 219) asks, 'What is the ritual

logic of girls leaping over a bull?', and proceeds to interpret the white bull-leapers as effeminate boys. However, that consideration is not afforded to any other image, resulting in the inconsistencies of interpretation outlined above. Such inconsistencies arise precisely because the ambiguous cases are seen as exceptions from a rule. The recognition that the majority of cases of gender attribution are unclear where gender is derived from physical sexual characteristics, enables those cases to be formative of alternative understandings of identification, or of alternative meanings given to what we understand as physical sexual characteristics.

Chapter 6: The Knossian Template for Images of the Body

Introduction

This chapter explores the body imagery from Late Bronze Age Knossos without starting from an assumption of male/female as foundational categories of identity. Such an approach involves examining the visual codes that recur throughout that imagery, without assuming *a priori* that gender is of any significance. It is observed that a single body-shape cross-cuts all media and all recognisable gender distinctions in Knossian body imagery. This non-gendered aesthetic of the body means that identity was represented in the imagery other than by recourse to genital differences as the primary marker of difference. Within the framework provided by the body-shape several other physical features are also prominent; features that also cross-cut most of the images. However, in only some instances are the figures distinguished from each other by physical features. Rather, style of clothing, colour, activity and body position are those facets of the image which are consistently used to distinguish between figures. Furthermore, particular figures or aspects of the images are brought to prominence through focus and magnification. That process of magnification and focus reveals a further level of distinguishing between figures in a composition, by means of the differences in the patterns on clothing, the details of ornamentation, and to a lesser extent slight discrepancies in the height of figures (see Fig. 6.1). These patterns and details enable figures within a larger 'grouping'—such as all those in a single composition wearing the same style of clothing—to be individuated from one another. Importantly, such individuation is not a means of marking out individuals, but rather enables distinction without exclusion. Fig. 6.1 illustrates how the body template is sub-divided into the larger categories—colour, style of clothing and activity/body position—which are then divisible by each other and the individuating details. The result of these means of distinguishing between figures is to set up a play between the universal body-shape and single figures; the larger groupings do not automatically exclude particular types from representation. For example, a figure in the images will always adhere to the common body-shape, but within that template any number of means of differentiation are possible. A red figure may have a particular style of clothing



Key: a=patterns on clothing; b=details of the body ornamentation; c=slight height differences between figures. The arrows represent those attributes that can be combined with others.

Fig. 6.1: Schematic diagram of the interaction between the visual codes of the Knossian body imagery.

and body position. However, that does not exclude a white figure from using the same clothing and body position. The patterns on the clothing, details of body ornamentation and slight height differences differentiate between that red figure and other figures, red or white. The only correspondence that cross-cuts all figures is the body-shape. Those figures are then divided by a number of means which do not set up large, exclusive groups.

Central to this project is the recognition that there is no inherent 'core' to the identities being represented in the images. Rather, the means of representing identity through the images can be understood as instances of a performative regime, in which the visual codes are the 'pictorial gestures' that constitute the identity that previous authors have assumed they express. The individual expressions of identity gain meaning through a juxtaposition of the common, ideal types with specific instances of departure.

The body can be understood, therefore, as articulated through semiotic chains of reference (see Yates 1993: 69).

The approach in the current chapter is a general one, even though that means the images are being discussed outside of their specific contexts. The images do, however, seem to include a common means of depicting the body, and the generalisations in this chapter are argued to be a clear way of presenting that data. Nonetheless, issues such as the materiality of the images, how they are implicated in the production of identities, and the meaning of the departures from the common form are crucial to a full understanding of gendered identities in Late Bronze Age Knossos. Chapter 7, therefore, explores how the departures from the common form, such as the depiction of breasts, and the context of the images create specific meanings by referring to the common form and by differing from it.

The Knossian body template

The most striking feature of Knossian images of the body is the consistency with which it is portrayed and not the distinction between figures on the basis of body-shape or particular physical attributes of the body. Three key elements cross-cut all the images of bodies from Knossos: a single body-shape; the details of the face, and the manner in which hands are depicted.

The figures in the bull-leaper panels (e.g. Fig. 5.6) are of two different colours; other than that, however, they are remarkably uniform in presentation. The narrowness of their waists, accentuated by the tight-fitting belts above their loin-cloths, is instantly apparent. Above and below the waist, in a virtual mirror image, their bodies rapidly broaden into exaggerated shoulders and buttocks. The only vertical asymmetry is their heads which crown the bodies and are connected to them by locks of hair. The red figure in the one fully-restored panel almost fully inverts the image; the head, violently twisted so as to maintain its upward projection, is where the bottom should be. Even the figures shown from the side achieve the same effect of a triangular upper body by exaggerating the breadth of the chest, back and buttocks, which in turn emphasises the narrowness of the waist.

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The bull-leapers are not unique in their portrayal of the body. A single body-shape is common to most of the images of people in all media from Late Bronze Age Knossos. Whatever the context of the painting, sculpture or glyptic—colour, dress, activity, body position—the body-shape remains constant: narrow waist, broad shoulders and large buttocks. The larger faience figurine (Fig. 7.13) 'wears' a bell-shaped skirt which falls to the ground, a short-sleeved open-fronted top which is tied at the front, and a tall truncated conical hat. The effect of the clothing and upper body is to replicate the common, "hour-glass" body-shape of the images: the skirt emphasises the increasing width of the lower body from the waist; the shape of the back and breasts have the same effect on the upper-body. The figurine also 'wears' two snakes: one curls symmetrically down the figure's back and arms, with one hand of the figurine holding the head and the other the tail in open palms; the other snake curls down the front of the figure and then up the hat where the head can be seen resting on the crown. The belt of the figurine is made of the two snakes coiled into a large 'knot'; the back of the 'knot' takes the form of a double-girdle. The figure has a very narrow waist; the back rapidly triangulates to the broad shoulders (see Fig. 7.14), the breasts create a mirror effect at the front of the figurine; the shape of the lower body—broadening at the buttocks and again at mid-thigh level—accentuates the hips whilst elongating the lower body. The coils of the snakes play with this idea of the body, with the specific shape that most of the images conform to; they mirror and emphasise the body-shape. The coils of the snakes follow the vital contours of the body of the figurine, interweaving with the arms, coiling down the side of the head where the images often have side-locks of hair, framing the face, radically broadening the chest and back, pinching in the waist, and then out again at the front and back of the pelvic area, mirroring the shape of the apron the figure wears. The ideal of the Knossian body-shape that pervades most of the images of figures from Knossos is starkly and boldly outlined on and by the figurine. A figure on a sealstone (Fig. 5.3) reproduces the faience figurine imagery: the body of the figurine is enveloped and framed by what appears to be a snake. A common idea and means of signifying the body is being presented, even though the context, type of representation and actual imagery are obviously different.

The 'Camp Stool' fresco figures (Figs 5.10, 5.11, 6.10) do not have the typical girdle, but they are still shown with belts and very narrow waists (although the waists are

partly obscured by the arms). The shoulders of the figures are thrown forward in a way that reveals and clarifies the patterning of the clothing as well as obscuring the chest area from view. The 'Cup-bearer' figure (Fig. 6.12) is given a similar treatment of the shoulders, except they are thrown back and the right shoulder is abnormally high, which in effect broadens the chest in comparison to the thin waist. The size of the buttocks is emphasised by the outline of the clothing in both frescoes; the 'Cup-bearer' figure's skirt exaggerates the size of the buttocks to the detriment of anatomical correctness by dipping in and then out before joining the thigh.

Many of the sealings and sealstones uncovered from Late Bronze Age Knossos show the body-shape very clearly; it appears to be an integral part of their design in many cases. The waist is commonly denoted by an almost round, pea-shape which connects the upper and lower body (e.g. Fig. 6.2). The shoulders are almost always broad, no matter what the activity, clothing or physical sexual characteristics visible on the figure. The ball-shoulders of the fisherman (Fig. 6.3), and the sweeping shoulders of the seated figure in the clay matrix (Fig. 6.4) are the clearest, or most exaggerated, examples[1].

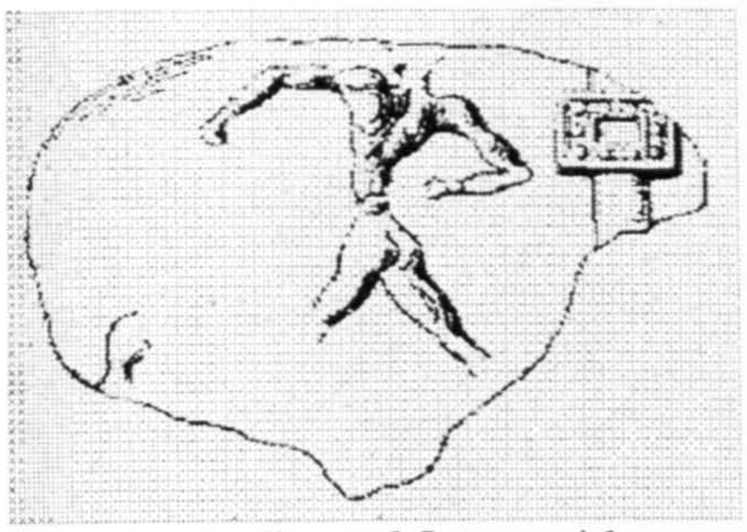


Fig. 6.2: Sealing of figure with pea-shaped waist.



Fig. 6.3: 'Fisherman' seal.

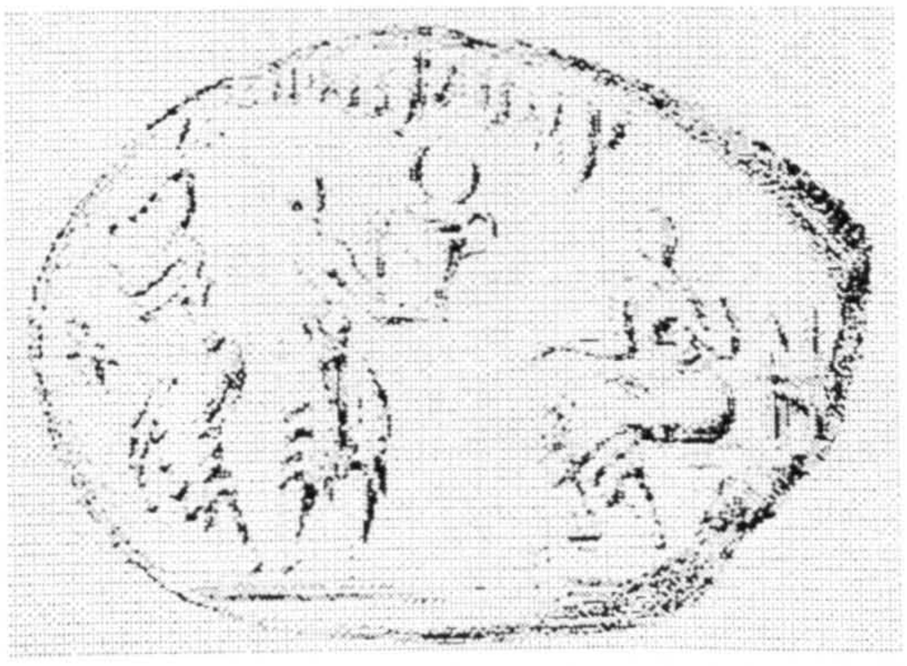


Fig. 6.4: Sealing impression of the clay matrix.

The torso from the 'Priest-King' figure (Fig. 5.7) shows well-sculptured shoulders and a rapid tapering to the waist; generally, however, the relief fragments are not well preserved enough to show complete bodies. The fragments of relief decoration from vessels have some of the clearest examples of the "hour-glass" body-shape: a fragment of black steatite (Fig. 6.5) shows two minutely detailed figures, one extant from the shoulders to

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[1] There are, however, four examples of figures in long robes who do not have the "hour-glass" shape; their bodies fall out from the shoulders then straight to their feet in line with the robes.



Fig. 6.5: Fragment of a steatite vessel showing two entwined figures.

the knees, the other from just below the knees to just below the waist. The musculature of the torso and right buttock and thigh of the left-hand figure is intricately carved; the buttock and thigh are large, the waist is narrow, and the torso expands rapidly at the *latissimus dorsi*. Furthermore, the body is unnaturally twisted at the waist; the buttock is firmly in profile and the torso is *en face*, with the effect emphasising both. Similarly, the two figures 'processing' below a 'peak sanctuary' on another fragment of steatite (Fig. 6.6) present narrow, girdled waists, an accentuated curve of the back which emphasises the girth of the chest area, and pointedly muscular buttocks and thighs.

The shape and significance of bodies consists of the combined and inseparable components of body and clothing. Meaning is derived from a complete image, not a juxtaposition of natural body and cultural clothing. The seated women in the 'Grandstand' fresco (see Figs 6.20—6.23) present an over-all image and do not allude to a 'true' body beneath their clothing. The actual effect is the same whether one is writing of a semi-nude or a fully clothed figure. One figure on which the common body-shape is not emphasised, however, is the one almost complete ivory 'Bull-leaper' figurine (Fig. 7.10). The figure is slender; the musculature is faithfully detailed on parts of the body, but it is not exaggerated. The shoulders are broad, though the buttocks are not large. The waist has been reconstructed with wax and may have been narrower than it now appears. The shape of the figure is consistent with those described above, but is less exaggerated, especially at the hips and buttocks. The figure is also unique in that clothing is not obviously depicted. However, gold leaf found in association with the figurine by Evans (1901—2: 71) may have been clothing for the figurine. Furthermore, all the ivory heads found in the area have small indentations in the skull, some with pieces of bronze 'hair' still in place (Fig. 7.7). The hair was added later, as the clothing would have been, and both were made from different materials to the figurines. The image, therefore, consisted of a combination of adornments and the ivory body; the effect of the figurine was achieved through the complete image. The ivory 'body' was not a separate, signifying entity; it did not represent an integral, Knossian image of the body. Rather, the figure was built-up from distinct material components which gained meaning through their combination into a complete image. The bronze and gold leaf were attached separately, but were integral to the figurine's over-all shape.



Fig. 6.6: Fragment of a steatite vessel showing 'processing' figures.

The seated white figures from the 'Grandstand Fresco' (e.g. Figs 6.20—6.23) have elaborately depicted hair and multi-coloured clothing. The figures conform to the common body-shape: the waists are extremely narrow, whilst the buttocks are indicated as large by the curve of their skirts. However, the shoulders are 'hidden' by the seemingly flounced sleeves of their upper-body garments: the representation of bodies is inseparable from the clothing and paraphernalia associated with those bodies.

Within the template created by the common body-shape particular parts of the body are brought to prominence through exaggeration or an increased level of pictorial detail. The special treatment given to such body parts, and their occurrence throughout the images, marks them as significant to the general idea of bodies represented and reproduced in and by the figures. The seated figures in the 'Grandstand' fresco show the elaborate depiction of hair that characterises many of the images, with side-locks, front-locks, headbands, and in various lengths. The standing white and red figures from this and the 'Sacred Grove' fresco (Figs 6.15, 6.16) are less clearly painted, but still demonstrate a similar treatment of the hair. Less detailed still, the single heads that fill the background of both compositions (see Fig. 6.17) maintain certain key aspects of the hair-style of the other, more complete, figures. Through a process of magnification, or increased focus, the crucial aspects of the face of a figure are increasingly isolated; a similar process is visible in the level of detail on the bodies of the figures. By the time the focus has reached the heads of the crowd only a few schematic details are left: the basic shape, the ear, side-lock, eye (different for reds and whites), head-band, some curls of hair, the occasional mouth-line and white line around the neck of the red heads. Magnify the image, and the complexities and details increase from the heads, through the standing figures, to the seated. Through such a process of visual isolation the salient features within the common body-shape are marked as relevant for representation.

The heads of the figures are often the most elaborate parts of the images: styled hair, jewellery and facial detail are scrupulously depicted. The faience figurines have straight, long hair, one shoulder length, the other to the waist. The longer hair is moulded away from the arch of the back, carefully distinguishing it and singling it out, as well as emphasising the "hour-glass" body-shape (Fig. 6.7). Unusually, the hair is straight, with only a slight wave; the majority of images with long hair show it curled. There are variations in how head hair is presented, but none of the figures in the



Fig. 6.7: Side view of smaller faience figurine.

frescoes have any facial or body hair; there are, however, two examples of beards in other media.

The breadth of the neck is emphasised in most of the images (e.g. the 'Bull-leapers', Fig. 5.8; and the 'Grandstand' fresco figures, e.g. Fig. 6.20). The facial details are also prone to distortion or exaggeration. The faience figurines (Fig. 7.13) have large ears, which in the case of the larger figurine are outlined by the coils of a snake. The hair of the 'Cup-bearer' is carefully painted to frame the right ear; a small jewel rests just to the front of that ear (see Fig. 6.12). The seated figures in the 'Grandstand' fresco have locks of hair in front of the ear to similarly mark its borders, as do the figures in the 'Bull-leaper' frescoes (see Fig. 5.6), where a touch of red is added to the lobe. The ivory heads, though badly preserved, show distinct ears that stick out. Even the 'Priest-King' figure, where the head was assumed to have been painted on the flat, shows the tip of an ear in relief below the brow of the 'lily crown'[2] (Fig. 5.7).

Noses and mouths receive a different treatment: noses are usually small, or underplayed—the faience figurines have distinctly flat noses—whilst mouths rarely feature at all, and are the least common part of the face to be exaggerated. The majority of mouths, if indicated, are marked by a narrow line. Again, the faience figurines are distinct in having broad mouths and obvious lips. The only clear image of an open mouth, however, is the large white figure from the 'Camp Stool' fresco (Fig. 5.10). That departure from the norm may be of significance to the image; traditionally interpreted as lipstick, the open mouth and 'carelessly applied rouge' (Evans 1935: 397), may have more to do with the presence of representations of goblets in the image; the open mouth and red may indicate that some kind of liquid was being consumed.

The same figure from the 'Camp Stool' fresco was remarked upon by Evans (1935; and see Cameron 1975: 343) as having the tear-duct incorrectly placed. He associated the anatomical inaccuracy of the image with the general decadence of artistic endeavours in LM II plus Knossos, which was part of his grand narrative of the flowering and decay of Minoan civilisation (e.g. Evans 1921: 25—8). Eyes are commonly represented disproportionately large in the images; they sometimes include a tear-duct. However, it is a mistake to equate faithful reproduction of an original with

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[2] The crown may not belong to the same figure as the torso (for discussion, see Hood *et al.* 1994).

'achievement' or as evidence of the decline in an artistic tradition. Rather, the depiction of the eye as large, and including the tear-duct as part of that image, is in itself evidence of a need to include a particular representation of the eye. The fact that the eye and tear-duct are being represented is the salient point, not how faithfully they are 'copied' from real-life.

The face was obviously significant for representation, but other parts of the body were also emphasised. The emphasis sometimes works with the body-shape; or it works to isolate particular features of the body. For example, the legs and lower-body of the figures are slightly longer than is anatomically correct; the effect is to make the figures appear taller and to place greater emphasis on the buttocks and legs. Similarly, calves are frequently emphasised. For example, the schematically represented feet of the figures in the 'Camp Stool' fresco (see Fig. 6.10) dip in towards the ankles and then dramatically outwards just above.

At Knossos, Evans (1921: 487) uncovered a faience mould, one side of which contained moulds of trichus and trumpet shells, a segment of a spiral bracelet, a rosette, and a semi-lunar plaque, and on the other side the mould of a hand (Fig. 6.8). The hand is clenched in a three-knuckled fist; the thumb is distinct and long. The mould cuts off with a flat surface just below the wrist. The hand would have been considerably larger in scale than the faience figurines from the 'Temple Repositories', though no actual faience objects like it have been found. A similar image of a fist and prominent thumb appears on a sealstone from Knossos (Fig. 6.9). Elongated thumbs, often at a peculiar angle, are also common to many larger images (frescoes and reliefs) and the figurines. The form only occurs, however, when the figures are shown with clenched fists. All the images of bull-leapers, except those on sealings and sealstones, have open hands, with a definite distinction made between the fingers, which are bunched up, and the thumb, which is at

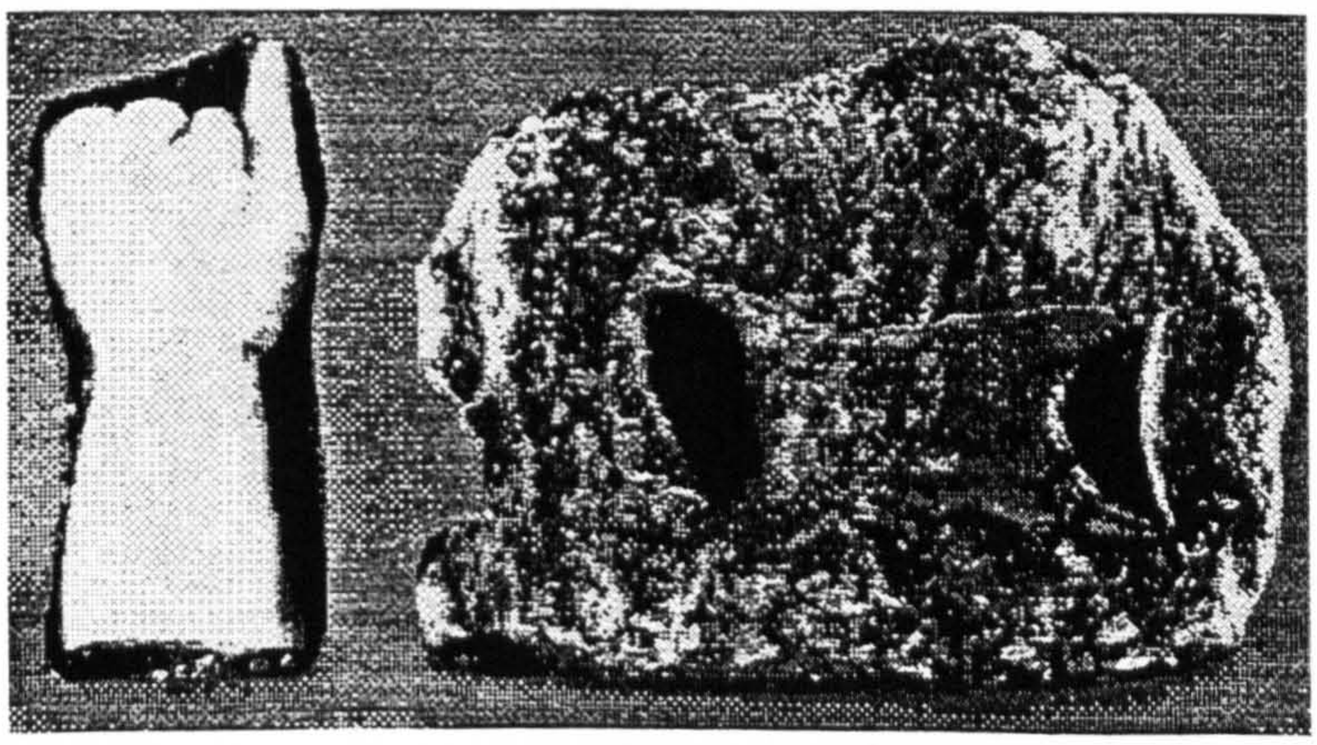


Fig. 6.8: Steatite mould for faience hand.



Fig. 6.9: Sealstone of fist.



Fig. 6.10: 'Camp Stool' figure with exaggerated calves.

an approximately forty-five degrees angle from the fingers (see Fig. 7.12). A similar schematic representation of the hand occurs in the background figures of the 'Sacred Grove' fresco (Fig. 6.17), as well as on the 'Camp Stool' figures (see Fig. 5.11). The accuracy of human body form is not always one-hundred percent correct: there are many instances of distortion, such as twisted bodies, large ears, etc. However, noticeably long thumbs occur in plastic representations, where other details are carefully included. The faience mould, for example, is comparatively large and there was no technical reason why the thumb should be distorted. The thumb is similarly portrayed in the torso of the 'Priest-King' relief fresco (Fig. 5.7), which includes a high level of detail and anatomical correctness in other body parts. The distortion of thumbs has to do with visibility: they were significant enough in the images to be either completely separate from the rest of the hand, or to be shown elongated with clench fists for greater visibility and to readily distinguish them from the rest of the hand. For example, the 'Cup-bearer' (Fig. 6.12) figure has a thumb which should be hidden by the rhyton; instead, the thumb does go behind the vessel and appears again, considerable elongated, on the far side, making the thumb appear unnaturally long.

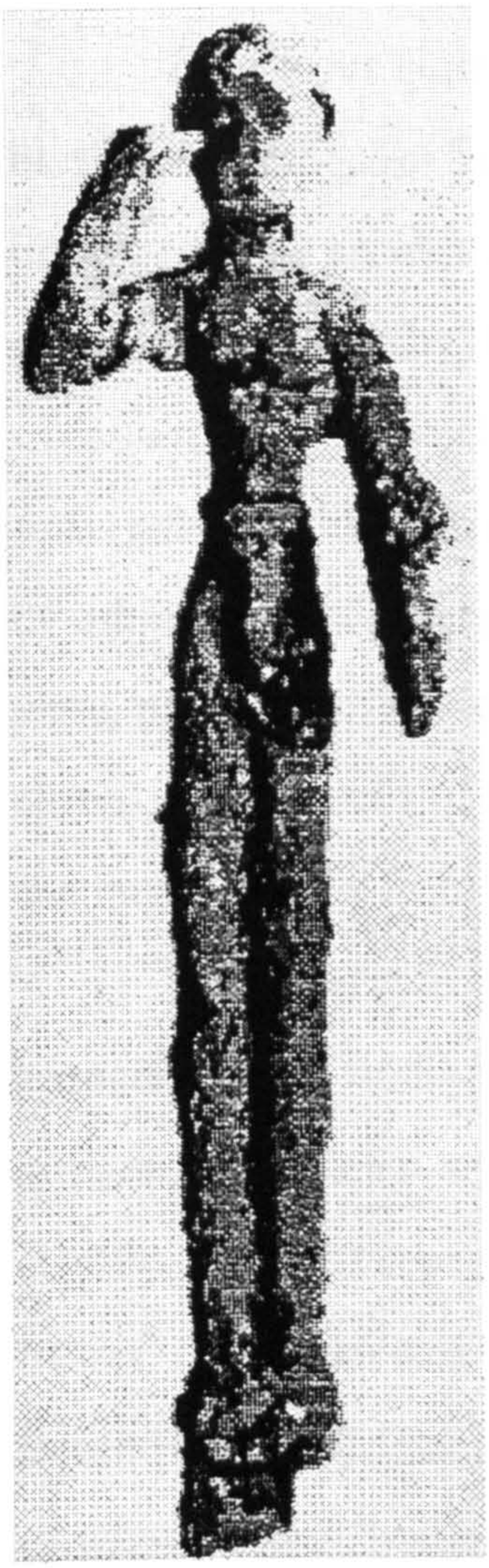


Fig. 6.11: Bronze statuette.

With an open hand 'visibility' is easy to achieve without having to alter the proportions of the thumb; however, in a fist the thumb must be exaggerated and distorted in order to achieve the same effect. A bronze statuette (Fig. 6.11) found near the old 'South Propylaeum' at Knossos (Evans 1928: 702) clearly demonstrates the significance of the thumb: the fist is closed and brought up to the forehead; the thumb can be clearly made out, even though the figure is corroded, pointing directly at the head of the figurine. The effect of the distortion is to ensure the thumb can be seen clearly.

Clothing, adornments, activities and body pose

The "hour-glass" shape and the placing of emphasis on particular aspects of the bodies of the figures from Knossos form a template, an intelligible boundary of the body based on an idea of bodies belonging to a specific group/s who produced and are represented in and by those images. Within that common form, however, there are various means by which certain figures can be associated with other figures, and so form groups; although such groups are never self-contained and always refer to aspects of other groups. The figures can be associated through type of clothing, activity, body pose, paraphernalia and, in the case of the frescoes, by colour. The patterns on the clothing, the details of the paraphernalia and specific gestures distinguish the figures in the larger groups from one another.

The figures in the images are presented in specific ways that highlight particular aspects of their bodily adornments. The 'Cup-bearer' figure (Fig. 6.12) shows the right arm and shoulder at a peculiar angle to the rest of the body; the shoulder is lifted slightly. A recent representation of the 'Cup-bearer' fresco includes a second 'cup-bearer' (of whom part of the left armband of the original remains) in front of the extant figure (Fig. 6.13). The second figure is drawn so that the right arm is not abnormally positioned (the shoulder is not drawn at all). The effect is that the right armband of the second figure disappears. It would appear that to the painter of the reproduction the symmetry of the figure was of greater importance than displaying the second armband. To the original painter the obverse was the case; perhaps it was of greater importance to the representation of the figure that the second armband was shown, even to the detriment of artistic balance.

Such bodily distortion is not limited to the 'Cup-bearer' fresco: a more dramatic example is afforded by a figure in the restored 'Bull-leaper' panel (see Fig. 5.6). The central figure is apparently in the middle of a leap: the figure's violently twisted body is freeze-framed in mid flight, head close to the buttocks, legs flailing, arms straight down each side of the bull. The body is twisted into an incredible position in order to show both the head and the loin-clothing as clearly as possible. The face is always visible, not because there is any individual distinction in the face, any type of portraiture; rather,



Fig. 6.12: The 'Cup-bearer' fresco figure.



Fig. 6.13: Reproduction of the 'Cup-bearer' fresco.

they are always visible because there is no portraiture. The face must be adorned with objects, the hair must fly in a particular way. There is no point in making the image without such effects, such bodily adornments. Anatomical accuracy gives way to the importance of making visible an aspect of the representation that acts to delineate and identify the figure as a member of a particular group within the larger group represented by the body template, by means of clearly presenting the clothing and facial details.

The style of clothing is closely linked to type of activity, although not exclusively. Loin-clothing has been characterised as 'activity wear' by a number of authors (see Chapter 5); the loin-clothing of two figures on a fragment of steatite (Fig. 6.6), and a fragment of fresco (Fig. 6.14) indicates, however, that the association is not an exclusive one. Sometimes an image contains figures with a single type of clothing (such as the 'Camp Stool' and 'Bull-leaper' frescoes, the fragment of fresco with red and black figures, Fig. 5.13, and the majority of the glyptic images); on other occasions clothing type and colour are juxtaposed (e.g. the 'Grandstand' fresco, and perhaps the 'Procession' fresco). Colour is consistently used to differentiate between figures in the frescoes. Red figures, contrary to popular belief, predominate in all the images except, ironically, in the 'Bull-leaper' panels, where the surviving white fragments outnumber the red by at least nine-to-two (Rehak n.d.: 4).

Alexandri (1994: 58) argues that in Minoan glyptic art there are many more activities with which male figures are associated, or able to take part in, than for female figures. There are associations between clothing and activity, but rarely by colour, clothing and activity. The activities include athletic endeavours, procession, seated formally, seated centrally but informally, standing, being a crowd, etc.

Throughout the images there appears to be a set of rules governing the use and representation of body parts. The distinction in body movement and gestures in various frescoes shows greater commonality between different coloured figures, and a greater distinction dependant on the activity of those figures or the theme of the composition as a whole. For example, it is commonly assumed that the white-footed figures in the 'Procession' fresco (see Fig. 7.1—7.3), in contrast to the red, were either not carrying anything, or were carrying an object of special 'religious' significance. However, from the analogy of glyptic art (e.g. Fig. 6.4) and the 'Cup-bearer' and extant upper bodies of



Fig. 6.14: Fresco fragment of loin-cloth and head.

the red figures (Figs 6.12, 7.5), there is no reason to assume that the white figures were not also carrying vessels.

The 'Grandstand' fresco shows three different attitudes for the figures: seated, standing and heads (e.g., see Figs 6.16, 6.17, 6.20). There are as many differences between the groups based on body position as there are between the different coloured figures. The heads are treated identically for pose and gesture (except the red figures at the top of the image who show hands in the air); the standing figures, although in different locations, have comparable levels of detail: they are also depicted with arms in the air. The seated figures are all white, and their activity and gestures are radically different from all other figures, irrespective of colour.

The figures in the images are broadly divisible into formal and fluid body positions, although both are governed by strict rules of representation. The distinction is best illustrated by the contrast between the ivory figurine (Fig. 7.10) and the faience figurines (Fig. 7.13). The ivory is active and fluid; the faience are heavily formalised and rigid. The 'Procession' (Fig. 7.2) and 'Camp Stool' (e.g. Fig 5.11) frescoes both have fairly rigid, formalised bodies presented, whereas the bull-leapers (Fig. 5.6) have far more movement. The 'Grandstand' and 'Sacred Grove' frescoes (Figs 6.15—6.18, 6.20—6.23) include both types: the fluidity of the representation of the heads and seated figures, and the fairly stilted representations of the standing figures. The glyptic imagery demonstrates that the fluidity or formality of bodies does not depend solely on an association with clothing type. The figures in cod-pieces from the glyptic do show a large variety of body positions; the figures in skirts, however, are not rigid in presentation of the body, and show a great deal of fluidity and movement (e.g. Fig. 6.4).

The importance of particular items of the apparel of the figures, and the process whereby these particular aspects were picked out, is clearly illustrated by finds associated with the faience figurines. With the faience figurines, in the eastern 'Temple Repository', Evans brought out fragments of faience clothing: two complete 'robes', one fragmentary robe, two complete girdles, and one fragmentary girdle (see Figs 6.19, 7.16, 7.17). The complete robes are very different sizes: the larger corresponding to the larger figurine and the smaller about half the size. The robes are flattened, but the overall shape is similar to that of the figurine. The girdles on the robes are of the thick-roll type of the larger figurine; the top of the robes are short-sleeved, but show no evidence of



Fig. 6.15: Standing red figures from the 'Grandstand' fresco.



Fig. 6.16: Standing white figures from the 'Grandstand' fresco.



Fig. 6.17: Background heads from the 'Sacred Grove' fresco.

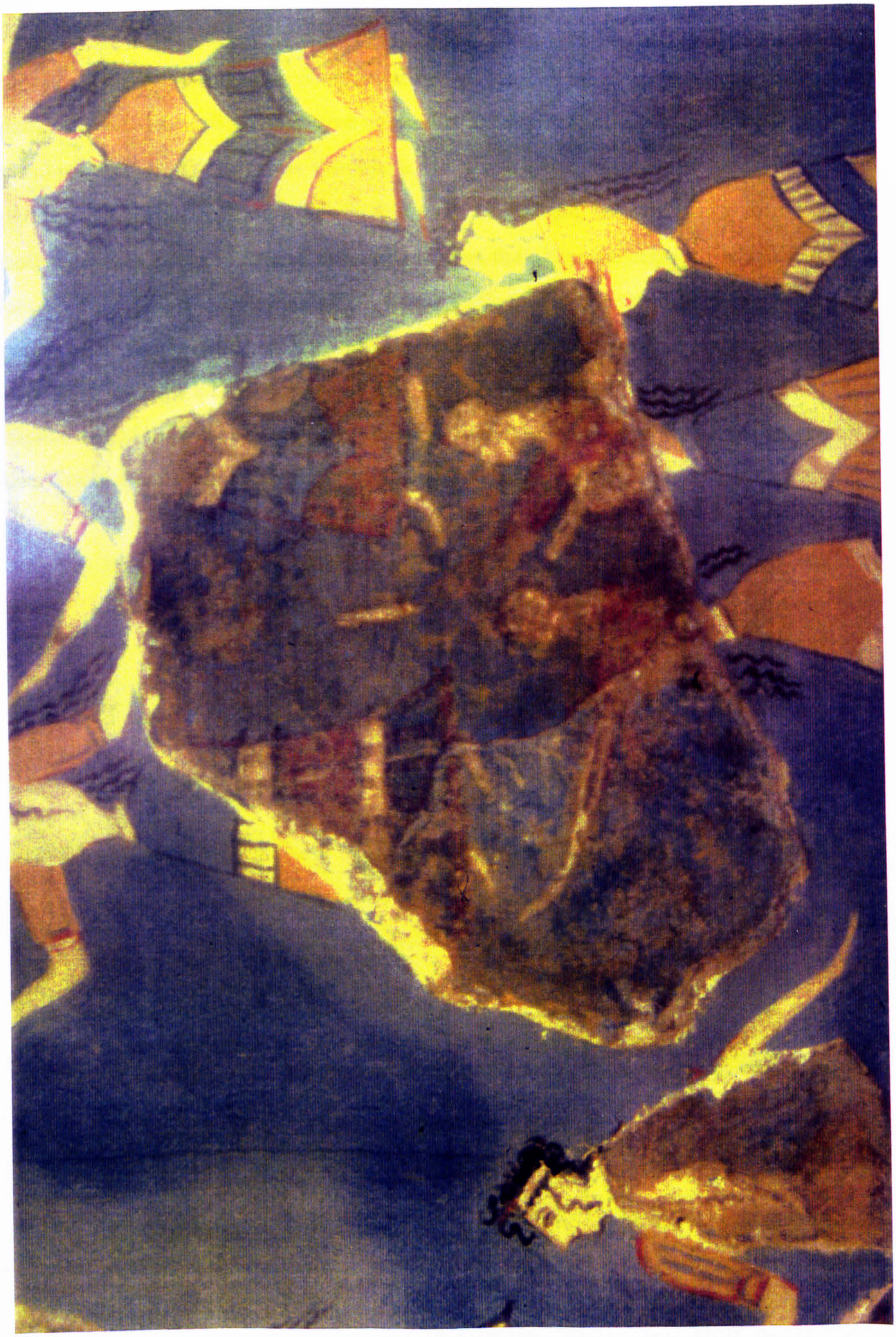


Fig. 6.18: Foreground white figures from the 'Sacred Grove' fresco.

ties; nor are they open at the chest, but are an inverted 'V' shape at the neck. The patterning on the bodice is the same as the smaller figurine: straight black lines curving outwards from the waist to the shoulders. The girdle of the larger robe is dark with no pattern; the smaller has one roll in dark and the other light. In contrast, the skirts of both robes are richly decorated, far more so than their figurine counterparts. The larger has a broad band of 'saffron-flowers' (Evans 1921: 506) along the hem, a large clump of plants immediately above with a double-wavy line border; the remainder of the skirt is decorated with thick horizontal lines until the girdle is reached. The smaller skirt has a triple band of dark lines at the hem, followed by fewer, but larger, flowers surrounded by a cloud-like outline in black. A single dark line fills the remainder of the skirt and

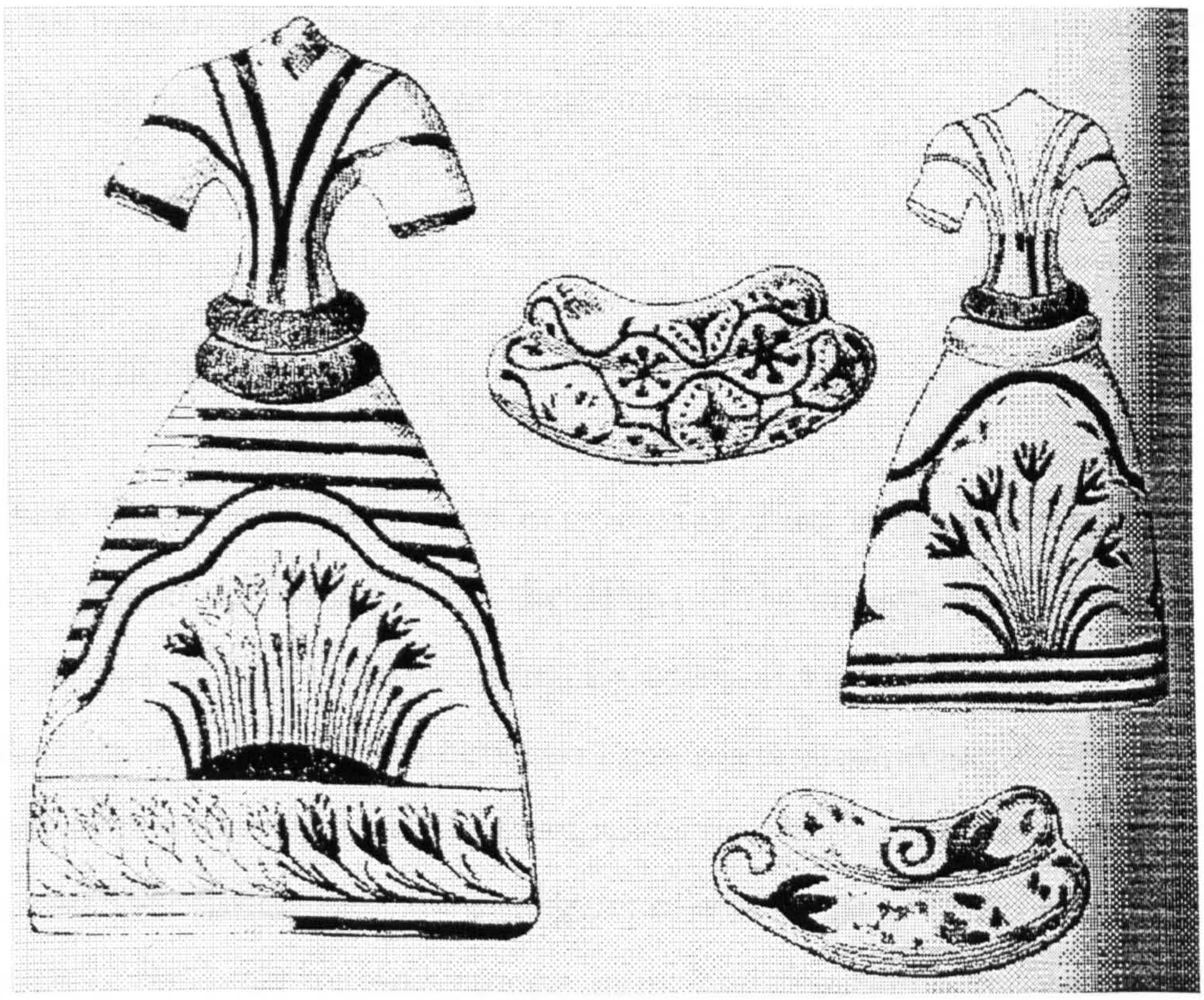


Fig. 6.19: Drawings of the faience clothing found with the faience figurines.

corresponds roughly to the cloud outline. Neither of the robes includes an apron such as the figurines show; the designs, however, are the same shape as inverted aprons. The separate girdles are the same shape as that of the larger figurine, but there is no evidence of them being the coils of a snake; they are also on a far larger scale. The girdles are richly decorated, one with a complicated, interlocking pattern which covers both rolls; the other with the heads of the same plants that decorate the robes.

Particular aspects of the figurines are being modelled separately; it is apparent that these aspects were of special significance. A similar process is occurring here as occurs with the miniature frescoes, except in the case of the faience apparel the artisans themselves are singling out particular aspects of the models and are reproducing and magnifying these aspects, only on a larger scale. Each successive magnification of a part of the image increases the scale of the part in order to emphasis the richness and detail of the pattern. The robes and then girdles are isolated, reproduced, and the importance of that particular item is emphasised by the increase in richness of decoration. The change in scale also allows more room for detail; the size and detail mutually increase the relative importance, or visibility, of the piece. Rather than the change in scale alone adding to the possibility of increased detail, as is the case with the miniature frescoes, the artisan chose specific parts of the image to magnify.

Gestures and details

There are obvious distinctions in type of clothing worn and in activity, but more emphasis is placed on distinctions in the details of the images, as can be seen from the above description of the faience clothing. By details is meant the patterns on clothing, the distribution of those patterns between figures in a single composition, the absence or presence of paraphernalia such as headbands, necklaces, armbands, anklets and bracelets, and their distribution on the figure; as well as the gestures and positions of various parts of the body within a composition. The decoration and patterns of clothing and paraphernalia in the images are given more attention and vary to a greater extent than any physical differences, and often to the detriment of anatomical accuracy. The parts of the body that are visible most often—the face, hands, feet, torso and legs—are very plain in contrast to the different styles of clothing and especially the patterns on them. The parts of the body that are exaggerated or shown frequently are not changed significantly: they are of a regular form and shape. The details, in contrast, change regularly; such details work to differentiate between figures within a single composition.

The figures in the 'Procession' fresco (Fig. 7.1, 7.5), of whom the middle sections have survived, are of the common, "hour-glass" body-shape. All three figures have a tasselled skirt which dips to a point at the front. They wear lipped girdles which are divided into three distinct bands which are decorated with patterns that are distinct from that of their skirts. The pattern on the bottom register of the girdle of two of the figures is repeated on the hem of their skirts. There are only three patterns on the girdles which are repeated on the bands of each figure in different combinations. Each of the patterns on the skirts is different from the others; one of the patterns is, however, the same as that on the skirt of the 'Cup-bearer' fresco, which may have formed part of the 'Procession' fresco.

In the 'Grandstand' fresco there are the remains of at least twenty-seven seated white figures (e.g. Figs 6.20—6.23). The bottom half of the garments of the figures appear to cover the wearers to the ankles, although no clear evidence of feet remains. The lower garments are divided by horizontal bands which separate differently coloured and patterned areas. The different patterns consist of straight lines and cross-hatching on the upper half of the lower garments, whilst the bottom half consists of bands of vertical lines. The top half of the figures consists of a white torso and forearms connected by coloured and patterned 'sleeves'. Some of the sleeves have bands, either on the inside or outside of the sleeve, or bordering the whole sleeve. The bands are either plain or patterned with cross-hatching, horizontal or vertical lines, or with a row of dots; or with a single line that divides into two near the shoulder and is flanked by two dots. The torsos are divided from the neck by either a single or double black line, which is sometimes divided by black and white or coloured bands. The upper bodies are divided from the lower by narrow white or yellow girdles.

The 'Procession' and 'Grandstand' frescoes are of distinct date and subject matter. However, the body-shape is common to both, as is the complexity of patterns and designs on the clothing; the 'Procession' fresco is more obviously detailed owing to the larger scale of the image. The detail and complexity of the smaller miniature fresco is apparent from the above description. The shape and style of the clothes are common to all the seated figures, but how the spaces created by that clothing and shape is filled is unique to each individual figure. There are a limited number of patterns and motifs that are repeated on the clothing of each figure, but the way they are arranged marks each



Fig. 6.20: Seated white figures from the 'Grandstand' fresco, A.



Fig. 6.21: Seated white figures from the 'Grandstand' fresco, B.



Fig. 6.22: Seated white figures from the 'Grandstand' fresco, C.



Fig. 6.23: Reconstruction of the seated white figures from the 'Grandstand' fresco.

figure out from the next. For example, there are only three different patterns with which the girdles of the 'Procession' fresco figures are decorated, but those patterns are arranged in such a way that each girdle is uniquely presented. The arrangement of patterns on figures with a common style of clothing and in the same composition recurs in all the images from Knossos. Wedde (1995: 494) has noted that the identical treatment of 'flounced skirts' never occurs on figures in the same image. A further clear example is the 'Bull-leaper' frescoes (Figs 5.6, 5.8): all the figures wear loin-clothing, but each loin-cloth is uniquely decorated. The only possible exception is the 'Ladies in Blue' fresco, although the extensive reconstruction is far from clear, and is based on the few fragments actually found.

The importance of representing the patterns on clothing, and representing them accurately, is demonstrated by evidence of the technical execution of the images: for example, there are traces of string marks and guidelines on the area of the skirts on the red figures from the 'Procession' frescoes, and on no other area of the figures. Furthermore, Alexandri (1994: 47) states that the engraving details on the skirts are greater than on any other aspect of the glyptic imagery. The complexity and range of patterns on clothing in the images may reflect the importance of textiles and the textile trade to the Late Bronze Age Knossians (see Barber 1991: 311—57). Rehak (1996: 50) suggests that the patterned clothing may represent clothing only worn on important occasions, whereas the plainer clothing, such as the plain loin-clothing, may have been used as every-day wear.

Subtle distinctions in 'gesture' may have served to further differentiate between figures in a composition. The white seated figures in the 'Grandstand' fresco were described by Evans (1930: 51) as 'conversing'; according to Evans (*ibid.*), they were 'only concerned with themselves', even though they are the central part of a much larger scene comprising of many more figures. Evans (*ibid.*) further states that the subject of the conversation at times 'provoked dramatic personal emotions', and that such a result could not have been achieved in the art, 'had not the spoken word of the Minoans been largely supplemented and emphasised by gesture language' (Evans 1930: 57). The figures do show a great variety of hand and arm gestures, which adds to the 'dynamic effect' of the image. More importantly, the different poses and gestures of the figures serve, along with the intricacies of their clothing, to emphasis the differentiation between figures. All

the images show a controlled depiction of the arms and hands in such a way that divides between them and establishes connection between all the figures by linking them together: some figures over-lap, whilst others are touching their neighbours. Arms and hands appear to be used in a complex way to emphasis the activity (see Hitchcock 1997 for a discussion on the possible meaning of arm positions in the Minoan bronze figurine corpus). The legs, in contrast, are almost always undifferentiated and only in some instances are they depicted in a position other than vertical and straight. The exceptions most commonly occur in glyptic imagery and when the figures are seated (see also the red figure from the restored 'Bull-leaper' panel, Fig. 5.6). Furthermore, the long skirt of some figures, such as the faience figurines, appears to serve as a replacement for the legs; no feet are visible below the hem.

The figures from the 'Bull-leaper' frescoes are distinguished from one another by gesture, clothing patterns, and further by distinctions in the type and form of adornments worn. All the extant figures show evidence of armbands and necklaces; some also have bracelets or wristbands. A distinction is therefore made on the level of who wears which type of jewellery. Moreover, there are differences between the representation of the same type of jewellery on different figures. For example, a fragment showing an arm of a white bull-leaper has a double-ringed biceps-band (Fig. 6.24); another (almost complete) white figure has a single-ringed biceps-band (Fig. 5.8). Furthermore, the shape of the necklace/s on a red figure (Fig. 6.25) are similar to those on a white figure (Fig. 5.8), yet the form and colour of the necklaces are distinct. Another example of differentiation by style rather than by type of clothing are the representations of girdles. The significance of this item of clothing is strongly alluded to by their modelling as separate, magnified faience objects. The girdle can be schematically or carefully depicted; distinctions occur at the level of patterning, but also in the number of 'lips' or 'roles' to the girdle, which range from one to three. The distinction is especially pronounced in the glyptic imagery.

A further means of differentiating between individual figures in a composition is afforded by differences in the size of the figures. Such differences are never dramatic and are rarely discussed by authors; nonetheless, the majority of images include subtle differences in height. The white figures in the 'Camp Stool' are slightly larger than the

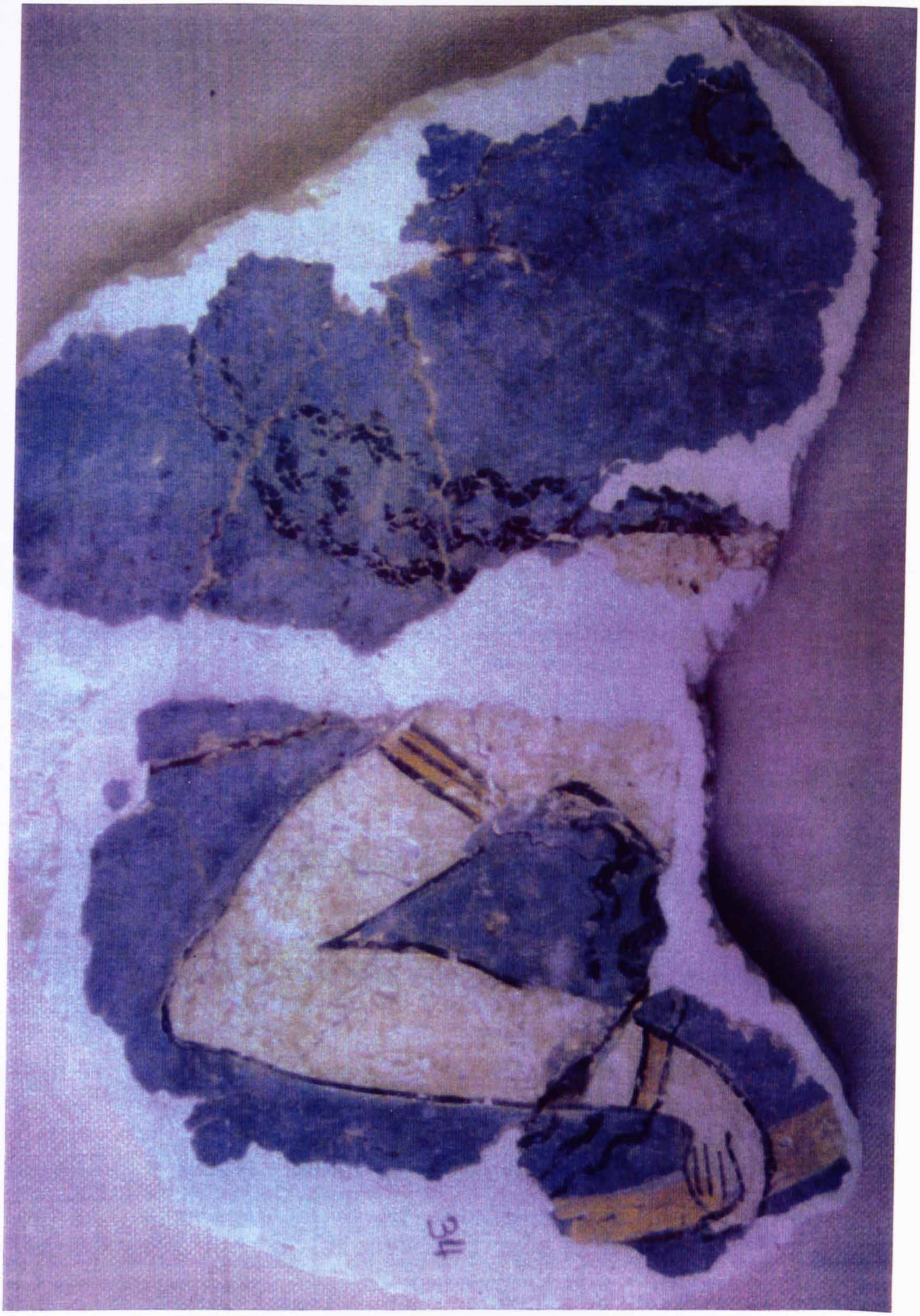


Fig. 6.24: White bull-leaper figure with double biceps-band.

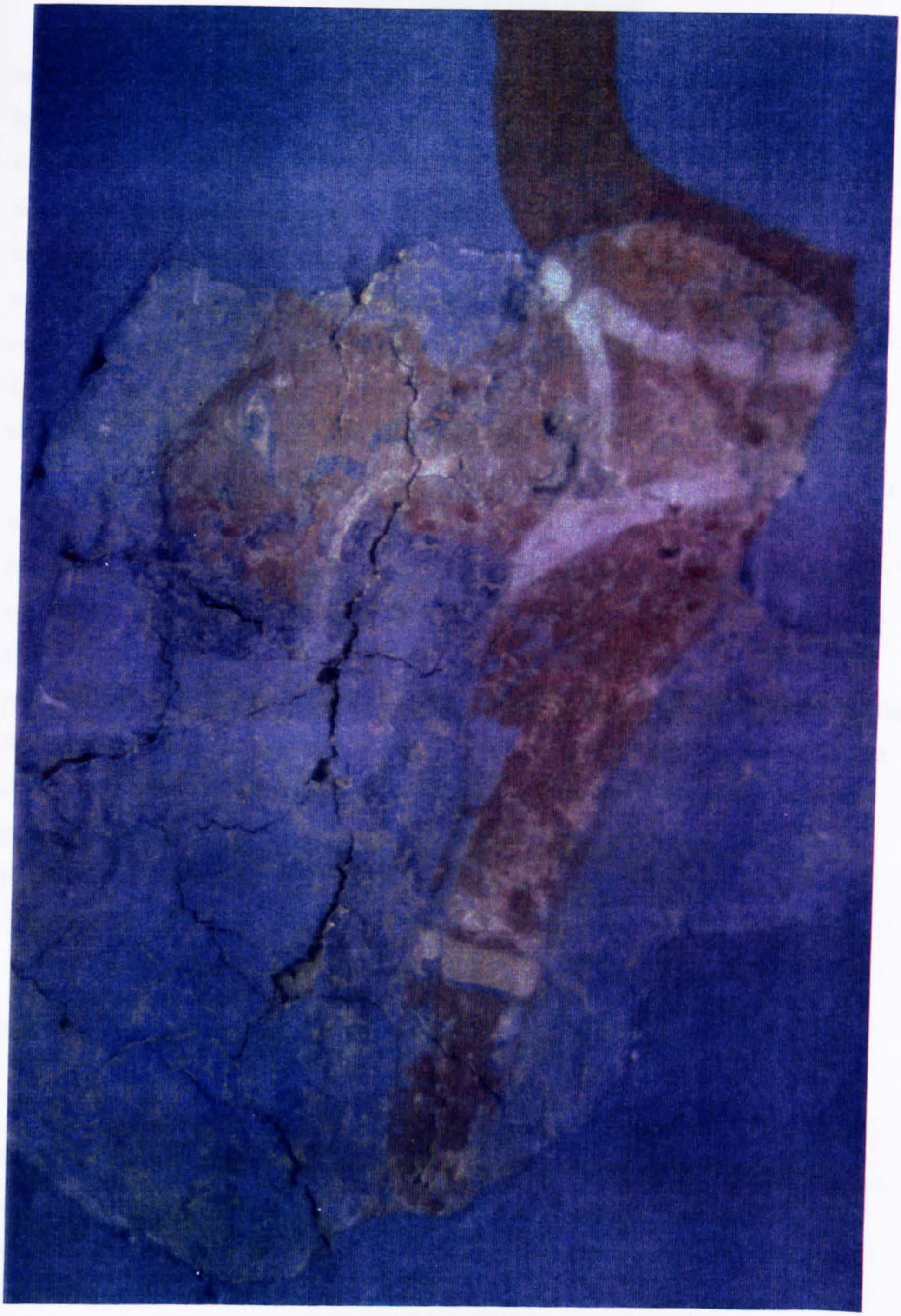


Fig. 6.25: Red bull-leaper figure with necklaces.

red; neither are all the red figures of the same height. The white bull-leapers in the 'Bull-leaper' panels are different heights, as are the extant red figures in the 'Procession' fresco (Fig. 7.1, 7.5). The two faience figurines and the lower torso of a third are also distinct in height; three separate faience arms from the same deposit may have belonged to other figurines, due to their different sizes (Panagiotaki 1993: 58). The seated and standing figures in the 'Grandstand' fresco are one example of a more dramatic and consistent difference in height between groups of figures in the same composition. However, the distinction may be due to having to fit the figures within the registers of the fresco.

Gestures and details individuate figures from their compositional peers; they do not, however, designate individuals. There is no evidence of individual facial or bodily portraiture; nor is there any distinction by size or richness of adornment that would mark out a particular figure as especially important (see also Cameron 1975: 129). Furthermore, none of the images are marked by inscriptions in Linear A or B[3] which might point out an individual person. Rather, the juxtaposing of pictorial gestures within the groupings of certain figures within the compositions uses a repertory of details that do not exclude nor include only particular types. Differentiation does occur, and groupings are created, but not by overt exclusion of certain types, nor by over-presentation of others.

Male/female and the Knossian template

The figures from the 'Camp Stool' fresco (Figs 5.10, 5.11) have a bulge at chest height: the bulges may be an extension of the shoulder decoration; or they may represent the chest of the figures. The effect of the image is to create a shape at chest height, a broadening of the upper-torso. A similar effect is achieved in the 'Bull-leaper' panels (e.g. Fig. 5.6) for both white and red figures. The white figures in the reconstructed panel have exaggerated chests. However, an examination of the

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[3] See Cameron (1975: 86) for a possible inscription in Linear A on a piece of fresco from the 'Court of the Stone Spout' where the 'Bull-leaper' frescoes were recovered.

reconstruction indicates that a certain amount of free-hand takes place in reconstructing the figures: the angles of the joins can be altered, slightly different effects can be achieved by small changes in the physical arrangement of the fragments. Much has been posited by the 'concrete' evidence of breasts in the images (see Chapter 5). The overall effect, however, is definitely of one predominant body-shape for all figures.

In Chapter 5 I argued that previous interpretations of gender in the Knossian images relied upon a circular argument linking cod-pieces with male anatomy. Furthermore, the 'absence' of breasts has been taken as indicative of maleness, where in fact breasts are the only actual physical sexual characteristics present in the images. The question of whether breasts, and therefore a distinction along sexed lines, are of primary importance to identity can be answered by appealing to the frequency and clarity of depiction of breasts as opposed to other physical details. The breasts are not emphasised as parts of the images except in the case of relief breasts and the faience figurines. In the sealstone images there are a number of cases of one or two breasts on some figures: roughly five percent of the figures on sealstones and sealings from Late Bronze Age Knossos depict two breasts, and a further five percent one breast only. In most cases the breasts are less clearly marked than other details: on occasion it is not absolutely clear that breasts are being marked at all. Breasts are not crucial to the presentation of gendered identities: rather, they are used in specific instances as particular elaborations on identity (see Chapter 7, pp.188—9, for further discussion).

It should not be such a great surprise to see that the evidence does not back up a precise division along purely sex difference lines; Chapter 3 amply demonstrated how masculinity falsely unifies men within a single bracket or category. The single body-shape and the way in which the variables interact with it deny the possibility of male/female being the primary marker of difference in the images. A core gender is signified by reference to genitalia; when they are absent, as is the case with many images, then secondary sexual characteristics (such as breasts) or other, culturally determined means of signifying that sex on the body (through clothing, hairstyle and jewellery, for example) are commonly used. The Knossian images, however, betray no consistent divisions along sex lines that would aid the interpretation of figures which have no genitalia. The lack of genital images to aid correct gender assignment to the images could be overcome if there were consistent differences between the figures (red

and white, if the colour-code is in fact that straightforward) that would allude to that lack. The images do not offer an easy answer, however, to the absence of the prime signifier in marking sexual identity; body-shape, clothing, hair style, jewellery all cross-cut the colour scheme. In Butler's (e.g. 1990a) terms, the signifying absences are not present that would speak of a Knossian idea of internally coherent genders as foundational of identity and difference.

Nonetheless, the colour-code referred to a means of classifying which was possibly based on anatomical sex; however, that sex was not considered the prime signifier of identity and was not exaggerated or elaborated upon. The group who produced the images most probably made the distinction, but it was not considered primary to identity and neither did it exclude or relegate a myriad of other facets that went into defining identity. Physical sexual differences held meaning, but were not central to meaning. Scholars of Minoan studies have been misled by the apparent easy dualism of red and white figures into assuming that sex difference was the primary marker of difference. It is more likely that sex difference, as *one of many* physical differences that can be elaborated upon, given meaning in many different ways, operated within the constitution of identity.

We cannot give precedence to the signification of a body part that is entirely absent from the figures, especially as there is no corroborative evidence to suggest the centrality of those body parts. Rather, we must examine what we can see, how that is arranged, and which aspects are emphasised or neglected. If the colour-code does represent a division into distinct sexes—male and female—then that difference is obviously superseded at times by other, more compelling, means of identification. The primacy of sex difference in identity and the means by which identification is assured is nowhere evident. The importance of an absent penis to representation can be illustrated by a comparison to the depiction of thumbs described above. Interestingly, the most distorted thumb is on the front of the torso of the 'Priest-King' relief fresco (Fig. 5.7), who is commonly assumed to represent the most important man from Knossos. The absence of a penis can be juxtaposed with the presence of the thumb: the thumb, common to all figures, and therefore to any designation of them as male or female, usurps the significance of the penis. The thumb has more to do with the representation of identity than the penis, which is everywhere assumed but nowhere to be seen.

Composite images, differences and performative identities

The importance of details of clothing and body adornment in distinguishing between the figures in the images, or as representing differences, has already been recognised and discussed by a number of authors. The standing white figures in the bottom register of the 'Sacred Grove' fresco have pale blue heads below a line of dark hair (Fig. 6.18). Comparison with a similar, though more obvious, treatment of heads in the Akrotiri frescoes and Near Eastern examples suggests to some authors (e.g. Davis 1986; Immerwahr 1990: 52) that the blue may represent completely or partially shaved hair. Varying styles of wearing the hair partly shaved is evidence to Marinatos (1993: 210—11) of various stages of girls' initiation into womanhood. Similarly, subtle differences in the style of, and patterns on, clothing may represent social status, activity or gender (Rehak 1996: 50). What all the accounts share, however, is the tendency to peg these observations of difference onto the seemingly concrete fact of coherent and polarised gender cores (see Chapter 5). Understanding gender as an inherently binary relationship leads to adornments and clothing merely acting as expressions of gender. Such details can be understood, within that framework, only as distinctions based on the social stratification of distinct gender categories; the similarities between red and white figures becomes subsumed by their supposed differences. The assumption of a core, sexual identity for the figures has relegated the role of clothing and other details in the images to that of expressive paraphernalia, or the embellishment through fabric and metal of an otherwise concrete identity. Difference can be traced in the social hierarchy of each group—the 'Priest-King' figure may have held more power than the 'Cup-bearer'—but not in how the two groups relate to one another. Moving away from the expressive model means that the images of bodies can be understood as surface representations of identities that were surface, insofar as other people needed to see and understand them. Hence, when the white bull-leapers are taken to represent women, they are considered more different to the red figures they are shown with, than to other white figures, even to the extent that minute differences in hair and jewellery are made to stand for the gendered distinction between reds and whites (see Chapter 5). A division based on physical sexual characteristics probably existed; however, the images show that this division was neither unique nor primary. Once the lack of a clear,

consistent, and overriding division into male/female in the images is recognised, the material is open to signify identity by other means and as alternative forms and types of identity.

Butler's (1990a, 1993) performative theory of gender (see Chapter 2) is informative in understanding how the images are evidence for, and were productive of, identities in Late Bronze Age Knossos. The images are performative in two senses: they compel belief in the substantive nature of the practices of which they are a part; and they compel belief in particular forms of identity which are, in fact, constituted by their 'pictorial gestures'. They are, therefore, intimately involved in the negotiation of particular forms to identity, and the practices associated with those forms.

Within the group of people who are represented in the images there were a number of variables which were ordered in such a way as to generate a series of composite representations of identities. The Minoan material represents the layering of specific details of and on the human body in a way that created a number of possibilities of how to identify with the images. The images, therefore, maintain the illusion of an abiding substance to the potential categories they represent, when in fact the particular practices represented by the pictorial acts and gestures of the images are what identity really *is*. If the constitution of identities is understood as performative, the images can be seen as involved in the culturally specific production of a socio-symbolic order of identities, and the visible distinctions and details in the images are evidence for the performance of the acts and gestures that constitute those identities.

The interaction of the details within the images created a number of choices for a particular group or groups who interacted in, around, and with, the palace at Knossos from MM IIIB—LM III. The images were not of personal, physical portraiture; rather, they contained important and dynamic details which represented a hierarchy amongst the painters and viewers. Physical sex was one means of identifying a particular type of person; other means included activity, body posture, clothing and associated paraphernalia. The images can be understood as various ways of balancing these pictorial gestures.

A central difficulty is how to theorise the connection between the images and the production and maintenance of identity in Minoan society. The images do not merely 'reflect' coherent gender/identity categories, or facets of Minoan beliefs and life

(see Chapter 5). Their material presence in certain places and their association with various practices, as well as the history of meaning they take on for particular groups or individuals, are also involved in the production and reproduction of particular meanings and identities. As such, the content of the images—the choice of composition, the form of the figures, the juxtaposition of particular elements—are part of specific usages, and are one means of presenting, reproducing and maintaining specific ideas of identity and gender. Those ideas may range from 'ideals' to specific politically manipulated images, dependent on their context and usage.

The performance of gender in Minoan society is mirrored, contained and assisted by the images. In a sense, the images act as performatives: they are visual cues that sanction and call into being that which they represent. The identity of meaning in the images, however, is not static, and should not be seen as reliant upon the invocation of an immediate claim to a metaphysical reality (Weir 1996: 115). Rather, they are constituted by a history of received meanings that alters the way they are perceived. There is no pure mimetic quality to the images, and they cannot therefore be used as evidence of an absolute, unchanging socio-symbolic order. Rather, they are part of a culturally and temporally specific discursive means whereby identities take on the appearance of an abiding substance, and in so doing hide the process by which identities are formed by such discursive practices.

I argue, therefore, that the images can be seen as performative, and do not reflect a Minoan reality, but are part of the processes by which Minoan identities are formed and performed. The particular qualities of the images—the potential to materially solidify, or for secrecy and mobility, etc.—are not identical to the workings of meaning in language, but have a particular power and effect due to their particular form of materiality. In other words, they are the norms of identity, etched into a material reality, which help conceal their performative invocation of identities by the citation of the norms that they compel through their appearance of solidity and their material presence (see Chapter 7 for discussions of specific images).

Conclusion: The commonalties within context

The commonalties that transcend all media of representation are concerned, therefore, with portraying a particular representation of the Minoan idea of bodies. The process of attaining that control, or legitimisation of that idea, to the extent that all images conform to it must, by extension, have excluded other body types from representation. Whether 'fat' people were frowned upon in real life in Minoan society is a moot point: what is important is that a general consensus is being exercised in the depiction of bodies, and, furthermore, that that consensus was exercised by a particular group of people within a highly specific context for Late Bronze Age Crete. The location of the images within the Palace at Knossos situates them within a particular physical and social context. The ideal type, the common aspects that cross-cut all the images, bind them together within a mutually intelligible web of inferences. Some of the same terms, ways of depicting the human body, are found throughout Crete and the Aegean at the same time (see Chapter 8 for a discussion of the wider context). It is important to recognise, however, that the cross-cutting aspects of identity as represented in the images do not limit our understanding of the people of Knossos to one group with a single idea. The palatial location of the images demands that we recognise that the images operated within a context of power and authority. Therefore, gender was not asserted in the imagery associated within those contexts at Knossos. The various media of representation, and the specific context of production and usage, of certain images in particular media allow for an analysis of how certain differences played with, or built upon, the common image to create specific meanings and specific types of knowledge in specific places. Within such an analysis the properties of the various media can be of crucial importance, as well as their specific locations. Certain media distinguish the images they represent by creating boundaries, by exclusion from that media of others. The faience figurines, for example, represent a discrete group of images, but they include some obvious affinities (such as the body-shape), some obvious ways of understanding the body and clothing that cross-cut all the various media. The differences between media in how the details are put together show how that particular representation is to be understood, or how it is distinguished from the common shape. As such, there is only so far that one can generalise about the images. A

point is reached when each particular image or media of representation will have to speak for itself. At that point the analysis becomes specific and meaningful.

Chapter 7: Knossian Images of Bodies in Context

Introduction

In the Knossian body imagery the markers of sex are rarely included in representations. Rather, the body is presented as a common shape, undifferentiated by sex. When physical sexual characteristics are included, they are always breasts: male genitalia are never visible. The visual codes of the images stress the division of figures by details and not by physical differences. This chapter analyses those visual codes within the context of their appearance in particular media, spatial location and their association with specific archaeological material.

The act of interpreting the images involves a recognition of their status as representations, as expressive and generative of particular concepts of the body, but not as reflective of a Minoan social reality. As representations, therefore, the images are embedded within a network of associations; their intelligibility as meaningful images is ensured by that embeddedness. Furthermore, the images have a material existence, whether as parts of the walls of the Palace, as small mobile objects such as the sealings and sealstones, or as figurines. The significance of the images, therefore, also involves their association with a particular medium of representation. That medium will condition, to some extent, how the images are used and will embed the images within a further network of associations. The specific material qualities of that medium indicate the types of practices and social relations associated with the image. The images can be understood as specific instances of a social 'negotiation' (see Joyce 1993) between the people making the images, those ordering and administering the space in which they are used, and the audience to which the images are directed. The instabilities and differences in the images will make more sense within that context, as will the production of sexed and non-sexed bodies.

This chapter explores how particular images of the body from Late Bronze Age Knossos can be understood in relation to the body template outlined in Chapter 6. There is no 'ideal' version of a Knossian body, only common features and those that differ. The particular forms to the common facets, and especially the differences, can be understood within the archaeological and architectural context of the images. Two

analyses are presented in this chapter: of the 'Cup-bearer' and 'Procession' frescoes; and of the faience and ivory figurines. The frescoes highlight a 'monumental' aspect to Knossian body imagery. As such, they are understood as an integral part of the 'power' of the institution of the Palace site at Knossos, and are constitutive of the practices associated with the Palace. The content of the frescoes demonstrates an association between the activity being displayed and the means of individuating figures in the composition. The frescoes are an especially concrete example of the way in which normative ideas of the body become materialised and gain the status of 'natural facts'. Within the context of the 'Cup-bearer' and 'Procession' frescoes a specifically sexed body played no part in such 'norms', nor in the maintenance of authority at the Palace site at Knossos.

In contrast, the faience and ivory figurines are small, potentially mobile forms of representation in which the body is the explicit focus of that representation. The two sets of figurines appear to represent the body in very different ways: the ivories are uncomplicated and unsexed representations of the body; the faience figurines are heavily decorated and explicitly sexed. That distinction, it is argued, has to do with the particular contexts of usage of these items, and with the ways in which physical sexual characteristics become an aspect of representation in the few instances in which they occur. Breasts, it is argued, are performatively enacted (see Chapter 2) as part of an image in a similar way in which clothing and adornments become part of the body. Sex, therefore, is not an integral or foundational aspect of the Knossian idea of the body, but rather a specific instance of departure from that idea of the body.

Power and the materialisation of gendered bodies: the 'Procession' and 'Cup-bearer' frescoes.

The following sections present an analysis of the visual imagery of the 'Procession' and 'Cup-bearer' frescoes. The main reconstructions of the 'Procession' and 'Cup-bearer' frescoes are outlined and the layout of the imagery described, including an indication of the chronology and depositional context of the images.

Previous interpretations of the frescoes are discussed. Subsequently, the architectural and archaeological context are discussed with reference to the practices that may have been associated with the images. The following section provides an analysis of the visual codes of the imagery in view of the 'monumental' aspect of their location and the arguments put forward in Chapter 6. Finally, the implications of the visual codes and spatial layout of the frescoes for understanding the meaning of representations of bodies at the Palace site of Knossos are discussed.

There are two major reconstructions of the 'Procession' fresco: one by Evans (Figs 7.1, 7.2) and the other by Cameron (Fig. 7.3). They differ from one another in the order the figures appear and in how the gaps between the extant figures are filled. The figures are both white and red, with red predominating. On both walls the first few figures have plain, long robes with variously decorated hems; the succeeding figures have more decorated and layered robes. The west wall fresco does not survive beyond these figures; the east wall, however, shows evidence of red figures without hems (six figures, following Evans; nine, following Cameron). A single figure with white feet and layered robe follows, with three figures facing the opposite direction immediately after, two of which have no hem, and the third the suggestion of a long, split garment (Cameron does not include the figure in his reconstruction). According to Evans, three further red figures then turn to face their original direction away from the 'West Entrance'; the middle portion of these figures has survived, which show them wearing skirts ('kilts') and carrying various objects. Cameron restores this group of figures in the centre of the composition, and has no further figures facing south. The upper halves of the majority of the figures have been reconstructed on the basis of comparison with images from throughout Crete and the mainland, especially those on a stone sarcophagus from Hagia Triadha, Crete. The most common interpretation of the frescoes is that they depict, or reflect, an actual procession of tribute bearers that entered the Palace from the 'West Entrance' system and continued to some place in the interior of the building, most probably the rooms of the '*Piano Nobile*' (e.g. Cameron 1987a: 324; Boulatis 1987). Marinatos (1987a: 25) uses the images to argue that men and women were heavily segregated in Minoan ritual activity. She states that: 'Not only is there role division, but we can speak of a deliberate polarisation of the sexes' (Marinatos 1987a: 25).

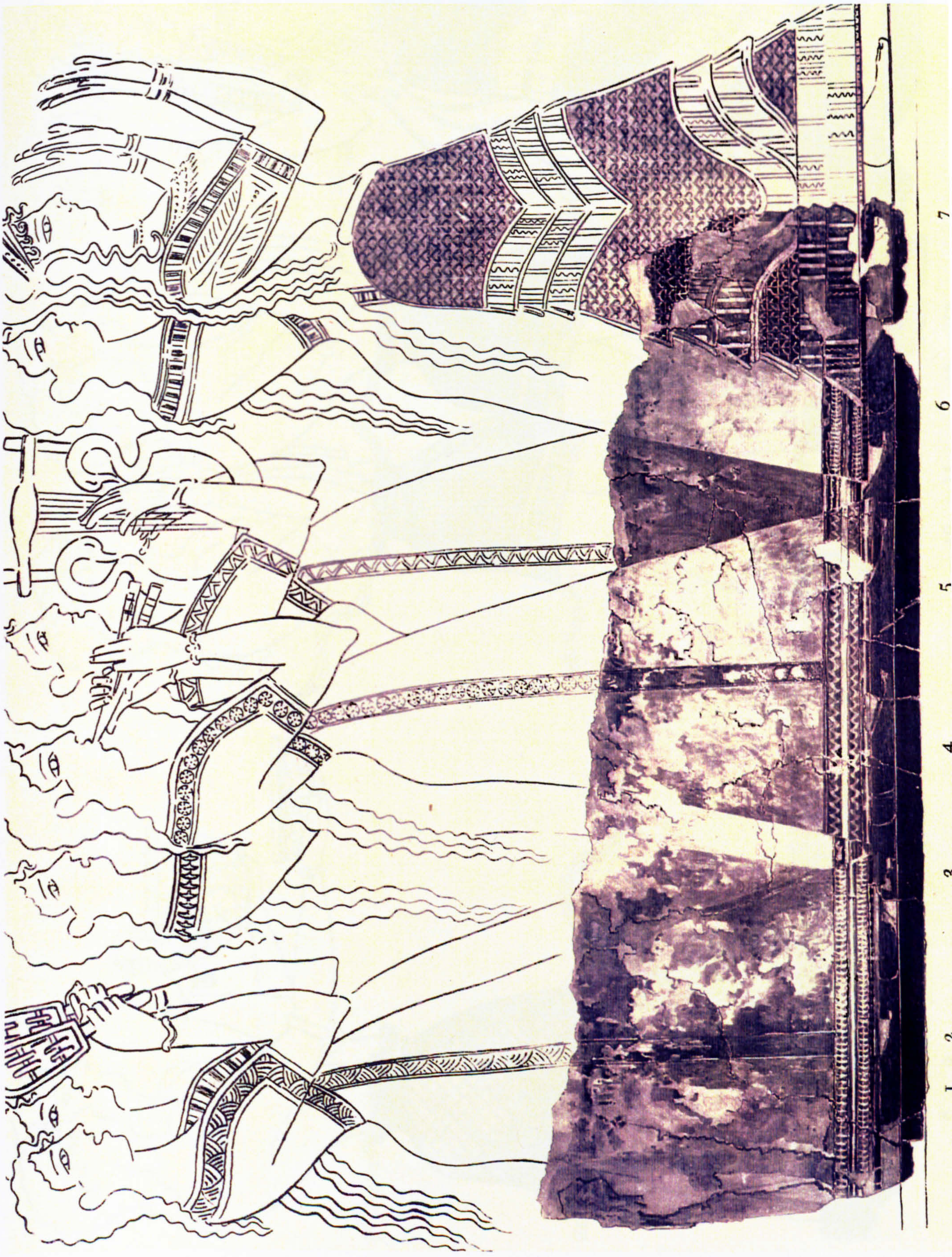


Fig. 7.1a: Evans' reconstruction of the 'Procession' fresco, east wall.

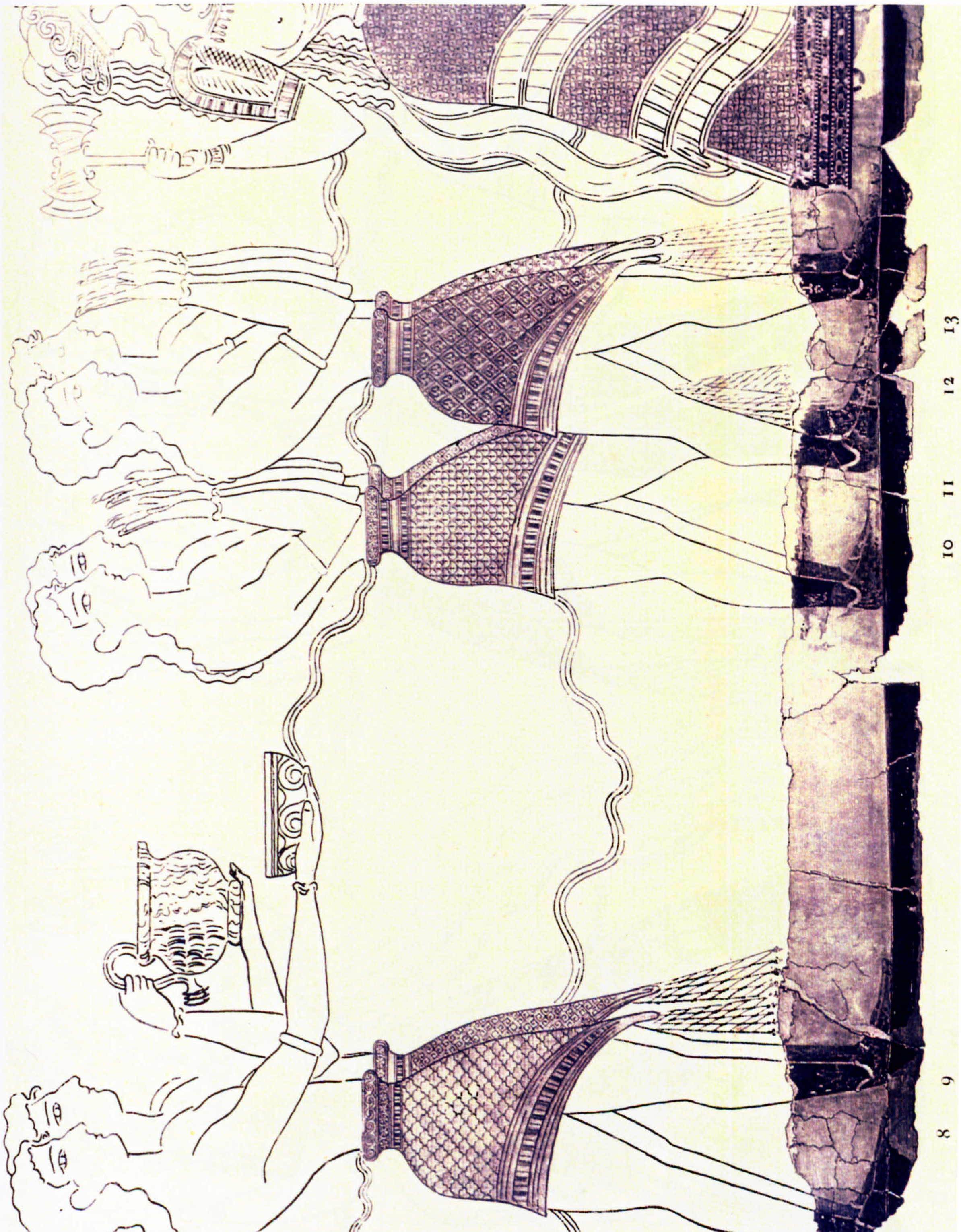


Fig. 7.1b: Evans' reconstruction of the 'Procession' fresco, east wall.



Fig. 7.1c: Evans' reconstruction of the 'Procession' fresco, east wall.



Fig. 7.1d: Evans' reconstruction of the 'Procession' fresco, east wall.

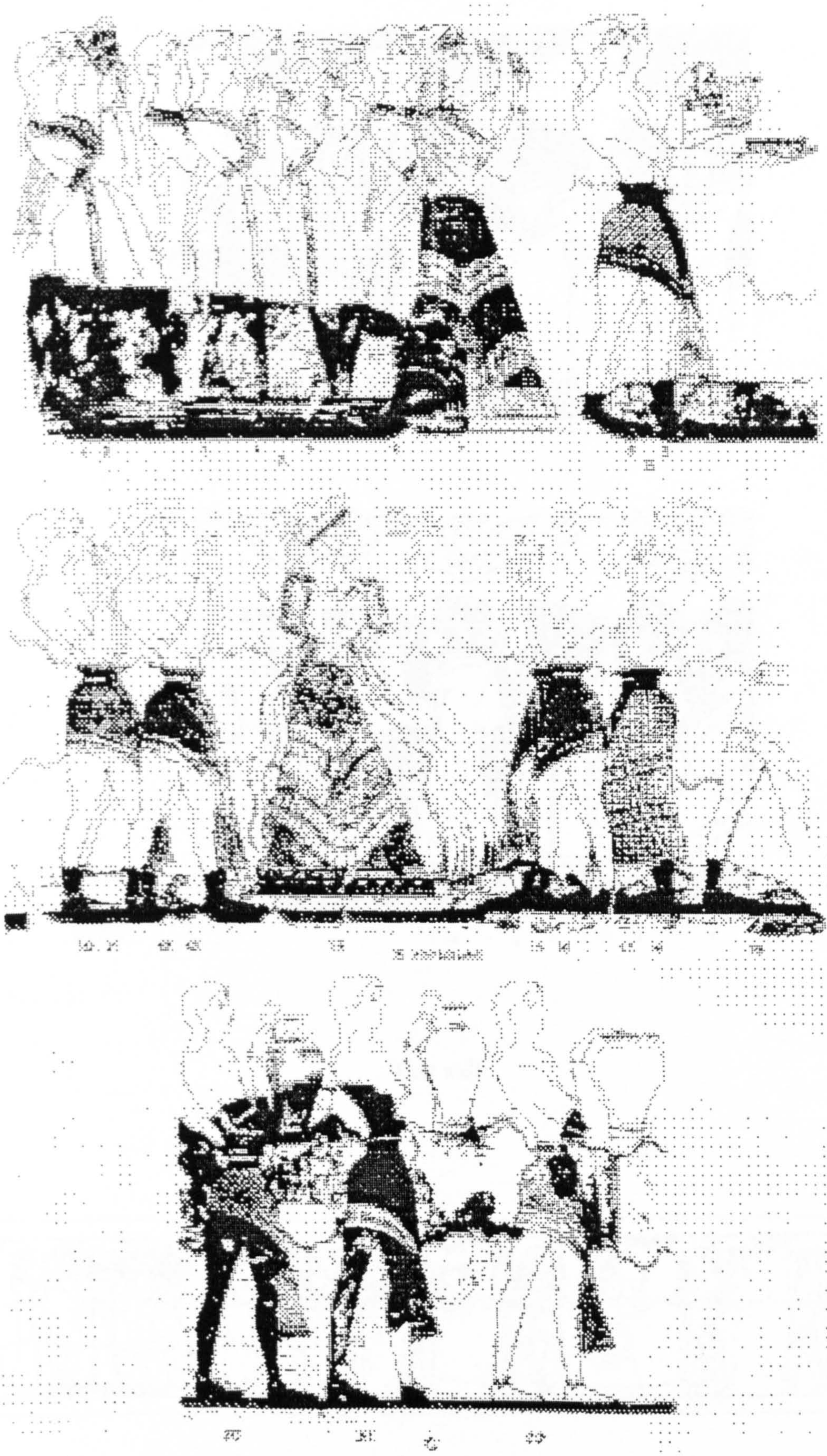
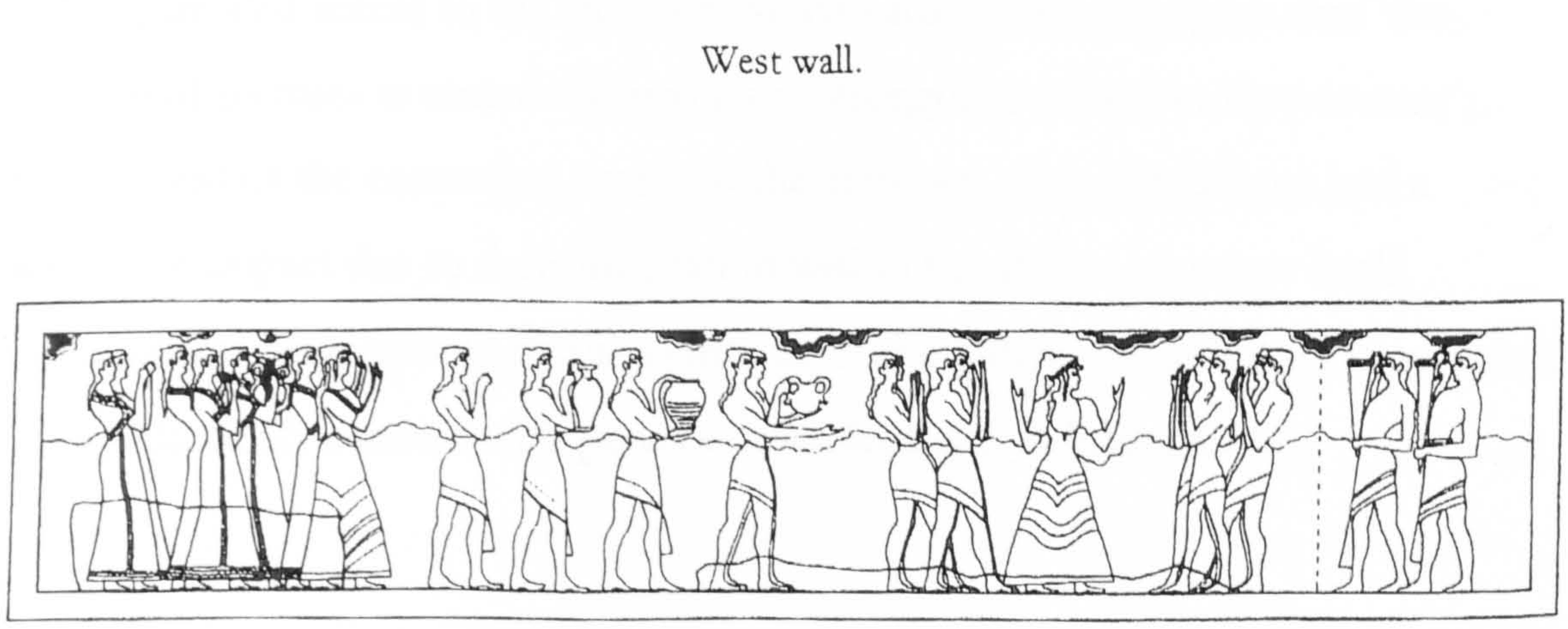


Fig. 7.2: Small version of Evans' reconstruction of the 'Procession' fresco.



West wall.



East wall.

Fig. 7.3: Cameron's reconstruction of both walls of the 'Procession' fresco.

Three of the 'Procession' figures and the 'Cup-bearer' are complete enough to show adherence to the common "hour-glass" body-shape (see Chapter 6). Furthermore, the visibility of certain aspects of dress and ornaments, as well as differentiation between individual figures by means of subtle arrangements of the patterns of their clothing, has also been remarked upon as common to many of the images from Knossos. As such, the body-shape is firmly within the bounds of the general concept of the body in representations from Knossos. However, particular qualities of the frescoes and the way the figures are represented indicate that particular meanings and practices were associated with the images. For example, the large scale of the compositions, their placement in the architecture of the Palace, and the particular formal attitude of the figures.

The visual codes of the frescoes indicate ways in which the images highlight and emphasise particular aspects of the figures. The compositional layout of the frescoes is crucial in creating associations between the various aspects of the images. The means by which the figures are distinguished from one another is other than through a simple binary opposition of male/female. That identity is not a straightforward binary distinction between white and red figures is evident from the complexity of the interaction of the other pictorial gestures and designs in the frescoes. Those means of individuation occur in the context of a formal arrangement of figures and objects in a large, transitory space. The visual codes appear in a medium and architectural space that allows only controlled access to the frescoes. Molyneaux (1996a: 4) argues that 'the sheer visibility of pictures as material forms gives strength to whatever they convey'; within the context of the controlled access to the frescoes, they would have had a particularly large impact due to their integration within the Palace structure itself. Institutional power, as suggested by the existence of the Palace site at Knossos, was not, therefore, symbolically equated with penises or explicit sexed differences.

The frescoes

The remains of the 'Procession' fresco were found in a corridor that entered the Palace southwards from the 'West Court' (see Fig. 7.4). The corridor was part of the Palace reconstructions that supposedly accompanied the MM IIIB—LM IA transition, which included the reorientation and enlargement of the 'West Entrance' system. The corridor in its final state was nearly three metres wide and was decorated entirely with painted stucco plaster (Evans 1928: 682—3). It had a raised central paving of gypsum slabs, bordered by green schist crazy paving with red painted plaster in the interstices. The remains of fresco were still adhering to the east wall of the corridor for at least nine metres from the 'West Entrance' at the time of excavation. Mainly only the bottom portion of a continuous line of life-size figures remained. On the west wall only the bottom parts of a few figures were recovered. Evans (1928: 684) notes that due to the falling away of the ground to the south the remains from the corridor ceased about seventeen metres south of the 'West Entrance' system. However, the relative height and position of similar remains of paving in a north—south section of corridor that opens onto the 'Central Court' further east lead him to postulate that the present corridor turned to the left, past the entrance to the 'South Propylaeum' and then continued north to the 'Central Court'.

The remains of the 'Cup-bearer' fresco (Fig. 6.12) were found in a similarly monumental area of the Palace—in a narrow passageway behind the west wall of the 'South Propylaeum' (Evans 1928: 704; Hood and Taylor 1981: 14; see Fig. 7.4)—close to the 'Procession' fresco. Again, major renovations of the area had accompanied the MM IIIB—LM IA transition. The fresco was found almost complete lying face down on the floor immediately in front of the west wall of the lower section of the area; a small fragment of a second figure in front of the 'Cup-bearer' was also recovered. The 'South Propylaeum', although not strictly a corridor, is a transitional area between the 'Corridor of the Procession' (as reconstructed by Evans) and the ornate, façaded staircase that led to the upper storey (the *Piano Nobile*) of the west side of the Palace. The 'South Propylaeum' consisted of a central area, divided in two, which Evans considered to have been unroofed. Access was either to the south, through a light area and then to the

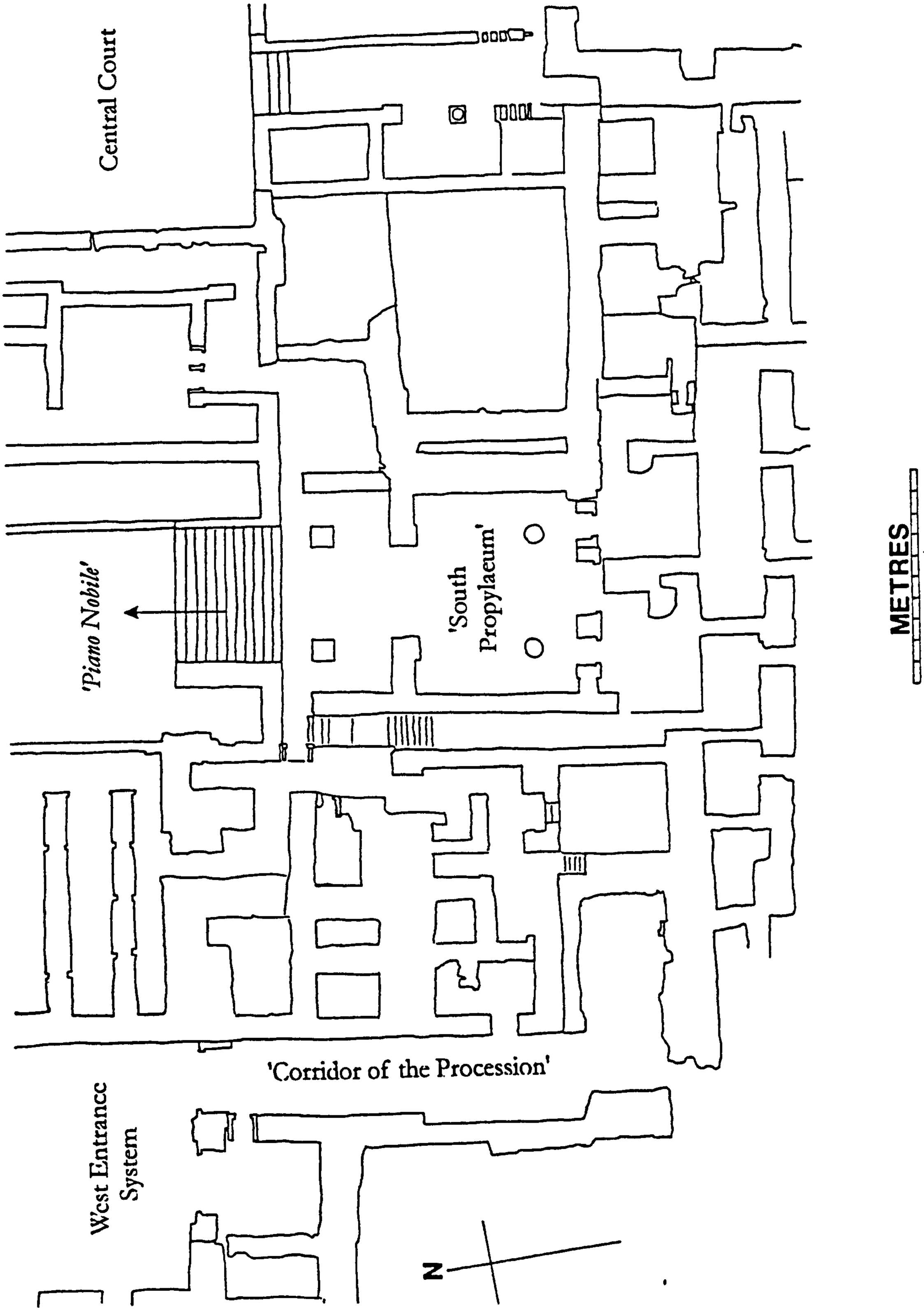


Fig. 7.4: Plan of the southern part of the Palace site at Knossos.

continuation of the 'Corridor of the Procession', or to the north, up the broad flight of steps to the upper storey.

The 'Corridor of the Procession' and the area of the 'South Propylaeum' both underwent considerable architectural changes throughout their history; a similar system of decoration may have adorned the walls prior to the extant frescoes (Evans 1928: 735—6; Cameron 1987a; Immerwahr 1990: 88). There is no consensus on the date of the production of the frescoes, although the fact that the 'Procession' fresco was still partly adhering to the walls at the time of the excavation, along with signs of burning, suggests a *terminus ante quem* of shortly before the 'final destruction' of the Palace (see Hawk Smith 1976 for discussion) for their execution. Evans (1928: 734—6) dated the frescoes to LM IA/B on the basis of Egyptian comparisons and his conclusion that the years after the LM II disaster were artistically impoverished. Cameron (1975: 63) and Immerwahr (1990: 174), however, date the figures to LM II/IIIA because they maintain a distinction between the loin-clothing of the Minoans and Mycenaeans, with the latter exclusively represented by 'kilts'. That distinction has recently been challenged by Rehak (1996; see Chapter 6), who demonstrates that both Minoans and Mycenaeans are represented by figures in 'kilts'. There is considerable disagreement as to whether the 'Procession' and 'Cup-bearer' frescoes are Minoan or Mycenaean in style (see 'discussion' in Hägg and Marinatos 1987: 325—8). A *terminus post quem* is provided by the archaeological material associated with the broadening of the 'Corridor of the Procession' and the reconstruction of the 'South Propylaeum' of immediately after the MM IIIB destructions (Evans 1928: 682—704), although Evans (1928: 682, 704) notes that both areas were redecorated in LM IA.

The archaeological and architectural contexts

The Palace is situated amongst a great many other buildings, none of which are as large or complicated, but many of which are elaborate structures in their own right. Whilst several other buildings at the Knossos site in the Late Bronze Age contained frescoes (e.g. the 'House of Frescoes', the 'Caravanserai' and the 'Minoan Unexplored

Mansion'), the Palace frescoes are unique in depicting human bodies[1]. The meanings associated with the 'Procession' and 'Cup-bearer' frescoes, and how they represent bodies, form an integral part of the usage of that part of the Palace structure at Knossos.

The interrelationship between practice and space has been increasingly recognised (e.g. Barrett 1994: 14; Locock 1994; Moore 1994a: 80; Parker Pearson and Richards 1994; Richards 1993; Thomas 1996: 83—91). Space not only frames practice, but the meaning of the space is embedded within that practice. The creation of subject positions within social discourse are therefore inseparable from the material conditions in which social practice takes place. Structured space 'fuses space and time in the creation of places which structure the routines of life by representing fixed points in the fluidity of existence' (Richards 1993: 148). Furthermore, '[a]rchitecture both founds a relationship between people and place, and allows that relationship to manifest itself' (Thomas 1996: 91). Previous interpretations of Minoan frescoes have concentrated on establishing where the activities depicted may have taken place (e.g. Davis 1987). However, it seems of greater significance that the images themselves were related to a particular place, and therefore practices, by their appearance at specific locations in the Palace. Those related practices need have nothing to do with the activities depicted in the images; rather, the constitution of particular social positions are to some extent generated and expressed by the images.

The aspects of both areas in which the frescoes were found—the 'Corridor of the Procession' and the 'South Propylaeum'—are similar in that they are transient access areas, 'portals' to other parts of the Palace (see Fig. 7.4). The finds associated with these locations do not include everyday objects, such as utensils and common ceramics. Furthermore, the areas contain multiple, but controllable access points: evidence from other areas at Knossos (e.g. Evans 1930: 12; Shaw 1973: 149) indicates that doors could be barred and/or locked from either side. During the MM IIIB—LM IA transition period access points to the Palace and to areas within the Palace were extensively changed (see Driessen and Schoep 1995; Evans 1928: 679—82; MacDonald 1990; Rehak 1997a: 60; Walberg 1992: 114—7). For example, the original reconstruction of

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1 The fragments of fresco with red and black figures on them were found outside the Palace confines

the 'West Entrance' system from west facing to north facing was altered in this period; the 'Corridor of the Procession' appears to have originally connected with the 'South-West Entrance' and stepped portico via a staircase, but went out of use at the end of MM IIIB (Evans 1928: 684, n. 1). The later, wider corridor in which the 'Procession' fresco was found no longer had an access point from the South 'West Entrance', but rather turned at an angle shortly before it, and then joined the short north—south corridor immediately above the Southern porch which connected with the 'Central Court' (*ibid*: 685). The new route would have passed the southern doorways of the 'South Propylaeum'.

The changes in architecture did not occur at a single point in time, but were on-going projects of construction and reconstruction. The changes between the Old and New Palace architecture, were, in a sense never completed. It is unlikely, therefore, that the architects of such changes had a pre-conceived idea of the outcome of such projects. Rather, particular social relations and practices—including how the body was used in representation—would have emerged from these changes, as much as being the driving force behind them (see Barrett 1994). During the course of such reconstruction and construction various means of accessing and leaving the Palace and areas within it were blocked off and opened or re-opened. It is becoming increasingly clear that a large part of Minoan architectural design was dedicated to transient areas, such as corridors, doorways and stairs (Hitchcock 1994b; Palyvou 1987; Preziosi 1983). Furthermore, the Minoan system of pier-and-door partitions enabled particular areas to be closed off and opened, allowing control of multiple configurations of space. Such systems of control are most noticeable in the Minoan Hall Systems (see Hitchcock 1994b), but their existence in other areas, such as the 'South Propylaeum' (see Fig. 7.4) indicates their more widespread use. It is evident that during the architectural changes that occurred throughout the New Palace period access from the 'West Entrance' system became increasingly circuitous, even if the corridor did not travel as far as the 'Central Court'. The uses associated with the over-complicated plan of the Palace structure may go some way to explaining its labyrinthine aspect. The appearance of a large, formal composition of figures in procession, facing outwards and inwards in relation to the centre of the

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(Evans 1928: 755). The context, however, is not secure.

Palace (an open space), and not actually moving, on the walls of a corridor that takes an inordinately round-about route to reach anywhere in the 'interior' of the Palace, suggests that the frescoes themselves, and the practices associated with them, were as much a focus of the activities carried out at the Palace as the deposition of goods in a central place.

The ability to control access to a space within the Palace indicates that particular people or groups at particular times were allowed access to the structure. The frescoes may have thus been on semi-public display, reserved for certain portions of the population at specific times or occasions. The routes within the Palace are related to an extent to similar areas of display on the outside of the Palace, especially the 'West Court', where the 'West Façade' of the Palace provided a backdrop for a large, open space (see Effenterre 1987; Hägg 1987; Momigliano 1992). The activities connected to the 'Procession' and 'Cup-bearer' frescoes may also have been related to the 'Royal Road' that is connected to the north-west angle of the Palace, and runs between the surrounding buildings for an indeterminate distance. As such, the practices associated with the Palace and the 'Corridor of the Procession' were part of the relationship between the Palace and its immediate, or larger, vicinity. It is possible, therefore, that the lack of figurative images in the frescoes of the 'town' at Knossos has to do with such a relationship.

Analysis of the visual code of the images

The size and extent of the 'Procession' fresco is unique at Knossos; if the 'Cup-bearer' formed part of an overall scheme (e.g. Evans 1928: 680—2; Cameron 1987a; Marinatos 1987b: 147), the size and extent would be even greater. Fragments of similar life-size, or nearly life-size, fresco figures have been found at the Palace, and the extensive remains of relief figures and bulls may have formed a contemporary or earlier decorative scheme. The composition is not complete, but from the remaining fragments it would appear that the frescoes covered nearly all the available wall space along the corridor. Evans (1928: 708) originally postulated a double row of figures in the corridor

and 'South Propylaeum', but his reconstruction has since been questioned (Immerwahr 1990: 89). The 'Procession' fresco begins immediately inside the door-jambs at the 'West Entrance' and continues the length of the preserved corridor. There is no gap between the bottom of the fresco and the paving of the corridor; the upper reaches of the wall have not survived, so it is impossible to tell how much of the vertical space of the wall was covered with fresco. Furthermore, the painted paving of the corridor may mean the decorative scheme was intentionally continued on the actual floor of the area.

The lower border of the 'Procession' fresco consists of a solid black/blue line, which steps up at one point in the fresco, between Evans' figures 14 and 15 (see Figs 7.1c, 7.2). The background of the frescoes has been reconstructed on the evidence of the three middle sections of the processing figures and the 'Cup-bearer' (Fig. 6.12). The background is divided into three registers, the upper creamy-white, the middle a pale blue and the lower yellow. The yellow background colour of the lower register continues for a small space below the black/blue line. The registers are divided by black lines which have one or two bands of white in between, and together form wavy lines. The upper reaches of the fresco have survived only in the 'Cup-bearer' fresco, which shows a thick, wavy red and blue line, which Cameron has included in his reconstruction of the 'Procession' fresco (see Fig. 7.3). There is no evidence, however, that such a line constituted the upper limits of the frescoes.

The majority of the figures are facing towards the south, away from the entrance. The step in the black/blue lower border of the fresco corresponds to a point at which four figures are facing in the opposite direction. The subsequent figure faces the original direction (according to Evans; Cameron has not included the figure in his reconstruction; see Fig. 7.3). The 'Cup-bearer' figure faces away from the steps to the upper storey. There does not appear, therefore, to be unidirectional movement represented by the figures, but rather groups of figures in line, with some gaps between the groups (e.g. between Evans' figures 9 and 10), who face in two different directions, although the figures do predominantly face southwards.

The body position and shape of the extant figures appears to be consistent. There are, however, a number of ways in which the figures are differentiated from one another. Larger groupings are created by means of colour, style of dress, ornamentation, whether or not objects are being carried, and the figures' position in the fresco. Further

differentiation between figures is achieved through slight discrepancies in height and the patterning of the clothing, although none of the figures is inordinately larger or smaller than the others. The type and patterning of clothing remain the most sophisticated means by which the figures are distinguished from one another. Other means include the relative position of the figures in the frescoes and their colour. Emphasis, direction and correspondences are achieved through the divisions in the frescoes and the relationship between geometrically delimited space, in the sense of particular patterns and shapes.

There are at least two types of garment that do not fall all the way to the ankles of the figures. One is represented beside the 'Cup-bearer' figure and the three middle sections of figures, and the other by a fragment by the lower leg of Evans' figure 18 (see Fig. 7.1c), although Cameron does not include the figure in his reconstruction. There is no evidence for the patterning reconstructed by E. Gilliéron *et fils*[2]. More convincingly, the garment has been interpreted as belonging to the 'hide' skirt variety by comparison with the Hagia Triadha sarcophagus figures (Boulotis 1987: 149, *abb.* 4b). There are also at least two types of garment that fall to the ankles: one which is patterned throughout and is layered (on Evans' figures 7 and 14, and Cameron's leading figures from the west wall); the other has an elaborately decorated hem, and sometimes a central vertical band running up the garment, but otherwise is undecorated. The former are worn exclusively by white-footed figures, and the latter by red-footed.

The 'Cup-bearer' figure has a pair of biceps-bands, one of which is only made visible by a distortion in the shape of the right shoulder (see discussion above, Chapter 6, p.123). The left hand biceps-band is positioned to the right and slightly above the girdle in the composition; the band mirrors the girdle, and appears as a miniature version of it, with the colours inverted. The surviving middle portions of figures from the 'Procession' fresco also have biceps-bands, although they are less clear in the reproduction by Gilliéron *et fils* (see Fig. 7.1d, figures 20—22). The 'Cup-bearer' has a small pendant by the left ear, a multi-coloured round patch on the left wrist which has been interpreted as representing a sealstone (e.g. Evans 1928: 705) and physical details such as a clearly painted eye in three-quarter view, a small patch of blue in the outside

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2 Gilliéron *et fils*. carried out many of Evans' reconstructions.



Fig. 7.5: Extant middle sections of two 'Procession' fresco figures.

corner of the eye, and a clearly depicted left-hand thumb nail. The remaining fragments of the 'Procession' fresco figures show toe and finger nails clearly depicted. Furthermore, all the red figures with bare calves and one white-footed figure (Evans' figure 14) have clearly marked anklets that dip below the area of the ankle bone, and some are decorated with dots.

Another means of differentiating between figures may have been by whether or not an object was being carried, and the type of object. Two of the figures are definitely carrying vessels; others may have been, although Immerwahr (1990: 89) has pointed out that it would have been difficult for the overlapping figures to have done so within the space provided. Only two figures are well enough preserved to show what they are carrying (the 'Cup-bearer' and Evans' figure 20); it may be significant that the two objects are very different types of vessels, and may indicate that a variety of vessels were carried by the 'Procession' figures (see also a further fragment of fresco which possibly depicts part of an arm and vase, Fig. 7.6, but was not found *in situ*). The bottom of the vessel in figure 20's hands exactly parallels the relationship of the 'Cup-bearer's biceps-band to the girdle: an identical pattern is used on the base of the vessel as the top lip of the figure's girdle and the two are in a similar spatial relationship as the 'Cup-bearer's girdle and biceps-band. The bottom of the vessel and the top lip of the girdle are also identical shapes.

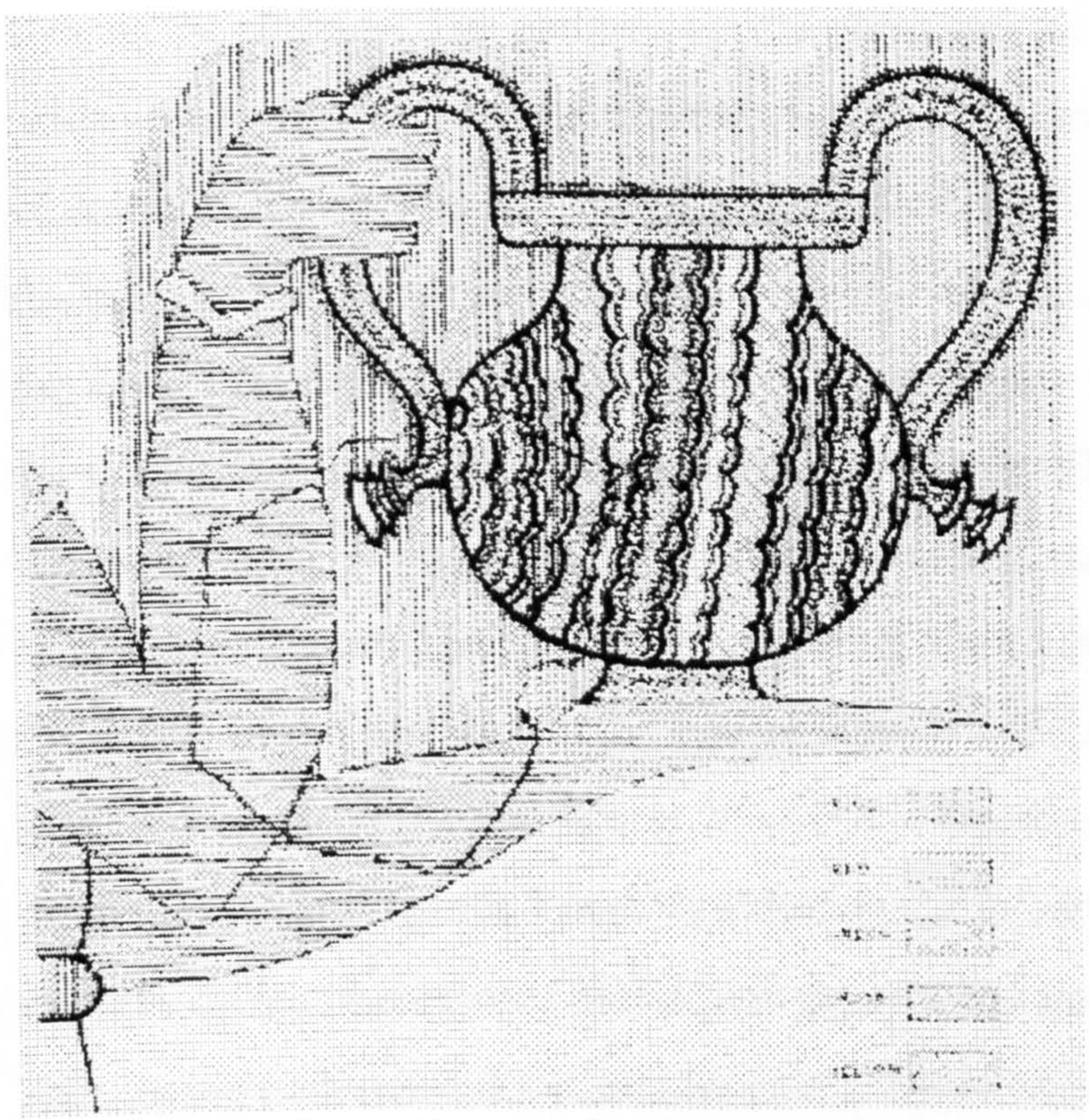


Fig. 7.6: Fresco fragment showing vase and arm.

The action of carrying creates a particular body position for the figures. The activity, therefore, is crucial to the form the bodies take in both frescoes. The bodies are formal and rigid, with no movement indicated even by the legs which are merely spaced apart, rather than actually in motion. Spatial distribution of the figures includes some

which are in single file with a clear outline, and others who overlap, forming groups which are hard to differentiate in the fragments. The figures in the second row also appear to be painted a slightly lighter hue than those in the first. The cut off points of the groups of figures is hard to determine in most cases due to the fragmentary nature of the frescoes; in one case the leading figure is definitely white (Evans' figure 14) and in two cases red (Evans' figures 8/9 and 15/16). The most marked break in the figures occurs between Evans figures 14 and 15/16, where the figures are facing one another, the lower border changes height slightly and there are traces of the bottom of an indiscernible object (which Evans interpreted as the hair of the white figure 14, see Fig. 7.1c) between the two groups of figures. The positions of the red and white figures and especially that break suggest that the frescoes represented a scene or narrative sequence, and not merely a representation of a single actual event.

Far greater differentiation is achieved by the patterns on the clothing than by the style of the clothing. The patterns on the skirts and the hems of the remaining long skirts are extremely intricate and detailed, which is in great contrast to the plain swathe of colour that makes up the 'naked' part of the figures. As noted in Chapter 6, none of the patterns on the kilt are the same; the shape of the inter-locking pattern on one of the figures from the 'Procession' fresco (Evans' figure 22) and the 'Cup-bearer' figure are similar, but the details of the pattern are distinct. The hems of the short skirts are the same on the two figures that remain (Evans' figures 20 and 21), although the colour of each is different. The short skirts appear to have tassels hanging from the front; even the details of the pendants at the end of these is different for the two instances in which they have survived (Evans' figures 13 and 20). The two layered garments which are best preserved (Evans' figures 7 and 14, although the latter is less clearly layered) show radically different means of patterning: figure 7 has horizontal bands divided by vertical bars, zigzag patterns and a particular motif; figure 14 (see Fig. 7.1a), in contrast, has many smaller horizontal bands with very intricate circular, lozenge and chequered patterns (Fig. 7.1c). The hems of the plainer garments demonstrate a similar level of differentiation by pattern.

Within the representation there are particular areas that are given emphasis or specific treatment which makes them stand out from the rest of the fresco. The wavy lines between the registers of the fresco create constantly changing volumes of

background space within which the various aspects of the images are framed. The figures are of slightly different heights, creating slightly different vertical spaces in which the details that make up their bodies appear; the vessels are also of different sizes and shapes. The flat bottom border ensures that all the figures are grounded and start at the same level in the fresco. However, as the figures develop, the differences in height and shape enable the wavy lines between the registers to frame specific aspects of the figures without imposing a particular dimension to those aspects. The consequential undulating form to the background sets up a further contrast between the only straight lines in the composition apart from the bottom border—those in the patterns of the garments, the girdles; and on the vessels. The background therefore sets up three divisions of the bodies of the figures: the legs of the red figures or the lower area of the long garments; the pelvic area and waist; and the upper body, especially the head and vessels. A further wavy line may have framed the heads of the figures from above, as in the case of the 'Cup-bearer'.

The correspondence between the middle register and the skirts of the preserved figures is especially striking. The division between the upper and middle registers occurs in all cases exactly, or almost exactly, at the level of the top lip of the girdle; the division between the bottom and middle registers occurs very close to the hems of the short skirts at both sides of the figures. The highly conventionalised shape of the skirt is exactly framed by the middle register of background colour. The skirts are the only area of the figures which include straight lines and geometrically correct patterns in great detail. The patterns were in fact painted onto the fresco by means of guidelines marked on the wet plaster in string; the marks end just outside the edges of the area of the skirt. The straight lines and minute detail of the skirts contrasts strongly with the curved lines and plain areas of colour in the rest of the figures; even the joins between the upper body and the abrupt, straight lines of the top of the girdles, do not match exactly and look strangely incongruent. The overall effect is to highlight the skirt and its patterning, and to set up a contrast between the curved lines in the composition, including the rest of the body of the figures, and their clothing.

The bottom register of the frescoes contains either plain legs and decorated feet and ankles, and the straight-lined pattern of the tassels of the red, short-skirted figures, or the lower part of the longer garments of the other figures. Not enough of the longer

garments is preserved to determine their relationship to the division between the registers. However, the overlapping figures at the beginning of both walls may have obscured the division, creating an unbroken field of patterned garment between the bottom border and the upper register.

The division between the middle and upper registers not only follows the line of the girdles of the short-skirted figures, but also appears to follow the line of the bottom of the vessels being carried, if Evans' figure 20 is exemplary. The striking parallels between the girdles and bases of the vessels is carried further by their relation to the registers and dividing lines: the continuation of the vessels upwards into the upper register frames their symmetry against the plain background. The straight-lined geometry of the 'cup' and vase parallel that of the skirts in the middle register. The wavy line at the top of the middle register connects the skirts and vessels of all the figures, including possibly the girdles of the central white figure; the chain of associations would then have been anchored at either end of the composition by solid groups of figures with long robes, such as those that begin the composition on both walls next to the 'West Entrance'.

At the level of bodily detail or style, there is remarkably little variation. There is little differentiation even at the level of ornamentation: the preserved sections of fresco merely show a row of red and white, variously spaced feet, most with toe nails and ankle rings. That uniformity is dramatically displaced in Evans' reconstruction, where the white-footed figure with the most elaborate hem (figure 14) is shown with torso to the front, indisputable breasts, and a *labrys*, or 'sacred' double-headed axe, in each hand. The scale of the figures would appear to indicate that in this instance at least, breasts would have been clearly marked. If breasts were present, which is far from clear, they would have been included as part of the overall lack of physical embellishment within the images, rather than a defining characteristic of that particular figure, or of all the figures. From the evidence of feet, out of a possible thirty-four figures, a maximum of five are white. There does appear to be some correspondence between decorated hems and colour, as well as style of dress and colour. However, the figures are individuated by means of the details of the patterns of dress and objects in each of the registers; colour, style of dress and position in the compositions describe larger groupings which are non-exclusive in their means of distinguishing between individual figures. The intentional

division of the figures into two or three zones, and the juxtaposition of straight and curved lines, is a means of determining or constituting associations between the performative elements of the images. The pictorial gestures evident in the images gain coherence through the relationships between body, clothing, activity, colour, position, objects and patterning, all of which are framed by the registers and borders.

The media, vision and type of representation

The 'Procession' and 'Cup-bearer' frescoes are distinct from other images of figures on a number of levels: the size and extent of the frescoes distinguishes them from other fresco images and the medium in which they are produced distinguishes them from all other images. The technique of fresco painting enables and excludes certain possibilities of representation. For example, Knossian painters were limited to a four-colour palette; the painting also has to be done whilst the plaster is still wet (see Cameron 1975 for a full account of the technique involved in fresco painting). That technique and the scale of the images have a particular form of visibility, which would have been intimately linked to the audience for which the paintings were produced. The images were viewed in a particular way within the context of a community's 'scopic regime' (Jay 1996). The constellation of variables along with the compositional form of the frescoes referred equally to the ideas behind their generation and the ways in which visual ideas were received. Goldhill (1996; see also Brown 1997) has documented three very different 'discourses of viewing' from the classical period: for example, in fifth century B.C. Athens the 'citizen's gaze' (*ibid.*: 19) was the field in which position was contested. In contrast, there was a large literature on seeing in Hellenistic society in which the idea of the 'poet as the seeing subject' was valorised (*ibid.*: 32). The contents of the frescoes, the ways of seeing, and the contextual importance of gender in the images are linked through the physicality of the frescoes, their absorption by the plaster on the walls of particular spaces within the Palace complex at Knossos, and the practices associated with, and constitutive of, the significance of those spaces.

The objects and clothing in the images are embedded in the representations; and the frescoes themselves are literally embedded in the walls of the structure at Knossos. The images, therefore, are inseparable from the context of their production and reception; they would have been strongly associated with that specific place and the practices associated with it. The type, size and details of the frescoes are unique at Knossos. To the present-day audience they appear in innumerable publications and reproductions; to a Late Bronze Age audience, however, they would have been unique to that place at that time. Furthermore, the general lack of representational imagery of human bodies, would have made their impact even greater on those who saw them, especially if access to the frescoes was controlled.

Conclusions: power and the materialisation of sexless bodies

The images in the frescoes are not merely reflections of a Knossian social reality. Rather, they are one aspect of the means by which a series of ideas formed and expressed—gave coherence and intelligibility to—every-day social practices at Knossos. The intelligibility of the images was assured by their place within a wider context of received meanings. That wider context was drawn upon in the creation of the specific significance attached to, and generated by, the 'Procession' and 'Cup-bearer' frescoes. One level of that wider context was the common way of depicting bodies. The specific context was formed by the architectural location and the actual content of the frescoes.

The spatial context of the frescoes indicates a degree of control of access to and movement through the areas in which the images were housed. As such, the existence of the frescoes in parts of the Palace structure which are characterised by a large number of 'monumental' and circuitous transient spaces suggests that the frescoes and the practices associated with them, were an integral part, and constitutive of, the function of the Palace, rather than leading to a particular place within the Palace and therefore 'illustrating' a practice associated with the palaces. The figures do not lead causally to a particular space, but rather always face inwards into the composition,

always towards another figure or centre of activity. The presence of the frescoes defined the meaning of that area of the Palace.

The images contain a set of visual codes that create layers of interconnected meanings. That layering defines how bodies are understood, what is important about them and further, what aspects of the body are connected to authority at the Palace site. Two of such layers are indicated by the middle and top zones of the compositions. Within those zones significant parts of the imagery are marked out from the general composition by the use of geometrically precise patterns; by straight lines as opposed to curved lines. The top zone contains the objects that are being carried, the remains of which are painted in a symmetrical fashion. The vessels depicted refer to the meaning attached to similar objects that have been recovered archaeologically from Minoan sites, including the Palace at Knossos. Workshops have been located for their manufacture, which may have exclusively occurred at Palace sites. An association, therefore, is made between the practice of making objects of value and the practices associated with the area of the frescoes. Furthermore, the images include details, such as the sealstone on the wrist of the 'Cup-bearer' which refer to administrative functions, or the control of access to certain goods or documents[3]. The vessels being carried by the figures in the imagery are held away from the body of those figures. The effect is to frame the objects, and to maintain a definite separation between the body and the object. The distinctiveness of the object is maintained.

The middle register of the frescoes exactly frame the skirts of the figures. The geometry of the design of the skirt and girdles mirrors that of the vessels. The skirts are dense areas of detailed and repeated patterning which have been carefully and regularly applied to a particular area outlined by the shape of the skirt and girdle. The outline of the skirts is integral to the bodies and body-shape of the figures; the tight fit and rigidly geometric shape of the girdles even more so—they define the "hour-glass" shape of the bodies. Furthermore, the separateness of the objects, their distinct quality as separate, bounded objects, is drawn into association with the body-shape by the girdles. The girdles are on exactly the same line as the division between the two registers.

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[3] The depiction of seals on the wrists of figures in the imagery is not confined to the 'Cup-bearer' image (see Rehak 1994).

Moreover, the shape of the vessel bottoms is identical to that of the girdles, as are the patterns. The formal legitimacy of the single body-shape is guaranteed by, and in turn guarantees, the power of the objects to invoke the authority of the Palace site. Similarly, the biceps-bands of the 'Cup-bearer' figure takes the place of the bottom of a vessel in the spatial layout of the composition, creating a further association between common elements of the Knossian body imagery and the production of specialised objects.

The combination of elements in the frescoes performatively maintains the referential power of both the body-shape and the objects being carried. The separateness of those objects is stressed, but the semiotic network of the imagery continuously reaffirms their relationship with the body-shape and ornamentation of that body. Within the monumental context of the imagery power and authority were synonymous with a body undifferentiated by physical sexual characteristics. The relative permanence of walls temper the ideas associated with images with the illusion of durability (see Molyneaux 1996a, 1996b). The self-referential authority of the objects and body-shape gained the illusion of substance by the literal materialisation of the images on the walls of the Palace.

Sexed differences in context: the ivory and faience figurines

> One aspect of archaeological analysis must … be the struggle to recognise the difference implicit in the artefact, in the face of the tendency to recognise it as something familiar.
>
> (Thomas 1996: 62)

When Evans uncovered the 'Temple Repositories' and found the faience figurines, his first written reaction to the larger figurine was to comment on her 'matronly bosom' and identify her as a 'Mother Goddess' (Panagiotaki 1993: 56, f. 2(a), after Evans *Excavation Notebooks*). Found with the figurines were two faience plaques showing young animals being suckled. That association was enough to convince Evans (hence, 'Mother Goddess') of the reproductive significance of the figurines, and was used to bolster the discourse on women and reproduction in Minoan society (see

Chapter 5). However, the connection between representations of figures with breasts and reproduction or the nurturing of children is not substantiated by the material evidence. Olsen (1998) draws attention to the explicit lack of images in which women and children are shown together in Minoan imagery. The depiction of breasts, once freed of this over-determination of them as signs of motherhood, can be understood as specific and contextualised departures from the common body form.

The two sets of figurines represent two apparently very different ideas of the human body: the faience figurines are very explicitly sexed, whereas the ivory figurines show no clear determinate of physical sex. The two types of body appear to represent a dichotomy between a lithe, athletic, male body and a formal, religiously endowed female body. However, both groups of figurines adhere to and depart from the common body-shape (see Chapter 6). The discrepancies between the two have more to do with the specific ways in which the general body template interacts with the specific context and content of the figurines to create particular meanings than with a straightforward male/female dichotomy. The figurines are further distinguished by activity and decoration. The faience group is in a formal, standing pose, with polychrome glaze and elaborate costumes and details; the ivory figurines are stark in their simplicity, are in active poses, are not painted, and their only adornments are possible gold-leaf clothing and painstakingly applied curls of bronze hair.

The distinction between body and clothing appears to be one between two different cultural understandings of the body. Rather than a sexed body which is further elaborated upon by clothing and ornamentation, the Knossian images show a specific cultural idea of a non-sexed body. The representation of breasts, it is argued, are a particular performative enactment of a particular body type. Breasts are intimately linked to a particular type of clothing, and in this instance, to the further adornment of the body with snakes. A sexed identity emerges from the body with the clothing and snakes; sexed identity does not inhere in the body, but rather is a particular, performative, embellishment of that body.

The figurines

The remains of the ivory figurines were found in a closet under the so-called 'service staircase' in the 'Domestic Quarter' of the Palace (Evans 1901—2: 70; see Fig. 7.8). The figurines were found with objects of gold, bronze, ivory, faience and crystal. Evans (1901—2: 71) associated the finds in the closet with another deposit from the 'East Treasury' six metres to the south. Separate parts of the same crystal bowl were found in both deposits. The faience figurines and clothing were recovered from the 'Temple Repositories' (see Fig. 7.9) in an area on the opposite side of the 'Central Court' to the ivory deposit, below two cists of a later date (Evans 1921: 464). The faience objects were predominantly found carefully laid out in the lowest layer of the eastern repository (Evans 1921: 498); other finds included further faience objects, gold foil, a large number of pots, bronze handles, a large number of faience and ivory inlays, and sealings. The faience objects included: the two restored figurines (Fig. 7.13); the bottom half of a third; the remains of two left and one indeterminate arm; three flat 'robes' in various conditions; and two almost complete separate girdles and a fragment of a third (see Figs 6.19, 7.16, 7.17). The faience figurines were found in a damaged condition. They have been fairly heavily restored with plaster (Panagiotaki 1995: 146), making it difficult to tell where the joins were. From the separate arms, however, it is clear that lead pins were used to attach them to the main body of the figures.

The ivory figurines were found in a 'very friable condition', and were subsequently soaked in hot paraffin and wax with the result that 'a good deal of their original consistency was restored and their surface at the same time cleared of impurities' (Evans 1901—2: 72). The fragments consisted of three right arms, two legs, four heads and one almost complete figure to

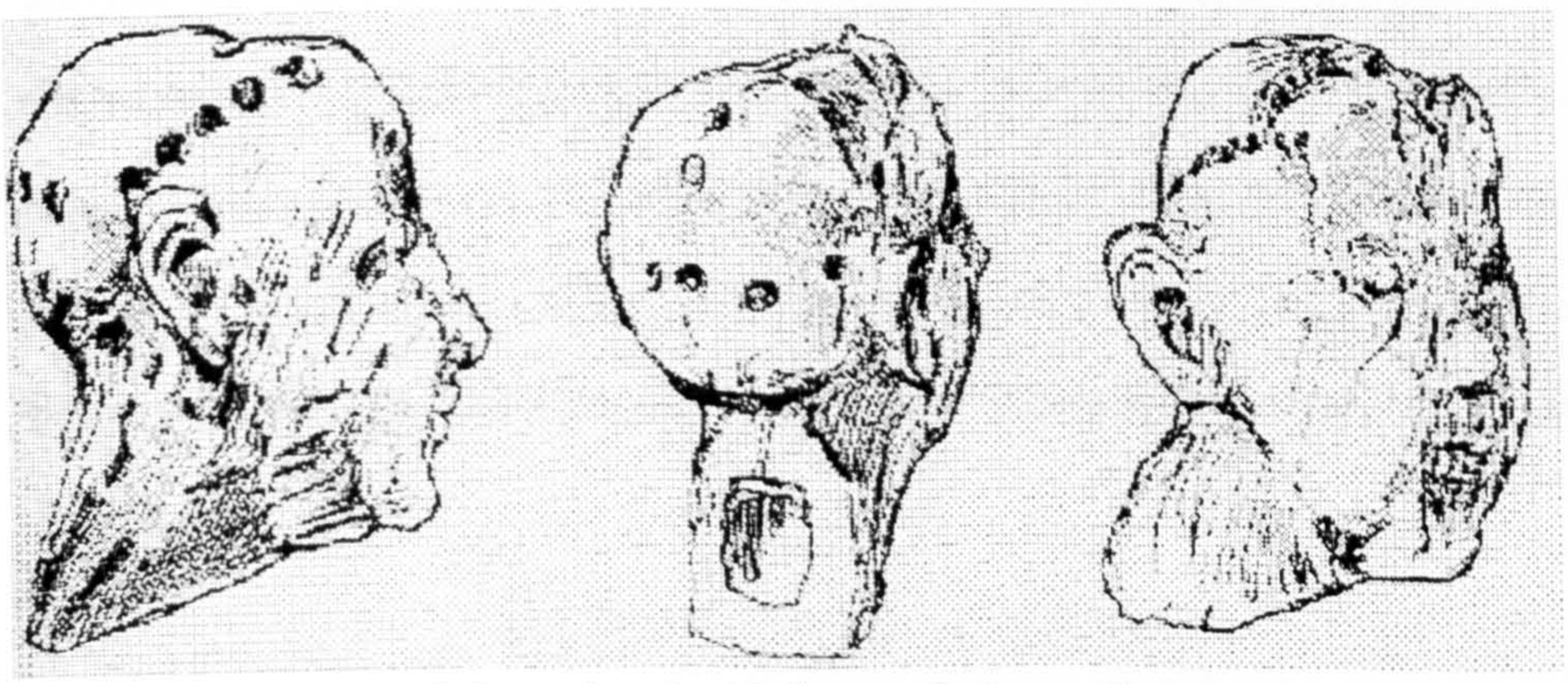


Fig. 7.7: Ivory head with bronze hair attachments.

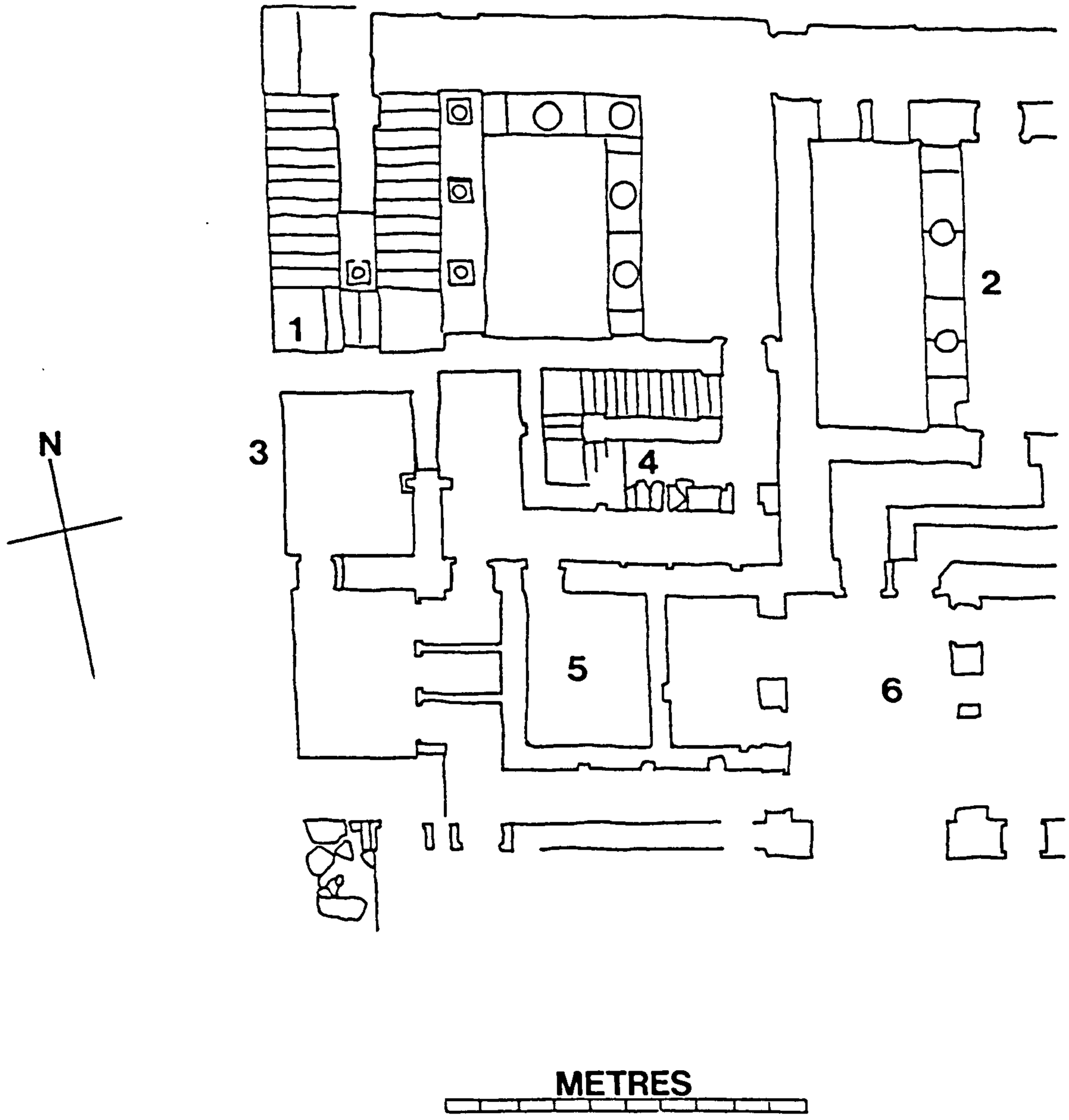
which one of the heads was found to fit (see Figs 7.7, 7.10—7.12). Gold-plated bronze hair attachments were also found, in one case still in place on a head (Fig. 7.7); the attachments were secured by means of small holes in the heads of the figurines. Evans (1901—2: 72) suggests that the thin gold plate found in the deposit may have been loin-clothing for the figurines, although none was found attached to the actual figurines. The limbs were made separately and attached by means of tenons and dowels.

According to Evans (1901—2: 70), the ivory figurines were found immediately below a layer of 'transitional' (MM IIIB/LM IA) Minoan vessels. The faience figurines were dated by Evans (1921: 495—523) to the same period, but Panagiotaki (1993: 88) has argued, on the basis of motifs on the sealings and faience objects from the deposit, as well as the pottery, that the deposit is more likely to have been from a LM I destruction context.

The archaeological and architectural contexts

The figurines are particular material entities that were found in particular spatial locations within the Palace; such contextual information will elucidate the practices in which the figurines played a constitutive part and which endowed them with meaning. The occurrence of sexed and unsexed bodies is a matter, therefore, of how the objects were perceived and how they were expressive and generative of particular meanings within the context of particular practices. The deposits of figurines were found in diametrically opposed areas of the Palace, both horizontally and vertically[4]. The rooms from which they were recovered, or with which they have been associated, are both relatively small spaces in secluded parts of the Palace. However, the practices that have been associated with those areas and the depositional context of the figurines are quite different.

[4] The oppositions between the two groups of figures are startling: upper storey versus 'basement' space; east versus west; ivory versus faience; fluidity versus rigidity; 'nakedness' versus heavily clothed; three right arms versus three left arms.



Key:
1. 'Grand Staircase'.
2. 'Hall of the Double Axes'.
3. Central Court.
4. 'Service Stairs', containing the 'Stair Closet' desposit.
5. 'Treasury'.
6. 'Queen's Megaron'.

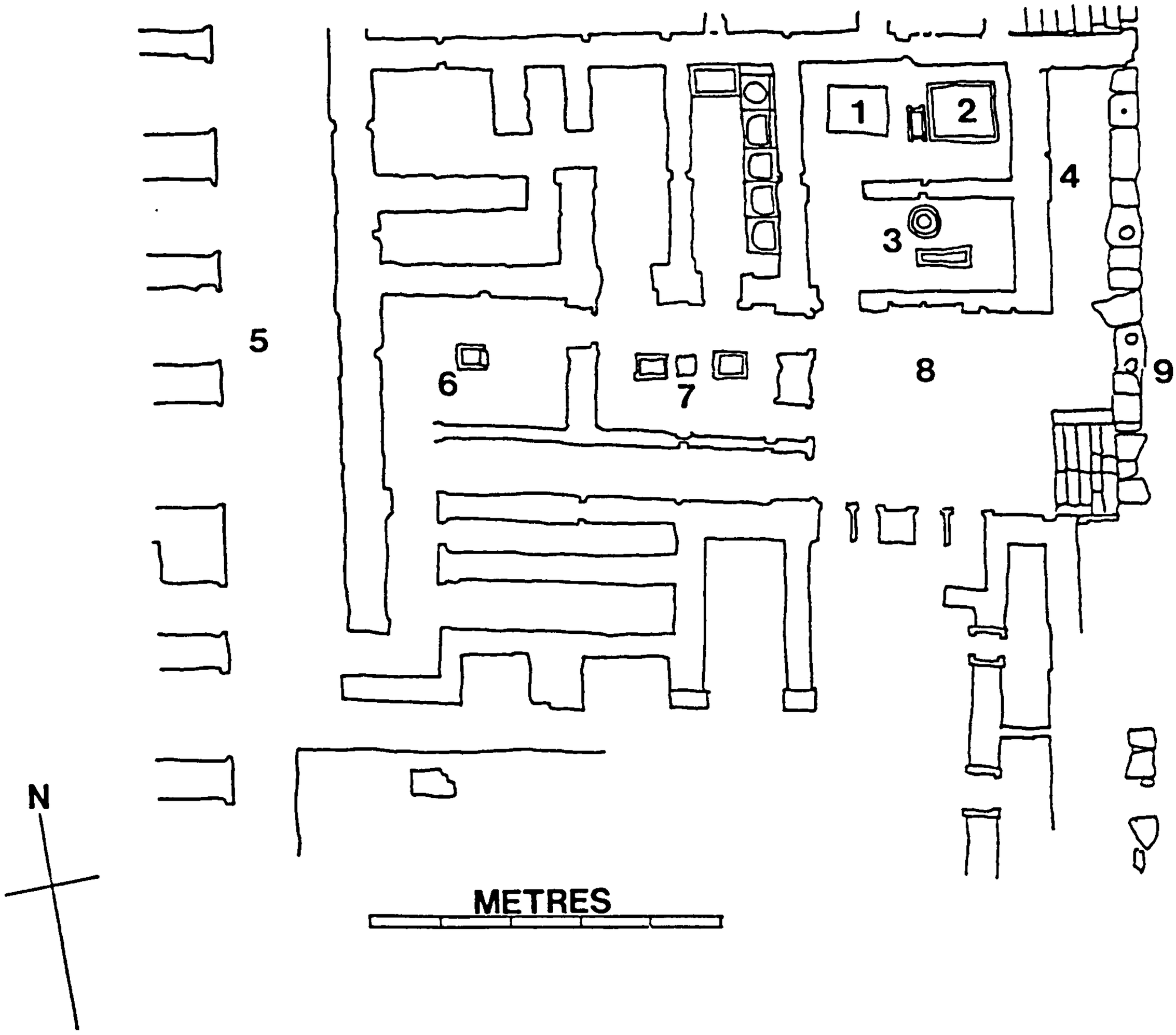
Fig. 7.8: Plan of part of the 'Domestic Quarter' of the Palace site at Knossos.

The 'Stair Closet' and 'East Treasury' (see Fig. 7.8) where the ivories were found are very secluded areas. If Evans (1930: 401) is correct in assigning them to an upper storey room, then the space would have been more secluded, with no windows or light-wells, and a solid floor of rough-hewn limestone blocks[5]. The existence of carbonised

5 The 'Treasury' room may have had a marinestyle rock pattern flooring of red porphyry limestone (Koehl 1986: 407), which would lend strength to the idea that the room was of importance.

wood and bronze handles amongst the deposit led Evans (1901—2: 71—2; 1930: 401) to suggest that the items were originally kept in wooden chests, further ensuring their safe-keeping and control over their usage and visibility. Access to the area would have involved a circuitous route through a large part of the 'Domestic Quarter'. It would appear, therefore, that the ivory figurines were of some value, although the fact that they were not recovered or repaired suggests either a discontinuation of the practices with which they were associated, or a continual source of such objects. Furthermore, Evans makes no reference to the condition in which the objects were found within the deposits, suggesting that such deposition was careless, or accidental, rather than deliberate.

In contrast, the faience figurines were recovered from two specific storage areas—the 'Temple Repositories'—and were deliberately placed and arranged within them (see Fig. 7.9). All the remains of the figurines and associated objects where found laid out in the bottom context of the east repository, apart from the 'upper part' (Evans 1921: 495) or 'zone' (Panagiotaki 1993: 51, f. 1 (a), after Evans *Excavation Notebooks*) of the larger figurine which was found in the fill of the west repository. Two superficial cists were found embedded in a gypsum pavement, under which were the 'Temple Repositories', which are far larger and deeper than the cists. The repositories are slightly different in size and design, but had almost identical stratigraphies: the later pavement had been laid on a bed of reddish clay, below which was a mixed layer of dark earth, debris, charred wood and some fragments of gold foil. From the surface to a depth of 1.10m double-handled MM IIIB amphora and pitchers were closely packed together, including a few polychrome Melian vases. Below this layer, for a depth of between 32—42cms the pottery ceased, the earth became more compact and a number of objects in precious material were found, including the faience figurines and objects. Evans (1921: 468—9) argued that the deposits had been disturbed after they had been sealed, which would account for the upper part of the larger figurine being found in the west repository. However, Panagiotaki (1993: 85) points out that the stratigraphy contradicts that suggestion, and any disturbance must have occurred before the gypsum paving was laid. She further states that the objects must have been broken before they were introduced into the repositories, as all the earth from the deposits was carefully sieved and no further fragments were found (Panagiotaki 1993: 86).



Key:
1. Western 'Temple Repository'.
2. Eastern 'Temple Repository'.
3. 'Room of the Tall Pithos'.
4. The 'Central Palace Shrine' (the 'Tripartite Shrine').
5. 'Corridor of the Magazines'.
6. 'West Pillar Crypt'.
7. 'East Pillar Crypt'.
8. 'Lobby of the Stone Seat'.
9. Central Court.

Fig. 7. 9: Plan of the area around the 'Temple Repositories' at the Palace site at Knossos.

The room in which the 'Temple Repositories' are located is immediately north of a room where a large pithos was found embedded in the floor and which was apparently also used for storage (Hallager 1987: 171). Both rooms form an adjunct off the 'Lobby of the Stone Seat', or 'Room of the Column bases', which gives access to the

'Central Court' to the east, a confusion of possible halls to the south, and the 'Pillar Crypts' and 'West Magazines' to the west (see Fig. 7.9). The area underwent structural changes throughout the life of the Palace, but appears to have served as the principle access route to the 'West Magazines'. During the Minoan palatial periods a tripartite 'shrine' was constructed directly facing the 'Central Court' to the east of the room with the 'Temple Repositories'. During the supposed Mycenaean period, post LM IB, the shrine went out of use, and the area appears to have taken on a more secular character (Hallager 1987: 169). During both the Mycenaean and Minoan periods, however, a large number of tablets inscribed in Linear A and B were deposited in the pillar crypts area, suggesting that the area was used for record-keeping, and perhaps for documenting transactions concerning the contents of the 'West Magazines'. Furthermore, finds of seal impressions from the 'shrine' may indicate that dedications of some description were simultaneously being made. Hallager (1987) argues that the storage of goods at Knossos during the Minoan periods had a religious as well as secular significance. The figurines would therefore have been an integral part of the religious practices in the area, perhaps as part of the 'shrine', and would have been stored in the 'Temple Repositories'. Furthermore, the decorative scheme of the room of the 'Temple Repositories'—white stucco painted walls with red bands—was the same as that of the 'West Magazines' (Evans 1900—1: 27), perhaps indicating similar uses of storage, rather than the area itself being the focus of 'religious' practices. What 'religion' would have constituted in such a context is far from clear (for discussion, see Quinlan 1993), but it is apparent that some level of control was being exercised over entrance to the magazines. Entering the Palace itself was far from a straightforward procedure, and entrance to the magazines would have been further complicated by the circuitous and multi-lobbied layout of the area.

The faience and ivory figurines are of roughly equivalent size. Unlike the frescoes they are mobile and may be arranged in a number of ways in various locations. Their association with relatively secure places means they can be hidden when necessary, and access to them may have involved a more specific group of people than the frescoes. Furthermore, there is the possibility that they were not meant to be seen by anybody, or very few people, but perhaps representing 'secret', or highly controlled knowledge. The interaction of these objects with people is likely to have involved

particular practices in which the objects were not merely reflexive mediums, but rather were active in generating and maintaining those practices and the social relations they engendered (see Jones 1997: 118; Moore 1993: 281; Strathern 1988: 171; Thomas 1996). The figurines, as particularly dynamic and dense areas of signification, would have played an important role in the generation of meaning in the practices in which they were involved.

The figurines themselves may have been 'gendered'. Rehak (1995) suggests that the fragments of vessels, in which scenes exclusively involving what are commonly understood as 'male' figures are portrayed, may themselves be gendered male.
On a different conceptual level, Strathern (1988: 171—8) has argued that amongst the Sabarl of Melanesia, objects are not understood as commodified objects in the Western sense, but rather as extensions of social relations. Therefore, amongst the Sabarl, the social separation of persons as distinct from one another provides the precondition for objectification (Strathern 1988: 177). An object to the Sabarl is conceived of in the same way as relationships between people, and not as a distinct, bounded 'thing'. In other words, an object is always in relationship with another object or a person, and is not an isolated, self-contained piece of material culture. Thomas (1996: 73) makes a similar point when he argues that both persons and 'things' circulate in exchanges which contributes to the formation of the identity of each. Strathern is making a specific distinction between commodity and gift economies. The form of the Minoan economy is ambiguous, with an apparent emphasis on the storage of bulk produce in the protopalatial period, to a reduction in storage capacity in the major sites and an increase of small, luxury items in the neopalatial period (Walberg 1995). It is unclear whether the small, valuable items such as the figurines were used in exchange, or as payment. It is clear, however, that the material used in the manufacture of the figurines involved a great deal of effort to obtain: animals from which ivory can be obtained are not found on Crete, possible Minoan sources of which were Africa (Evans 1921: 119) or Syria (Davaras 1976: 154). The faience includes natron, a mineral not locally obtainable (Foster 1987: 287), and manganese from Egypt was used in the black colouring on the figurines (Foster and Kaczmanczk 1982). The choice of material for the different figurines may be significant. Ivory allows for intricate carving which can better express an idea of movement and clean lines; faience is harder to work, but bright colours can

be produced on the objects. Furthermore, the faience figurines include an extra layer of finely-ground white quartz, applied as a paste (Panagiotaki 1995: 147); the result is to produce an especially brilliant glaze which emphasises the colours of the figurines.

The manner in which the materials were deposited and the condition in which they were found provides clues to the status of the objects at Late Bronze Age Knossos. Panagiotaki (1993: 86) has suggested that the careful deposition of the faience figurines and the layer of red earth deliberately laid over the deposit indicates that the broken figurines were given a 'ceremonial burial', a type of consecration for the continuing use of the 'Temple Repositories' area. The idea that objects may be 'killed' (see Thomas 1996: 162) intentionally has been argued in the case of the Minoan bulls-head rhyton (Rehak 1995), and may also have occurred in the case of the figurines. Furthermore, the fact that more limbs than figures were found in both deposits of figurines, may indicate that separate body parts had a significance away from the figurines.

The unsexed body and performativity

The almost complete ivory figurine (Figs 7.10, 7.11) is presented half-way through a leap; the arms are straight out in front of the body, the hands are open as if to grasp something wide. The neck of the figure is bent violently backwards. A slight torque in the shoulders means the arms are angled slightly to the figure's right (see Fig. 7.11). The effect is of a free-flowing body, but one which is also quite rigid and taught. The sense of movement, however, is paramount, and is exaggerated by the lack of any apparent means of attaching the figure to a base or line. The lack of an exaggeratedly narrow waist and large buttocks may be due to the reconstruction of the waist of the figure with wax. It is conceivable that the figure had a narrower waist and that the join with the lower body exaggerated the shape of the buttocks to a greater extent. Furthermore, corrosion of the ivory on the whole figure except the left arm may account for the thinness of the body.

The details of the body include: clear muscular definition on the surviving arms; open hands, long fingers and protruding thumbs (see Fig. 7.12); long, flat feet;



Fig. 7.10: The ivory bull-leaper figurine.



Fig. 7.11: The ivory bull-leaper figurine, front on.

exaggerated ears; and, gold-plated bronze hair attachments. Seen from the front the restored figure gives an impression of great strength and movement (Fig. 7.11); these traditional 'masculine' traits are not, however, backed up by an explicitly sexed body. The activity of the figure appears to define the meaning of the representation far more than any explicit reference to genitalia. The figure is not explicitly sexed male or female. The figure may be ambiguous in its representation of a binary sex, but it is unambiguous in its presentation of a muscular, mobile figure. The typical features—the broad shoulders, hand position, large ears, etc.—clearly place it within the Knossian template for representations of the body; the specific features, most clearly expressed by the body position, the activity and the material, enable contextual meanings to arise.

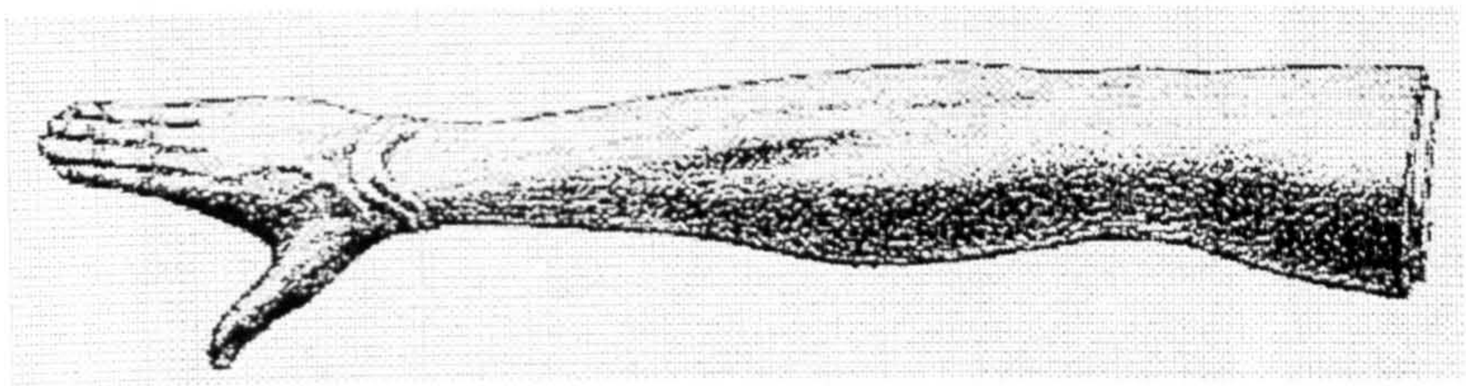


Fig. 7.12: One of the three arms found with the ivory figurine.

Many of the same bodily details are emphasised on the faience figurines, including large ears, separately modelled hair, and a particular hand position—in their case, one figurine has clenched fists and the other has open hands (see Fig. 7.13). The musculature of the arms of the faience figurines is not emphasised, although the breadth and musculature of their backs is (see Figs 7.14, 7.15). Furthermore, the figurines do not have feet, but stand directly on the base of their skirts in an apparently more formal poise. The scale, or divisions of the body appear also to follow those emphasised by the registers in the 'Procession' fresco: the proportions are identical, with the bottom two areas including the decorated skirt; the middle area is taken up by the apron/loin-clothing; whilst the top area encompasses the upper body and head. The effect is to make the figures seem unnaturally tall. The body position of the two surviving figures differs only in their arms positions: one holding them straight out in front, the other holds them out to the side and bent at a forty-five degree angle upwards at the elbows. Both faience figurines hold snakes: one has two small snakes which are held away from the body, and the other has the head and tail of two large snakes which are wrapped around the body, held out towards the ground. The snakes emphasise the shape of the body of the larger figurine (see Chapter 6), and appear to be an integral part of the



Fig. 7.13: The two faience figurines (the larger on the right).



Fig. 7.14: Back of larger faience figurine.



Fig. 7.15: Back of smaller faience figurine.

figure. The body position of both is determined to an extent by their association with the snakes, which are integral, therefore, to the activity and visual code of the images.

Clothing and performativity

The ivory figurines emphasise the musculature and activity of the body; the faience figurines are in a more rigid and 'fixed' position, and were clearly meant to stand up. Similarly, the faience figurines are more closely associated with the snakes they hold and the elaborateness of the clothing, as well as with a number of separate items of apparel, some of which may have formed part of a compositional arrangement. Perforations through the faience clothing, for example, indicate they could be hung up, perhaps as a back-drop to the figurines or as items in their own right. The ivory figurines do include some indications of clothing or paraphernalia: the gold-leaf may have originally been clothing, and one loose leg and one loose arm have double-banded bracelets carved on them. However, the faience figurines rely far more on their apparel and elaborate appearance, in contrast to the body position and activity of the ivories.

The faience figurines share with other representations of people in skirts an enormous amount of detail, and care has been taken to ensure the clothing stands out. They are the figurine equivalent of the patterned hems in the 'Procession' fresco and the engraved skirts on some sealings and sealstones (see Chapter 6). The figurines include details and additions which are not present in other images: both figures have elaborate head gear, with figures balanced on top[6]; the larger figurine has a snake which is integral to the body-shape and costume, and actually constitutes the figure's girdle; the garments include 'aprons'; and both figures have clearly depicted and exaggeratedly upright breasts (see Fig. 6.7). The shape of the garments is clearly referring to variations of a common type. Both complete figurines and the separate bottom half have variations of that common type. The differences from the common form are what constitute the importance of the clothing to the figurines. For example, the aprons of

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[6] The feline on the hat of the smaller faience figurine was found separated from the figurine in the deposit, but fitted with a pin into a hole in the figure's hat (Evans 1921: 504).

the skirts curiously invert Evans' (1935: 386; see Chapter 6) suggestion that loin-clothing was worn under the dresses of the red figures in the 'Camp Stool' fresco. The aprons in profile (see Fig. 6.7) look very like the loin-clothing in other images, such as the fragment of fresco (Fig. 6.14) found south of the 'Corridor of the Procession' (Evans 1928: 751) and reconstructed by Cameron (1978: 587, f. 4) as part of a procession on the 'Grand Staircase'. Evans (1921: 503) admitted that the 'double apron' was a 'primitive garb common to both sexes'. The combination of various visual codes on the faience figurines allows a 'layering' of meaning in which the combination of skirt and loin-clothing on an image is understood without recourse to the oppositional binary male/female. As demonstrated in Chapter 6, the absence of female sexual characteristics does not equate with 'male'; therefore, the referential power of loin-clothing may encompass more than merely indicating an absent penis. Similarly, the significance of breasts in an image may arise from more than a means of referring to an uncomplicated and concrete sexed identity.

Where culturally elaborated sexed differences are accompanied by a dense layering of clothing and ornamentation—as opposed to culturally elaborated sexed indifference accompanied by little obvious ornamentation—then the clothing is of paramount importance in signalling those differences. The fragments of clothing and flattened 'robes' (Figs 6.19, 7.16, 7.17) found with the faience figurines indicate the significance of representations of clothing, even when no body is present. The faience clothing enables alternative and elaborated meanings to be applied to that clothing because of its status as representations. Its significance does not arise from a straightforward equation of the material with actual clothing. For example, the patterns on the flattened robes (see Fig. 6.19; see Chapter 6 for a description) would have been very difficult and time-consuming to produce in textile (Barber 1991: 320—1). Barber (1991: 321) suggests the patterns may have been painted on for one-off special occasions, a suggestion which fails to recognise the objects' statuses as representations. The depiction of a particular plant motif on an item that does not usually include that motif enables a wider network of associations to be drawn upon to create a layering of meaning on these particular items.

A sealstone (Fig. 7.18) from the stratigraphical museum excavations (Warren 1982—3: 69), outside the immediate area of the Palace, and a steatite lentoid (Fig. 7.19)



Fig. 7.16: The larger faience dress.



Fig. 7.17: The smaller faience dress.

from the 'Court of the Stone Spout' (see Fig. 4.1) in the Palace both show figures holding what appear to be elaborately decorated skirts[7]. Girdles are accorded a similar monumental status separate from a body. Several authors (e.g. Kantorli-Papadopoulou 1996: 86) have suggested that the type of skirts and dresses represented off the body may indicate that such garments were only worn by particular people (usually 'priestesses') and/or on particular occasions. It is implicitly assumed that women are dressing-up in alternative clothes for certain roles they perform.



Fig. 7.18: Sealstone with figure possibly carrying a skirt.

However, it is apparent that breasts are only depicted in the context of the style of garment similar to those worn by the faience figurines[8]. There are a great many representations of what are assumed to be women in the same or more usually other types of dress in which breasts are not depicted. Moreover, none of the other representations of breasts are as explicit or emphasised as those on the figurines. For example, the two occurrences of breasts in the fresco imagery (see Figs 5.12, 6.20) occur in the context of a representation of a group of figures dressed in garments which emphasise the shoulders and arms (see Chapter 6) and differ in form to the dresses of the faience figurines; the breasts are a more subtle means of differentiating between figures, rather than an integral part of the shape and clothing of those figures.



Fig. 7.19: Sealstone with figure carrying a skirt and *labrys*.

The performative appearance of breasts

The faience robes end at the neck in an inverted 'V' shape, coming to a definite point (see Figs 7.16, 7.17). The opening in the bodice where the breasts are placed on

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[7] A more compelling example is provided by a figure clearly holding a 'layered' skirt in a LM IA fresco from Akrotiri, Thera (see Doumas 1992).

[8] Although the relief breasts from the supposed 'Great East Hall' were not found with any indication of clothing (Evans 1930: 497—509, f. 354 A).

the figurines is not indicated on the robes, and neither are breasts painted on. If these objects were 'true' representations of the dress presented on the figurines, then a cut-away section at the neck of the robes would have been easily achieved to signify the absent breasts, and the shape of the female body around which the robes are supposed to open. Such a detail is not included; it would appear, rather, that breasts only appear, or are indicated, when the robes are combined with a body. The sexed body, therefore, is brought into being—materialises—when a particular type of garment is combined with a body within a specific context of representation. As such, the breasts are an integral part of the costume of the figurines. A 'naked' body with breasts does not occur in the Knossian imagery. Rather, the common form to the body is not differentiated by physical sexual characteristics. The breasts combine with the dress and ornamentation of the figurines to produce a sexed body. An explicitly female body is a specific occurrence which emphasises the form of the body template—the breasts mirror the curved spine of the figures—*and* adds a subsidiary layer of meaning to a representation. A gendered body does not pre-exist its representation in Knossian imagery; rather, the costumes, adornments, acts, body position and medium of representation combine to performatively produce gender on the figurines.

The faience figurines include other details which indicate that breasts are a part of, rather than essential to, the representations. The snakes of the larger figurine mirror the vital body-shape and an essential part of the clothing; the snake is entwined around and embedded in the figurine. As such, the snake embodies the important aspects of the image, and is as constitutive of the idea of the body and the identity of the figurine as the breasts are. In combination with the clothing, the snake and breasts bring out and highlight the identity being represented: not by alluding to a hidden 'core' identity, but rather by presenting through the material those aspects which are essential to the representation of an identity which is being performatively produced on and by the figurine.

Conclusions: the performative production of sex on the body

The faience and ivory figurines represent two different deployments of the visual codes of Knossian bodily representation. Male/female is not a useful or pertinent means of categorising and understanding the imagery presented by the figurines. The significance of different representations of the body is highly contextualised and dependent upon the qualities of the medium of representations, the medium's embeddedness within a network of common understanding, the significance attached to particular spaces, and the mobility and potential visibility of the particular image. A sexed body only emerges in specific instances and in association with specific types of clothing and adornment. What is widely understood within the contemporary West as the 'biological sex' of the body—'natural' sexed differences—is in the Knossian imagery an unsexed body. We understand breasts as a natural part of the body. The Knossian imagery, however, inverts that understanding. Things that we consider the cultural eloboration of the so-called biological body, such as dress and ornamentation, includes in the Knossian imagery, the 'coming out', or emergence, of breasts. The single body-shape was the Knossian idea of a 'natural' body. The breasts can be understood as the Knossian cultural elaboration of their 'natural' body. In other words, breasts are the *cultural* elaboration of a *cultural* idea of the body, not an integral part of that idea of the body. The Knossian concept of a 'natural' body, as represented in the images, was not that of sexed body. A body in the imagery only demonstrates signs of sex in recognisably social acts and performances. As such, breasts, and other signs of identity in the representation, do not belong naturally on the body, much in the way that Yates (1993: 66) has describes the signs of masculinity in Swedish rock art as 'detachable' signs that are 'applied to the surface of the body'. The fact that different colour glazes were used for the breasts and faces of the figurines alludes to the status of the breasts as distinct from the rest of the body. The production of sex in the imagery can be understood as a performative enactment of certain pictorial gestures on the surface of the body, along with other attributes such as clothing and the inclusion of the snakes. The juxtaposition of the two sets of figurines demonstrates that far from being the hidden truth of a body, sexed differences do not occur on the nearly naked body of the

ivories, but rather emerge through and with the elaborate clothing and decoration of the faience figurines.

Conclusions

The above analyses of the 'Procession' and 'Cup-bearer' frescoes and the ivory and faience figurines amply demonstrate the inappropriateness of the sex/gender split for exploring gender through representations in Late Bronze Age Knossos. The assumption of a core gender that is primary to identity has underlain all previous interpretations of the representations. The result is that sex has been seen as the part of the 'natural' body onto which a gender is culturally elaborated. That relationship, however, has been one of implicit causality, where gender must follow sex, therefore reducing the potential radical separateness of gender from sex to a fiction. Under such rubric, an exploration of masculinity would involve an investigation of the cultural embellishment of an uncomplicated male body. However, in the figurative imagery from Knossos the only explicitly sexed bodies are those with breasts; male bodies have been assumed by the absence of breasts. The predominant features of the bodies in Knossian images are a single body-shape with a layering of details in a way that only utilises the differentiating potential of physical sexual characteristics in specific instances. Such differentiation is the exception, rather than the rule, and is not the primary means whereby difference and specificity are marked on representations of the body.

Rather than maintaining the sex/gender distinction and assuming a causal link between the two and, therefore, an internal, inherent quality to gender, the representation of bodies in the imagery is better understood by recognising gender and sex as performatively produced by the very acts and gestures that are said to be their expressions (see Chapter 2). The representations are evidence for, and part of the structure of, such performative reiteration of 'norms' of the body in Knossian society. The materialisation of such norms is understood as the ways in which they gain legitimacy and the status of natural fact within the social contexts in which they are

involved. As such, their appearance in different locations, in different media, and the differences in content of the images, are evidence for their involvement in certain social practices. The 'Procession' and 'Cup-bearer' frescoes are monumental types of representation. Their power and authority in allowing particular ideas of the body to materialise derive from their location in a monumental, transient space in the Palace; a location that, in turn, derives part of its purpose from the display of the frescoes. The illusion of substance afforded the images by their literal embeddedness within the walls of the Palace demonstrates the tangible quality and power of the images, and the ways they justify and legitimate the types of body represented. In a very concrete sense, such bodies came to *matter* (Butler 1993) for the Knossians.

The faience and ivory figurines are a different means of representing the body and would have had effects on practices and types of knowledge distinct from those associated with the frescoes. Part of the authority of the images would have been guaranteed by their use of common means of presenting the body, such as the "hour-glass" body-shape. The ways in which the images combine details on the common form, such as the depiction of breasts on the faience figurines and the understatement of the "hour-glass" shape in the ivory figurines, are deliberate acts for creating specific meanings within the context of the figurines' usages. Furthermore, the figurines vividly demonstrate the mechanisms involved in the performative constitution of the bodies that gain legitimacy through their materialisation—their sedimentation—in tangible and visible forms of representation. The semiotic organisation of the images—the ways in which the elements of the representations are layered on the figurines—involves a play of clothing, adornments and bodily differences, with the body template.

The figures demonstrate two processes: the performative production of a particular idea of the body; and the semiotic organisation of the attributes involved in that production. In the performative production of bodies the unsexed body is the norm—the cultural idea of a natural body—onto which details are added. Sexed differences are part of that elaboration—they only come into existence when combined with other signs, such as elaborate clothing. The snakes are part of the performative production of bodies, identity and sexed difference in this occasion; the snakes mirror the body-shape. The breasts are part of that body-shape, and an elaboration, a level of detail which is inseparable from the clothing.

The means by which bodies are distinguished from one another (on both the fresco figures and the figurines) is by subtle distinctions and wider, sweeping contrasts. Such means include breasts in specific cases. The signs relate to one another through chains of reference; they are detachable to an extent, evidence for which includes the deliberate deposition of separate arms, legs and hands, and the removal of designs and motifs from one context to another. The separate modelling of the parts of the figurines (Panagiotaki 1993: 47), rather than using a common mould, individuates them by size and details of their clothing, producing bodies with particular, subtle distinctions. Individuals are not marked, and larger groups are cross-cut, divided up again by the inter-use of clothing and colour and then by the specifics of their details.

The material from Knossos shows a means of differentiating between figures that does not follow a binary structure. The figures are individuated by a number of cross-cutting themes, some of which make specific pictorial references to other schema in a semiotic chain of reference. Specific meanings are generated through departures from a common body-shape. Sex is not the principle means of differentiating between the figures in the imagery, nor are individuals represented. The only markers of sex that are occasionally shown are breasts; and these only in the presence of particular garments. As markers of sex, breasts are not used to differentiate between two social blocks—men and women—but rather occur in specific instances. Moreover, the occasion in which breasts appear have no connection with reproduction. In conclusion, the categories male/female are not sufficient or applicable in describing the myriad potential means of differentiating between persons in the images; a differentiation which occurs irrespective of Western notions of physical sexual differences.

Chapter 8: Knossos in Context

The importance of maintaining a focus on a specific set of material and not generalising from possibly distinct spatial and cultural contexts was stressed in Chapters 4 and 5. However, considering some instances in which relationships or differences can be established between the Knossian imagery and material from the vicinity of the Palace site may be of use in considering social tensions and shifting power relations in Bronze Age Crete. A consideration of all the figurative imagery from Late Bronze Age Crete is beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, the general discussion below is followed by a brief discussion of two areas: the change in emphasis of certain aspects of images of bodies on sealings and sealstones between LM IB and LM II plus; and the differences between figurative imagery from Middle Minoan peak sanctuaries and the Palace site at Knossos. The first area illustrates the potential of images of bodies to be politically manipulated and may indicate tension at the level of hegemonic authority at the Palace site. The second area concentrates on a possible conflict between different understandings of the salient features of bodies in representation. The two areas discussed highlight the contestation and mutability of ideas of the body, bringing attention to the potential hegemony of concepts of the body that exists in an archaeological setting.

The bodies presented in the Knossian imagery are not direct reflections of a Knossian social reality. The images are representations and therefore are complicit with an idea, or ideas, of bodies. They are also part of the mechanisms whereby those ideas are reiterated. However, it is important to recognise that such ideas are hegemonic. They are produced by, and aid the legitimisation of, a particular group who were in a position of authority at the Palace site of Knossos. Part of the ambiguity or structural peculiarity of particular images may be a result of tension between received meanings and the generation of new meanings. Such tension does not have only an historical dimension, but also entails negotiation for social positions. The disparity between the representations of the body at Knossos and the lack of such representations in the 'town' area may signal a monopoly on such images, or that such images were only considered appropriate in the context of the Palace site. Frescoes with human figures are entirely absent from the town site, except for the fragments with black and red figures which were found in an insecure context (see Chapter 6, pp.165—6). Fragments

of ivory figurines (Catling 1978—9; Evans 1930: 433, 1928: 728), ceramic figures (Evans 1928: 753; Popham 1984: 198, pl. 191a), and several sealings (e.g. Fig. 7.18; see Warren 1982—3: 69) with humans depicted were found outside the Palace area. Overall, however, the finds of representations of human bodies outside the Palace site are negligible in comparison with those found inside the Palace, even in buildings in close proximity to the Palace. Particular mediums of representation were also excluded from displaying human bodies. Most strikingly, no finds from the area include pottery decorated with human forms, until a single example from LM III with highly schematic painted figures. The extremely elaborate 'Palace-style' polychrome vessels from the Middle Minoan period, and the 'Marine-style' pots from early in the Late Minoan period demonstrate that the elaborate painting of vessels occurred. Only fragments of stone vessels have been found with images of persons engraved on them (e.g. Figs 6.5, 6.6).

The relationship of Knossos to the area in its immediate vicinity is in some ways unique in Bronze Age Crete. The prohibition on figurative images does not stretch as far as the 'Royal tomb' at Isopata, 2.5 kms north, nor the cemeteries around Knossos (including Mavro Spilio, Zafer Papoura and Archanes), nor the Villa site at Amnisos. Isopata produced several seal-rings, some of gold, with human figures depicted. Fragments of fresco found at Amnisos have been restored by Cameron (1978: 581, pl. 1), and include at least one figure in an elaborate 'split flounced skirt'. Knossos has by far the largest quantity of fresco images of human bodies; but other sites, notably the Villa site at Hagia Triada, have produced vessels with carved human bodies (e.g. The 'Harvester's vase', the 'Chieftain's Cup' and the 'Boxers Rhyton'), a large quantity of sealings, an elaborately painted stone larnax (the Hagia Triada 'sarcophagus'), and many bronze and ceramic figurines. The majority of the figures are of the common body-shape: clearly the idea of the body presented in the Knossian imagery was not confined to the Palace site at Knossos. Furthermore, the occurrence of separate body parts ('votive limbs') at peak sanctuaries (see Peatfield 1992; Watrous 1995: 398) suggests some correspondence in signification. The specifics of their representation, however, are beyond the scope of this thesis.

The images of bodies from the Palace are intimately connected with issues of authority and power; they represent the dominant 'voice' in the maintenance of hegemony at Late Bronze Age Knossos. A sense of the contestedness of the view of

the body produced and expressed in the imagery from the Palace site, as well as a sense of the historical dynamic involved in their reproduction, emerges from changes in the representations on seals and sealstones from palatial contexts and a comparison of the images from Knossos with material from Middle Minoan peak sanctuaries.

Alexandri (1994) argues that a change in the sealstone imagery corresponds to the Mycenaean take-over at Knossos after the LM IB destructions. All the major sites on Crete except Knossos were destroyed in LM IB. Subsequently, records were kept in Linear B instead of Linear A, and many artistic traditions changed (see Rehak 1997a; Chapter 4). Alexandri (1994: 171) argues that representations of 'women' in glyptic sealstone imagery were used by the new palatial authorities from LM II onwards as a symbol of palatial power. Similarly, Hitchcock (1997) argues that gestures previously associated with 'female' bronze figurines are co-opted in the production of 'male' figurines after LM IB. Chapter 5 critiqued the ascription of sex to figures in the imagery. However, it is clear that the use of certain symbols in the imagery was intensified during this period. The body-shape remained the same, but the citational power of certain parts of the images, including the style of clothing (the basis of Alexandri's (1994) assignation of gender to the figures, see Chapter 5) and the association between different styles of clothing and gestures, changed.

Imagery of male genitalia in Bronze Age Crete is limited to the ivory figurines of babies from Palaikastro (Evans 1930: 446, f. 310 and pl. 37) and ceramic phalli from some Middle Minoan peak sanctuaries (Peatfield 1992). During the change from the protopalatial to the neopalatial periods the peak sanctuaries became increasingly centralised around the Palaces, more monumental architecture was used in their construction, and more elaborate 'offerings' were left at them (Peatfield 1987). The disappearance of the ceramic figurines and phalli corresponded to the locational changes in the peak sanctuaries. Peatfield (1987) argues that the relationship between peak sanctuaries and palaces changed from one of independence to one of dependence, with the palaces asserting their authority through tighter control over the 'religious' functions served by the sanctuaries. The disappearance of sexual bodies and body parts from the sanctuaries and the corresponding growth of figurative imagery at the Palace at Knossos may reflect a struggle for dominance by the palaces. More importantly, the existence of such tension between the Palace and outlying area, however it was

resolved, is indicative of the hegemonic status of the ideas of the body bound-up with the imagery at Knossos.

The extent of the influence of Crete on the rest of the Aegean and *vice versa* during the Late Bronze Age is still a matter for debate and is closely connected to the rivalry between Mycenaean and Minoan scholars (see Chapter 5). 'Minoanisation' has become the by-word for describing the process through which material outside of Crete that exhibits a similarity in form with material from Crete is understood as being influenced in some way by the Minoans. In numerous instances such material includes representations of the body which have previously been used as the basis for Aegean-wide synthetic analyses of Bronze Age art (e.g. Immerwahr 1990). The material most commonly comes from the Cyclades and the mainland, but 'Minoanised' frescoes have been uncovered as far afield as Tell el-Dab`a, Egypt (see Rehak 1997b for discussion of the Tell el-Dab`a frescoes and a review of the state of research into connections between the Aegean and the Orient). The best-preserved examples of Minoan, or 'Minoanised', frescoes outside Crete are from the LM IA destruction level of Akrotiri, on present-day Thera. The site includes a complex of buildings, none of which are palace-type structures, but many of which include fresco decoration (see Doumas 1992; Hardy *et al.* 1990; Marinatos 1984; Morgan 1988). The frescoes from building 'Xeste 3' include more images of bodies with breasts than do the Knossian images. Furthermore, several reddish-brown figures have indications of penises, although these are far from pronounced. The interrelationships between Minoan Crete and the Cycladic islands, especially Santorini, is a contentious issue (see contributions to Doumas 1978; Hardy *et al.* 1990). The details in the paintings show clear affinities to Knossian imagery (see Cameron 1978; Davis 1990), but the contextualised production and representation of bodies is likely to have been distinct.

The possible contestations and different 'voices' apparent in the different means of representing bodies and the change in the authoritarian use of images of bodies demonstrate that what we see in the images is not necessarily a consensus of ideas on what constituted the defining features of bodies for the Knossians as a whole. The images may have been extremely seductive in their portrayal of a particular 'truth' of the body and opposition to their dictums may not have been explicit. Nonetheless, just as representations in contemporary European and North American society fail to account

for the totality of the actual experiences of people (see Chapter 3), so too the lived experiences of people in and around Late Bronze Age Knossos may have been at odds with the dominant forms of representation made explicit in the imagery.

Part 3: *Masculinity and Archaeology*

Chapter 9: Conclusions: Masculinity and Archaeology

Introduction

'Masculinity' in the contemporary West is indivisible from the structure of sexual difference. In the Knossian imagery there is no 'male' body that is used in a decisive way to mark difference. Therefore, in the context of the images, 'masculinity' makes no sense as a monolithic entity which is marked by its difference to other bodies. Using the rubric of the sex/gender split an exploration of masculinity would involve the cultural elaboration of an uncomplicated male body defined by a penis. However, in the Knossian figurative imagery, such a body is not distinguishable. Rather, a single body-shape uncut by sexual distinctions is displayed. The sex/gender split and studies of masculinity which use cross-cultural evidence reify a particular idea of the male body. However, the corporeal premise which founds the categories 'men' and 'masculinity' through their association with a male body are not present in the images at Knossos. This is not to suggest that the absence of penises in representation means that penises are not implied, nor that the potential differences between bodies is dissolved or disappears. The lack of penises in contemporary art and illustrations does not mean that the penis is not central to a male body in contemporary society. However, those illustrations and artworks use the presence of other attributes to consistently refer back to a dual structure male/female. A clear-cut division into male/female, or any two categories of identity based on bodily differences, does not occur in the Knossian imagery. The exceptions to the colour convention are all explained away and fitted into one scheme or another of the binary division male/female by Minoan scholars. However, the inconsistencies that become apparent on close examination of the arguments put forward (see Chapter 5) reveals that the images are falsely divided into two categories. The inconsistencies of such a project are not openly discussed by Minoan scholars, although an unease can be felt at times (e.g. Cameron 1987b). However, the difficulties in even imagining that contemporary categories of the body are not timeless structures is one reason for the reticence of Minoanists on the possibility of exploring their material in different ways. The male/female binary appears so seductively 'natural' and normal, and the colour convention appears to work so

neatly. However, the attributes in the imagery do not consistently align themselves into two categories which would make-up for, or signify, the absent core gender present on the surface of the bodies. 'Masculinity', therefore, becomes a highly problematic term to employ in relation to the Knossian figurative imagery.

This thesis has concentrated on both a critique of contemporary ideals of masculinity, arguing that those ideals are not experienced in a pure form, and a critique of male/female as extra-social categories of identity which are based on a 'natural' body. This chapter explores the implication of these critiques for the archaeological exploration of 'masculinity' in the past. In the first section it is argued that current ideals of masculinity, including ideas of what constitutes a male body, are naturalised by projecting those ideals onto past societies. Minoan archaeology plays a particular part in such a process through its position as the 'lynch-pin' between pre-classical and classical society. The following section discusses whether 'masculinity' as an object of study can be assumed to exist, or have existed, in non-Western or historically distinct contexts. Through a discussion of recent work on masculinity and ethnography the limited descriptive power of the term 'masculinity' in other cultural contexts becomes clear. The inapplicability of the term for archaeological analyses such as that of the imagery from Late Bronze Age Knossos is explored further through a discussion of the fragments of fresco with black and red figures found near the Palace site (see Chapter 5, pp.165—6; Fig. 5.13). Rather than basing interpretation on the assumption of a division into two coherent bodies, it is argued that an analysis should focus on the many possible ways bodies are differentiated from one another and the relative importance attached to different parts of bodies. The recognition of genital differences in past societies need not imply that identification focused exclusively on a binary division based on such differences. It is argued, therefore, that the focus of inquiry should not be an exploration of 'masculinity' in the past, but rather on the conditions under which concepts such as 'masculinity' may have arisen through various understandings of bodies.

The naturalisation of a male body through archaeology

The interpretations made of material from past societies serve to naturalise current notions of social reality. The search for origins is part of that process (see Conkey and Williams 1991; Moore 1995: 52). Although Evans was quick to dissociate the peace-loving Minoans from the war-like Mycenaeans, he maintained that Minoan culture was the pre-cursor of classical Greek culture (see Chapter 5). Evans' account of the uncovering of the 'Cup-bearer' fresco ordains the figure as the earliest known representation of 'modern man':

> [T]he impression made by this discovery at the time of finding, when as yet no real portrayal of this mysterious Minoan race was known, remains ineffaceable. There was something very impressive in this vision of brilliant youth and of male beauty, recalled after so long an interval to our upper air from what had been till yesterday a forgotten world.
>
> (Evans 1928: 707—8)

The importance of Evans' writing on the Minoans and their association with classical Greece lies in his attempt to trace a genealogy of attributes of contemporary masculinity from as far back in time as possible. Such a project justifies those attributes as having antecedents in the distant past, as being the origins of classical Greek, and hence modern, masculinity. If 'male beauty' can be located so early, then not only does Evans valorise 'his' Minoans in the eyes of contemporary people, but he also 'fixes' the evidence to reflect the supposedly 'natural' aspects of contemporary society. Evans' notion of male bodies and beauty is an example of the performative invocation of prior authority. However, the evidence itself does not stand up to Evans' account. The ascription of the category 'male' to the Knossian imagery has been demonstrated to be based on a false corporeal premise (see Part 2).

The projection of contemporary ideals of masculinity and male bodies onto the past serves to reinforce the ideals of the present. As a result, not only are differences in the material of past societies obscured or obliterated, but current ideals are seen as natural. Consequently, the contradictions between ideals of masculinity and actual lived experiences of many men are obscured. Dissolving the naturalness of the ideal and

exposing the impossibility of actually embodying that ideal (see Chapter 3) is an important part of the process of de-naturalising the past, of letting the differences inherent in the material stand out. Furthermore, recognising the false ontology of the category 'man' calls into question the ways in which archaeologists ascribe 'masculinity' to supposedly male bodies in the past.

Male bodies, masculinity and ethnocentrism

Men's Studies writing on masculinity has been accused of being anthropologically naïve (Lindisfarne and Cornwall 1994: 29). The question of the applicability of the term 'masculinity' in a non-Western cultural context is of crucial importance to archaeological enquiry. Masculinity has been recognised to be about more than just men: it has ideological, symbolic and structuring effects throughout society (e.g. Sedgwick 1995). However, the ultimate referent of 'masculinity' must be the opposition between a male body and a female body, neatly bounded and defined by absence/presence of genitalia. The sex/gender split purports to allow a non-referential status to gender—to masculinity and femininity—which frees it from biological constraints. Masculinity and femininity, however, are ultimately derived from the male/female dichotomy. Therefore, even when masculinity is understood to have effects far beyond the characteristics of a particular sexed body or the individual attributes of a gendered person, the ultimate referent of those manifestations, the source of their symbolisation, is a male body defined by a penis. Masculinity refers to a description of the valorisation of contemporary practices, including the institutionalisation of masculine hegemony. However, once the referent is no longer a body defined by a penis, then masculinity becomes a problematic concept to employ.

The paradox of using masculinity as a descriptive and analytical term in other cultural contexts is demonstrated by Connell (1993) when he argues that the limitations of studies of masculinity are illustrated by their 'startling ethnocentrism', but who then reinstates masculinity as having universal significance. Connell (1993: 600) observes that a 'discourse of "masculinity"' has been constructed out of the experiences of five

percent of the world's population of men. It is remarkable, he argues, that the 'men-and-masculinity' research should be so incurious about 'other civilisations and other periods of history' (*ibid*). In recognising the cultural specificity of masculinity, Connell (1995: 43) argues: 'There is no masculine entity whose occurrence in all societies we can generalise about'. Connell (1993: 601) further argues that using ethnographic material could lead to a 'comparative sociology of masculinity' capable of challenging many of 'our culture's received notions'.

However, the paradox in Connell's argument lies in the use to which he applies comparative ethnographic material. Contemporary studies of Western masculinity which ignore such material are not ethnocentric if they aim to explore current Western ideas of masculinity. They can be accused of being anthropologically naïve insofar as alternative understandings of gender may shed light on received notions of sex and gender in contemporary society. Rather, the ethnocentrism lies in Connell's own use of anthropological and ethnographic material as evidence for a universal referent of masculinity, albeit masculinity in different institutional settings. Even though Connell (1993: 601) denies a simplistic definition of masculinity as the reified partner of femininity, he repeatedly refers to masculinity as being about men. He argues that the 'object of knowledge' in a study of masculinity is '*men's places and practices in gender relations*' (*ibid*., original emphasis). Connell (1993: 602) argues that such a definition includes the object of study of sex-role and 'personality research' with their focus on individual psycho-dynamics, but also encompasses the realisation that 'masculinity as personal practice cannot be isolated from its institutional context'. Within the contemporary organisation of gender, Connell (*ibid*) isolates the state, the workplace or labour market, and the family as the main institutional boundaries of gendered practices. Whilst drawing attention to the increased globilisation of Western culture and hence the disappearance of 'intact, separate cultures', he argues that ethnographers have 'come up with accounts of local constructions of masculinity very different from the mid-Atlantic norm' (Connell 1993: 601). However, he retains an essential quality to masculinity regardless of 'local' accounts when he argues that: 'Masculinity and femininity are inherently relational concepts, which have meaning in relation to each other, as a social demarcation and a cultural opposition. This holds regardless of the changing content of the demarcation in different societies and periods of history' (Connell 1995: 44).

Connell (1993: 601) has defined masculinity as being about 'men's places and practices' in gender relations and then referred to 'local constructions of masculinity' as differing from our own. He has mapped a contemporary understanding of masculinity as being implicitly about a sexed, male body as primary to identity onto alternative cultural contexts. Connell (1993: 605) concludes his historically and culturally alternative survey of masculinity by stating: 'Indeed, I am forced to wonder whether "masculinity" is in itself a culture-bound concept that makes little sense outside Euro/American culture'. He further admits the complicity of current understandings of masculinity with the growth of individualism and the merging concept of the self in early modern-European culture (*ibid.*: 606). Connell (*ibid.*) subsequently dismisses such misgivings by arguing that 'Euro/American' culture is 'dominant in the world now'.

Connell's (1993: 605) worry about the culture-bound status of the concept of masculinity is based on the observation of 'genuinely different institutionalisations of gender in different culture areas'. More crucially, however, his arguments rely upon the naturalisation of a particular concept of the body. Connell (1993: 602) argues that masculinity cannot be 'abstracted' from sexuality. He sees such a move as reflecting an assumption that 'sexuality is pre-social, a natural force belonging to the realm of biology' (*ibid.*). In the following sentence Connell (*ibid.*) releases sexuality from its assumed pre-social status, but he implicitly leaves 'the body' as the referent of the pre-social: 'But while sexuality addresses the body, it is itself social practice and constitutive of the social world'. Hence, Connell's (1993: 597) stated aim that the '[h]istoricity of "masculinity" is best shown by cross-cultural evidence on the differing gender practices of men in different social orders' is an appropriative act in which 'masculinity' (which must refer to men who are defined on the basis of a pre-social body) is assumed to have universal significance. The paradox is that Connell argues that masculinity must be studied in its historical and cultural contexts if such studies are to avoid charges of ethnocentrism, yet his text demonstrates that masculinity cannot be dissociated from a male body. Rather, the universal status of a male body itself is called into question by ethnographic evidence (see Chapter 3). Connell unintentionally reveals the inapplicability of the term 'masculinity' in discussions of alternative cultural and historical contexts by linking that term irrevocably to a transcendental idea of a male

body. He is talking about the same thing ('men') in different contexts. His argument relies upon differing 'institutional organisations' of an uncomplicated male body.

The paradox in using cross-cultural evidence to expose the constructedness of Western ideas of masculinity and then reapplying those ideas to such cross-cultural contexts is revealed by a discussion of the fresco fragments of black and red figures from the site of Knossos (Fig. 5.13). The appearance of black figures in the imagery reveals both the non-binary means of categorising by colour in the fresco imagery and the inapplicability of the term 'masculinity' in describing identities from Late Bronze Age Knossos as they are presented in the images.

The largest fragment found was called 'The Captain of the Blacks' by Evans (1928: 755—7) and the title has been retained by all subsequent Minoan scholars. Evans (1928: 756) explained the black figures as a troop of Black mercenaries lead by a Minoan captain. Evans (*ibid.*) was at pains to stress the importance of the figures, arguing that:

> The actual enlistment of black troops [by the Minoans] may be regarded as a symptom of conquest and colonial expansion on the African side, and their employment on European soil is closely paralleled by the part played by 'Turcos' and Senegalese troops in more recent warfare.

As argued in Chapter 6, there is no reason to assume that the second fragment of fresco with a portion of a black head did not precede rather than follow the red figure. Furthermore, the explicit colonialism of Evans' interpretation of the figures works to cast the supposed representation of Blacks as distinct from the convention used to represent Minoans themselves. The colour convention traditionally used to gender figures in the images is based on an arbitrary distinction between two colours: red and white (see Chapter 5). However, in the case of the black figures colour is assumed to apply to an ethnic, not gender, distinction. The tendency to view other colours as denoting race is further revealed by the assumption that the yellow bull-leaper figure from the Tell el-Dab'a fresco represents an Asian (e.g. Rehak 1994: 78, n.7). Accordingly, colour is understood by Minoan scholars to denote male/female in the case of the Minoans but is understood to mark ethnicity in all other instances. Interpreting the colour in those instances as marking race is both implicitly sexist and reveals the limitations of the categories used to describe identities in particular

archaeological contexts. Sex is seen as being of primary importance to the Minoans—as their principle means of categorising people—but ethnicity is their primary means of marking all other peoples. Furthermore, men are assumed to be the common denominator of the ethnic identities so marked. The question of how Black or Asian women were represented in the art is never addressed. Other societies become equated with male societies, defined primarily by colour. As in Evans' account of the origins of 'male beauty', the Minoans are 'Europeans' and it is implied that we have access to their forms of social organisation: African or Asian societies become 'Other'. The cultural and historical gap between contemporary society and Minoan society should make them as 'Other' as any other society. However, Minoan society again becomes the earliest referent of Western ideas of bodies.

The existence of third or fourth colours does not imply that third or fourth genders were present if the ethnic referent is taken away. Rather, what becomes obvious is that gendered identity is far more complex than a simple binary relation of male/female. If white and red are referring to male and female, then it becomes apparent that they are not the unique nor primary markers of difference in the Knossian imagery. The colours are cross-cut by other means of differentiating figures in the imagery. Just as masculinity is more than just sexed differences in current practices, so too the representation of identity in the images is more than merely male/female. The existence of other means of identifying become apparent once the inconsistencies of the colour convention are highlighted by the existence of third and fourth colours. Once these additional colours are added to the repertoire of cross-cutting means of differentiation examined in Chapters 6 and 7, then identification can be seen to be a complex interpolation of numerous variables, none of which referred back to a sexed body defined by the presence/absence of genitalia. Whether or not the Minoan representation of the 'Other' is as straightforward as Evans assumed, the fact remains that colour refers to more than just genital sexed differences or ethnicity. Instead, the alternative colours can be understood as further instances of identity being marked and mixed. As with the other images discussed (see Part 2), colour serves to differentiate broadly between the black and red figures who share a common body-shape. The style of clothing is also the same on both figures. The details of the clothing, however, are what mark each figure out from the next. The exclusivity of colour as a major grouping

is brought into question by the common body-shape and the common style of clothing: there are far more similarities between the bodies being depicted than there are differences.

Male/female, bodies, and archaeology

Archaeological explorations of gender in the past need to move beyond the sex/gender split and the consequent reification of a model of the body as an inevitable binary relation of male/female, to a consideration of how bodies come to *matter* and to take on the appearance of substance. The realisation that bodies can be conceptualised in alternative ways and that the constellation of attributes that make parts of bodies more or less significant is becoming apparent from recent anthropological and archaeological research. For example, androgyny is another way of conceiving of sexed differences by thinking of people as containing capabilities of both men and women (see Strathern 1988; Broch-Due *et al.* 1993). However, the concept of androgyny is still founded upon a relationship between two distinct genders defined by sexual characteristics of the body, which is an inappropriate model for the Knossian imagery where physical sexual characteristics (breasts) are a transient aspect of bodies. It is clear from Roscoe's (1996) research on the berdache that a binary or monist model need not apply to categories of identity, which can be better understood as the performative enaction of identities in which the relation between two genitally distinct bodies is neither immutable nor central.

Moore (1993: 281) argues that part of the reason for a return to the body in anthropological research is due to an unease about biological facts, about perceived irreducible biological differences between men and women. The body is referred back to as a primary category. She further argues that anthropologists often treat local discourses as purely metaphorical whilst according Western observations of biological differences a status as literal (*ibid.*). Moore (*ibid.*) stresses that views about the body are actualised by various beliefs rather than simply being represented by them. Discourses—scientific and otherwise—are therefore *both* metaphorical and literal. The

discourses which imbue masculinity with its signifying, structuring and material power actualise ideas about the male body rather than those discourses merely describing a male body. Connell's (1993, 1995) attempts to include cross-cultural evidence in his theories of masculinity ultimately reinstate masculine and feminine as two immutable and founding features of all societies. What he is describing is one belief system of the body imposed onto other, possibly disparate, systems. Connell is fuelling the discursive production of perceived differences between male and female bodies, rather than representing or analysing them through his discussion. His ideas may work as a description of Western discursive ideals, but when extended to ethnographic and anthropological material they merely serve to colonise potential differences. The Knossian figurative imagery actualises a discursive ideal of bodies in which male/female is not accorded a primary role. Bodies defined by sex are not a primary category nor an irreducible fact in the imagery. Understanding masculinity and femininity as inherently relational, binary, and primary to identity disallows such an interpretation of the material.

The recognition of alternative conceptualisations of the body is apparent from anthropological (see Chapter 3) and archaeological research (see Asher-Greve 1997). However, usurping the primary importance of genitalia to categorisation is a harder task. Genital differences are probably recognised in the vast majority of societies. However, the salient point is to dissociate sex from body, body from 'natural', and consequently to usurp sexed difference as the primary and foundational marker of difference. The creation of meaning includes the creation of meaning around the sexed body. Persons in other cultural contexts may not be gendered or 'personed' primarily on the basis of genitalia that are visible at birth. In some Native North American communities the genitals of infants were manipulated and massaged in order to ensure that the infant became an adult of whichever sexual category (Roscoe 1996: 342—3). Not only does such behaviour highlight the literal discursive construction of sexed differences, of the meanings associated with genitalia, but more crucially it demonstrates that physical differences at birth are not necessarily immutable, conceived of as 'natural', nor guarantors of identification. Furthermore, Roscoe (*ibid.*) explains that the genitals were not the only parts of infants' bodies that were 'massaged'—other body parts included the face, nose and eyes. Such practices are radically different from Western

understandings, as demonstrated by the 'Dark Secrets' program (see Chapter 3, pp.58—9). In Western society one is gendered at birth, or even before birth, on the basis of genitalia. In other societies the body may not have been conceived of as already marked by gender. For example, the lack of emphasis on sexed body parts in the Knossian imagery is paralleled by an increased emphasis on hands and thumbs. The thumb is always visible and clearly depicted away from the fingers of the hand. Winter (1996: 12—3) argues that the Akkadian stella of Naram-Sîn demonstrates a local connection between the necessary visibility of the perfection of the right hand side of the body and divine kingship. Similarly, the thumb may have had especial significance to the Knossians; all figures show them clearly and the extra body parts that were recovered with the faience and ivory figurines included three right arms and three left arms. The hand of one of the ivory arms (Fig. 7.12) is highly detailed and the thumb is shown clearly. Different body parts were clearly being valorised in the Knossian imagery.

Genital differences are an obvious means of differentiation, but there has been too much emphasis placed on them. Particular parts of bodies have been afforded too much weight in determining social structures and have resulted in an over-emphasis on particular capabilities of different bodies, such as the reproductive capacity of some women. It is becoming increasingly clear that contemporary Western identities are made up of the interpolation of many different discourses such as gender, race, age and class (e.g. Berger *et al.* 1995a; Butler 1993; Moore 1994a). If one can assume that a similar complexity of identity formation and variety of potential subject positions existed in past societies, then it is not difficult to imagine that other differences, visibly of the body or otherwise, were afforded greater weight in the categorisation or differentiation of persons in those societies. The Knossian imagery, whilst probably representing the justification of a particular regime associated with the practices at the Palace site (see Chapter 8), nonetheless demonstrates the representation of bodies differentiated other than by recourse to a male/female binary as an essential and primary quality of those bodies.

The performative production of ontologies of the body

'Performativity' is a conceptual tool that enables an understanding of how different regimes justify and hide their production and naturalisation of ideas of bodies and how those ideas actualise particular bodies through discourse. It is not a universal theory. Rather, its applicability to archaeology is in recognising the performative production of bodies as sexed in contemporary society, the contingency of that production, and therefore the possibility of alternative ontologies of bodies operative in other cultural contexts. Butler's (e.g. 1990a, 1993) work is extremely useful in conceptualising or understanding how a particular type of body comes to be seen as natural and pre-social and the role that physical sexual differences may be afforded in that process. The creation of ontologies of the body is unlikely to be an exclusively contemporary Western preoccupation. The particular mechanisms of the creation of ontologies of the body and the symbolic associations and metaphorical mobilisations that they are productive of, and produced by, are likely to be historically and culturally specific. Butler (1990a: 139) asks us to consider gender as a 'corporeal style' which is both intentional and performative, 'where performative suggests a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning'. Further, she argues that 'the body is not a "being" but a variable boundary':

> Consider that the sedimentation of gender norms produces the peculiar phenomenon of a "natural sex" or a "real woman" or any number of prevalent or compelling social fictions, and that this is a sedimentation over time that has produced a set of corporeal styles which, in reified form, appear as the natural configuration of bodies into sexes existing in a binary relation to one another.
>
> (Butler 1990a: 140).

Gender produces bodies into relations with one another, produces particular corporeal styles. Gender is then taken as the expression of the 'natural' configuration of the bodies it has actually created and maintained by re-enactment. It follows, therefore, that bodies do not have to be configured into sexes that exist in a binary relation to one another.

The berdache are a good model of such a process occurring in an alternative cultural context. Rather than considering the berdache in relation to the normative categories male and female, the implications of the berdache means of identification should be brought back to deconstruct the normative categories themselves. Male and female work in a binary relationship. The berdache model cannot co-exist with that binary model. Therefore, male and female in the berdache communities are not male and female. Rather, they are more berdaches—the process of identification was the same for all categories of identity. By positing that some categories are based on an exclusive relationship with a sexed body but others are not, then we are reinstating a binary relationship in which the berdache can merely oscillate between the two, or be seen as an identity with no means of identification.

Even if primacy is afforded to sexual differences, even if bodies are produced as sexed, this need not be in a relation of opposition. Archaeologists should be looking for the performative production of ontologies of bodies, not for male, female and other, which merely reinstate a binary model in a position of primacy. The focus of enquiry needs to be on the berdache model, rather than third and fourth genders that can only refer back to a binary model.

Conclusions

'Masculinity' cannot be used uncritically in archaeological analyses of disparate cultural contexts if we are to avoid subsuming potential differences in the material. Rather, we should be constantly aware of the structuring power that the symbolic mobilisation of masculine modes of thought and description have on the kinds of analyses we conduct. Even at the level of excavation technique and the recording of 'significant' data such effects are felt. 'Masculinity' is an inappropriate term as it is understood and employed for use in all archaeological analyses because it has to refer back to men, male, and therefore a body defined by a penis. Work such as that by Berger *et al.* (1995a) shows the complexities of masculinity. Masculinity is not just about men—it structures many discourses, including a symbolic order that reifies the

masculine, that casts it as the 'One'. It is a major structuring principle of society which is compelled, reproduced and naturalised through every-day practices. The assumption of masculinity in any shape or form in prehistoric societies reproduces a masculine symbolic economy in the past. It is not hard to imagine a society where physical sexual characteristics were afforded less weight in social interactions and symbolic representations than other salient features of difference. However, masculinity has such a hold on the symbolic economy of Western society that to continue to use the term as a descriptive one will inevitably draw upon a history of usage and a string of assumptions about the structuring of all facets of society.

Archaeologists cannot assume that the evidence of past societies that they come into contact with will have reflected and generated a conceptual system in which the monolithic entity 'masculinity' played a part, especially if they are examining a non-Western cultural context. Descriptions of past societies which conceive of male and female as similar to a Western binary system more often than not reify and help constitute a normative ideal of the body. Archaeologists who use the normative categories male/female in an uncritical way are contributing to the idea of those categories as somehow timeless, 'natural' structures. Recognising the complexities of masculinity and the interplay between individuals' experiences of discursive ideals and how those ideals are perpetuated reveals the inability of descriptive categories to fully describe and the failure of the ideal to reinstate its exact copy. Therefore, retaining male/female as categories in our descriptive language of past societies may be obscuring alternative means of differentiating between persons. Genital differences are commonly used to differentiate between people. However, they are not an exclusive nor primary means of doing so. Male and female as categories do not take into account the multiple morphological possibilities of combining, dividing between, and categorising people, and the meanings that may be associated with different parts of bodies.

However, dispensing with the descriptive categories male and female runs the risk of replacing very real structural and symbolic differences in the relationships between men and women in contemporary society with a lacuna, which, as has been widely demonstrated, is usually filled with 'male' as the default gender. However, retaining the categories often involves retaining an assumption of dominance of men over women, a criticism that has been made of the concept of hegemonic masculinities

(Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994: 23). That is not to imply that relations of dominance do not, or did not, exist. The particular standpoint of the producers and users of the figurative imagery from Knossos as potentially privileged members of their societies must be taken into consideration. The representations are very much of ideals and would not have been commensurate with every person's experience at Knossos. Rather, they are part of the process of the political bounding of the body. Challenging the discursive ideals of masculinity through recognising its failure to encompass all experience, through recognising the localised experiences of men as not equalling those ideals, engenders an understanding of the existence of alternative means of categorising bodies. An archaeological analysis that recognises the specificity of the material under consideration and develops local theories of the production of bodies rather than assuming the universal applicability of the categories male/female, will be more able to account for differences in the past.

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