

THE CHIEFTAIN CUP AND A MINOAN RITE OF PASSAGE*

(PLATE VII)

THE scene carved in relief on a Middle Minoan III–Late Minoan I serpentine footed conical cup or chalice from Ayia Triada has attracted the attention of numerous scholars since its discovery and initial publication.¹ The cup is 11.5 cm in height with a maximum diameter of 9.9 cm. Two male figures are depicted facing each other (PLATE VIIa). The figure on the right (hereafter, figure A), stands before a rendering perhaps of a pillar with even, horizontal, divisions to indicate stone blocks. His hair is arranged in tresses that hang to his waist, one of which is pulled in front of his ear. He wears three necklaces, several arm bands and bracelets, and around his waist, a short belted kilt into which is inserted a dagger. On his feet he wears boots which reach up to his mid-calf and are decorated with horizontal incisions. In his extended right hand he holds a straight staff; his left hand is empty and is thrust back, bent at the elbow. The facing figure (hereafter, figure B), is shorter and more simply attired. His hair appears short and gathered in a top-knot. In his right hand he holds a long sword and in his left, a long-handled object with a curved top, interpreted by some scholars to be a ritual sprinkler.² Around his neck he wears a simple collar, a short kilt is wrapped around his waist, and on his feet he wears undecorated boots which reach to his mid-calf. On the back of the cup are three male figures carrying large flattened animal skins, usually identified as ox hides or shields.³ Only the heads of these males are visible above the ‘hides’. Their hair is worn short in the front and hangs freely behind their ears.

The explanation of the scene on this cup, generally known as the ‘Chieftain Cup’, has depended largely on an analysis of the difference in the height, attire and ‘attitude’ or pose of the two facing figures as well as the identification of the objects held by all of the figures. These explanations can be characterized broadly as either religious or secular in their bias. In the original publication of the vessel, its discoverer, Luigi Paribeni, held the opinion that the scene depicted a military procession or parade, a conclusion based primarily on the sword held by figure B and on his identification of the hides as ‘ox hide’ shields.⁴ The military atmosphere of the scene was developed further by scholars who suggested that an officer, our figure B, is introducing three men, called ambassadors or prisoners of war, who wear stiff leather cloaks, to a youth of higher status, probably a prince.⁵ The apparent youthfulness of the figures has led to yet another interpretation which claims that the cup depicts children at play, one impersonating a prince, another an officer and three impersonating soldiers.⁶

* I am grateful to Ellen Davis, Walter Forehand, Michael Jameson, Susan Jeffords and Michael Vickers for reading my manuscript and making many valuable suggestions. The following abbreviations will be used: PM I, II, III, IV: Sir Arthur Evans, *The Palace of Minos at Knossos* (London 1921–35); Forsdyke: J. Forsdyke, ‘Minos of Crete’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* xv (1952) 13–19; Hood: S. Hood, *The arts in prehistoric Greece* (London 1978); Marinatos and Hirmer: Sp. Marinatos and M. Hirmer, *Kreta, Thera und Mykenische Hellas* (Munich 1976); Zervos: C. Zervos, *L’Art de la Crète néolithique et minoenne* (Paris 1956).

¹ L. Paribeni, *Rendiconti dei Lincei* xii (1903) 324. For other discussions with detailed descriptions see, Forsdyke 13–14; P. M. Warren, *Minoan Stone Vases*

(Cambridge 1969) 37; H.-G. Buchholz and V. Karageorghis, *Prehistoric Greece and Cyprus* (London 1973) 94.1166. For detailed illustrations, see Zervos pls. 534–537; Marinatos and Hirmer pls. 100–2. The cup is in the Herakleion Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 341.

² PM II 792–4.

³ Their identification as ox hides is the more generally accepted. See, e.g., Forsdyke 13. Paribeni (n. 1) 324, understood them to be shields.

⁴ Paribeni (n. 1) 324.

⁵ This interpretation was held by K. Müller, ‘Frühmykenische Reliefs aus Kreta und vom griechischen Festland’, *JDI* xxx (1915) 246 and followed by F. Matz, *The art of Crete and early Greece* (New York 1962) 127.

⁶ Marinatos and Hirmer 144.

It was Sir Arthur Evans who recognized the religious dimensions of the scene by identifying the long-handled object in the left hand of figure B as a ritual sprinkler.⁷ Evans believed that figure B was an officer who held a sword and sprinkler for presentation to the young Chieftain as symbols of the Chieftain's temporal and religious authority. Following Evans, John Forsdyke suggested further that the sword held in the hand of figure B was a 'sacrificial instrument', thereby establishing the identity of figure B as a priest.⁸ The priest is seen by Forsdyke as a participant in a ceremony where the hides of sacrificed bulls were presented to figure A, whom he called a young king.⁹ That a king should receive sacrifices, a ritual appropriate for a god, is explained by his suggestion that the king was a god, in the same way that the Egyptians believed their pharaohs to be gods. Forsdyke maintained that the hides would later be formed into the familiar Minoan figure-8 shaped shields.¹⁰

All of the preceding discussions of the cup recognize a distinction in the status and age of the two main protagonists. This difference is expressed by the greater height and more elaborate jewellery and costume of figure A. Figure B is therefore seen as subordinate and inferior, an idea reinforced by the rather 'deferential' tilt or nod of his head.

I do not mean to question that it was the intention of the artist who carved the vessel to show that figure A is the elder, but to analyze why he appears as such. In fact, the two figures are remarkably similar in the rendering of their anatomical details. The musculature of figure A only appears to be more developed than that of figure B because his torso is rendered frontally, while that of figure B is in the foreshortened $\frac{3}{4}$ view. Incisions articulate the pectorals and rib cage of both figures. Both have slender arms with rather well-modelled forearms and slender, though well-articulated, leg muscles. A vertical incision along the thigh and an incised arc from the knee caps continuing down the shin suggest the internal divisions of their leg musculature. The faces, rendered in profile, are also similar with incisions for the outline of the face and interior details of the frontal eye, lips, and chin to jaw line. Oddly, the curved line extending from the nostril around the mouth to the chin is more deeply cut on the so-called 'youthful' figure B, giving him, on close inspection, a peculiarly and no doubt unintended 'aged' appearance.

The only physical trait which truly appears to distinguish the figures is the manner in which their hair is worn. I believe that by examining the various coiffures which appear on representations of the Minoan male figure it will become apparent that specific hair styles were worn by specific age groups. By studying these hair styles it will also become clear that a specific hair style not only denotes a particular age group, but in some cases denotes distinctions in class and status within that group. I will argue further that the differentiation of the male figures into age groups which appear to correspond to distinctive hair styles suggests the practice by the Minoans of 'rites of passage'. An iconographic analysis of the hair styles of the Minoan male figures, according to age group will articulate the stages of maturation associated with the 'rites of passage'. This analysis will also help to clarify the meaning of the scene represented on the Chieftain Cup which, I believe, can be shown to document a rather restricted and unusual 'rite of passage'.

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF THE MINOAN MALE HAIR STYLES

The youngest children represented in Minoan art are two ivory figurines from Palaikastro

⁷ PM II 792-4.

⁸ Forsdyke 14-15.

⁹ Forsdyke 15 f. Forsdyke pursued the idea that this king was in fact Minos himself, an idea apparently not accepted in subsequent treatments of the cup.

¹⁰ Forsdyke 16. The magical or religious associations of the figure-8 shields was suggested by Forsdyke. For

the motif of the figure-8 shields on an LM IB 'trick vase' rhyton and its cultic associations, see P. M. Warren, 'Minoan Crete and ecstatic religions, preliminary observations on the 1979 excavations at Knossos', in R. Hägg and N. Marinatos, *Sanctuaries and cults in the Aegean Bronze Age* (Stockholm 1981) 156, fig. 6.

dated around 1450 BC¹¹ (FIG. 1A). They show two small children, one standing and one seated. Their scalps are stippled to indicate either short hair or hair as it is growing out, and their softly modelled limbs, lacking in any muscular definition, emphasize their youth. A similar style of hair is depicted on a seal impression of a young child from the Middle Minoan II 'Hieroglyphic Deposit' at Knossos and on a recently discovered ivory head from Archanes.¹²

The most convincing evidence for another age group comes not from Crete but from its 'Minoanizing' neighbour to the north, the island of Thera. The frescoes of the 'Boxing Boys' (FIG. 1B) and the 'Fisher Boys' (FIG. 1C) and, perhaps, too, a terracotta head from Mt Juktas, indicate a hair style whereby the scalp is shaved around individual locks.¹³ A similar treatment of the hair appears in Egyptian representations of the child Horus and of royal princes and princesses.¹⁴ Perhaps the Minoan and Theran fashion ultimately derives from the Egyptian, where youths who wore the Horus locks held positions of secular and religious privilege.¹⁵ The age of the Aegean youths can only be estimated. While the undeveloped musculature of the 'Boxing Boys' seems to suggest early adolescence, the somewhat more developed biceps and shoulders of the 'Fisher Boys' would make them just slightly older. The hair style of the 'Fisher Boys' also seems to indicate a slightly advanced stage of maturity. While their scalps are still shaved, they also appear to have cut their locks fairly short. The cutting of the locks may have been part of the preparations for advancement to the next stage of maturity, the stage represented by figure B.¹⁶

The youthful figure B on the Chieftain Cup wears his hair in a distinctive manner with a small top-knot gathered on his head and short 'bangs' combed forward, as suggested by the parallel, vertical, incisions running across his forehead (FIG. 1D). It appears that the scalp was now allowed to grow and that the short-cut locks of the previous stage were gathered together as the top-knot. A similar hair style is also represented on the kneeling figure on a gold signet ring from Shaft Grave IV at Mycenae.¹⁷ The hair style which occurs on a small group of male figures from the so-called 'Grandstand' fresco from Knossos and on the two figures of acrobats on an intaglio from the Knossos area may be a related variant.¹⁸ On these latter two examples the top-knot seems to have grown longer, to a double 'pony tail', which is still gathered on the top of the head. In the 'Grandstand' Fresco, the row of male heads along the upper tier is distinguished

¹¹ R. C. Bosanquet and R. M. Dawkins, *The unpublished objects from the Palaikastro excavations 1902-1906* (London 1923) 125-7, pl. 27. For convenient illustrations, see Zervos pls. 523 and 530. For their dating in LM IB, see Hood 120, n. 44.

¹² Sealing from Knossos: PM I, fig. 201b; also illustrated in Marinatos and Hirmer, pl. 25, upper. Archanes ivory head: *Ergon* 1982 (1983) pl. 138, upper right.

¹³ The Boxing Boys: S. Marinatos, *Excavations at Thera IV* (Athens 1971) fig. 3, colour pl. D, E, F. Also illustrated in Marinatos and Hirmer, pl. XXXVIII. The Fishing Boys: S. Marinatos, *Excavations at Thera VI* (Athens 1974) fig. 4, pl. 85, 88, 90. Also illustrated in Marinatos and Hirmer, pls. XXXIV. These figures are included with hesitation as they are not strictly Minoan. Nonetheless, the predominance of Minoan artistic conventions and conventions in fashions bore heavily on the corresponding conventions on Thera. On the question of Minoan influence on Thera, see most recently C. Doumas, *Thera, Pompeii of the ancient Aegean* (London 1983) 123-5, 129; E. N. Davis, 'The iconography of the Ship Fresco from Thera', in W. G. Moon, ed. *Ancient Greek art and iconography* (Wisconsin 1983) 3-14. See also papers by M. A. S. Cameron and O. Höckman in C. Doumas, ed. *Thera and the Aegean world I* (London 1978). The terracotta head from Mt Juktas:

Praktika (1974) pl. 177a, b; also illustrated in S. Hiller, *Das minoische Kreta nach den Ausgrabungen des letzten Jahrzehnts* (Wien 1977) pl. 18d, e. I am indebted to Ellen Davis for this reference.

¹⁴ M. Lurker, *The gods and symbols of ancient Egypt* (London 1980) 56-7. C. Müller, s.v. 'Jugendlocke' in *Lexicon der Ägyptologie* III, 274; E. Feucht, s.v. 'Kinder', in *Lexicon der Ägyptologie* III, 427. I owe these references to Ellen Davis. See her discussion of the Egyptian custom in 'Youth and Age in the Thera Frescoes', *AJA* (forthcoming).

¹⁵ *Idem.*

¹⁶ For the cutting of the 'Horus locks' as part of an Egyptian rite of passage, see W. Helck, s.v. 'Initiationsriten', *Lexicon der Ägyptologie* III, 157; E. Feucht (n. 14) 427. The evidence for the custom of hair-cutting in classical Greece is discussed by Evans in PM IV 476-82.

¹⁷ Signet ring from Mycenae: Marinatos and Hirmer pl. 230.

¹⁸ 'Grandstand Fresco': PM III 46 f. colour pl. XVI (where the figures are restored); M. Cameron and S. Hood, *Knossos Fresco atlas* (London 1967) pl. II, IIa (for the original fragments); intaglio from Knossos: J. Boardman, *Greek gems and finger rings* (London 1970) pl. 60. Ellen Davis kindly pointed out the representations on the signet ring and intaglio.



FIG. 1. Minoan Male Hair Styles (not to scale). A: ivory figurine from Palaikastro; B: 'Boxing Boy' from Thera; C: 'Fisher boy' from Thera; D: Chieftain Cup, figure B; E: Chieftain Cup, figure A; F: Chieftain Cup, Hide Bearer; G: Figure from Palanquin Fresco, Knossos; H: Harvester Rhyton, 'Priest' (drawings by the author).

from the general sea of faces by their smaller scale as well as top-knots, which Evans recognized as an indication of their youth. As with the 'Fisher Boys' of the previous group, the longer hair would seem to indicate a slightly advanced stage within the same period of maturation now proposed for figure B. The physical development of figure B and that of the figures on the signet ring and gem stone as well as the activities in which they participate would seem to suggest that this group was composed of youths who in age were beyond adolescence and perhaps in their mid-teens.

The hair style which characterizes the following stage appears on figure A (FIG. 1E), on the more powerfully built bare-headed pugilist of the Boxer Vase from Ayia Triada, on the bull leapers of the Toreador Fresco, and is similar to that of the crowd of men on the 'Grandstand'

fresco.¹⁹ In all of these cases the hair is arranged in long, waist-length tresses and, with the exception of the figure from the Boxer Vase, combed with a single lock before the ear. Perhaps the pugilist had tucked his forelocks behind his ears while boxing. In addition, all of the figures in this group have elaborate forehead curls, and all, except perhaps the crowd of males on the 'Grandstand' fresco, wear a rather curious backlock.²⁰ The backlock, which appears to have grown from the top of the head, seems intentionally to have been kept shorter than the other tresses. Perhaps this backlock was formed from the short-cut locks which composed the top-knot and represents a vestigial top-knot, kept thereafter to distinguish the wearer. This group in general comprises representations of the aristocratic Minoan male who seems to be in the prime of his adult life, wearing rich personal apparel and engaging in athletic activities and palatial festivities.

The figures of the hide bearers (FIG. 1F) on the Chieftain Cup belong to yet another group which might also include the 'Cup Bearer' from the 'Procession Fresco' from Knossos, the male figures on the 'Camp Stool' fresco and two figures bearing bowls depicted on a relief carved stone rhyton from Knossos.²¹ While all of these figures appear to wear their hair long, from shoulder length to the middle of the back, it is more simply arranged than that of the previous group. Rather than combing the hair into individual tresses, their hair hangs free, combed behind the ears. The male figures which form this group not only wear a similar coiffure but, in three cases, are engaged in related activities, as bearers of objects in a procession. From the representations of their physiques and the manner of their hair it would seem that the age of this group overlaps with the previous two.

An even simpler hair style appears on a group composed of young men with short hair who are engaged in different sorts of activities. These would include the 'Captain' on the fresco of the 'Captain of the Blacks' from Knossos, the litter bearers on the 'Palanquin Fresco' also from Knossos (FIG. 1G), and the bare-headed singing figures on the Harvester Rhyton from Ayia Triada.²² While their age appears to be within the same range as the last group, their short hair and occupations might distinguish them as belonging to another stratum of society.

The oldest group of males depicted in Minoan art is composed of figures in later maturity. Their hair is cut short and hangs freely over the nape of the neck. A single or several curls over the foreheads of all of these figures and the distinctive backlock on the leading figure from the Harvester Rhyton (FIG. 1H) are the last vestige of their more ornate youthful appearance. Several of the figures in this group wear heavy robes, e.g. the figure on the Harvester Rhyton, and others, on several seal stones, wear long robes and carry staffs or axes, symbols, perhaps, of their priestly status.²³ The same coiffure appears on seal stones which only depict the head of a male figure.²⁴ Although two are bearded and two are without beards, these four representations still belong to the age group of men in later maturity.

¹⁹ Boxer Vase: F. Halbherr, E. Stefani, L. Banti, 'Haghia Triada nel periodo tardo palaziale', *Annuario* lv (1977) 83. For illustrations see Marinatos and Hirmer pls. 106, 107. Grandstand Fresco: PM III 46 f., colour pl. XVI.

²⁰ I would like to thank Ellen Davis for pointing this feature out to me and for her helpful comments on the representations of hairstyles in Minoan art. On the subject of women's hairstyles from Thera as indications of the stages of maturation see her forthcoming note in *AJA* (n. 14). The backlock also appears on the ivory figurine of a youth published in PM IV, fig. 394. The figure is thought, however, to be a forgery; Hood 120, n. 40.

²¹ Cup Bearer: PM II colour plate XII; also illustrated in Marinatos and Hirmer pl. XV. Camp Stool

Fresco: PM IV colour pl. XXXI. For comments on the date of these frescos see Hood 66, 68. For the fragment from the relief carved stone rhyton, see PM II fig. 486; Warren (n. 1) 85, P474.

²² Captain of the Blacks: PM II, colour pl. XIII; Palanquin Fresco: PM II figs. 502, 503; Harvester Vase: Marinatos and Hirmer pls. 103-5; Zervos pls. 552-5.

²³ Harvester Vase 'priest': Marinatos and Hirmer pl. 103; Zervos pl. 552; 'Priests' on seal stones: PM IV fig. 343.

²⁴ Heads of bearded 'priests' on seal stones: Hood figs. 226, 227 (also Marinatos and Hirmer pl. 122, bottom left); Heads of beardless 'priests': PM I fig. 201a; P. Yule, *Early Cretan seals: a study of chronology* (Mainz 1980) pl. 1. 4.

HYPOTHESIS OF A MINOAN RITE OF PASSAGE

Having delineated distinctive hair styles which underscore differences in age and status of Minoan males, I would now propose that the changing of hair style formed part of a social institution among the Minoan aristocracy which celebrated the process of ageing according to the stages of maturation. In many cultures, both ancient and modern, the stages of maturation and the change from one stage to the next are often marked by specific rituals of initiation or 'rites of passage'.²⁵

These 'rites of passage' in general and initiation rites in particular which are characteristic of 'tribal' or traditional societies (at one time called 'primitive' societies), also survived into the Classical period as an undercurrent in certain civic festivals and educational institutions.²⁶ They are felt particularly to underlie certain social institutions preserved in Crete and Sparta.

At the conclusion of one particular civic festival on Crete, the Ekdysia, the young men of Phaistos exchanged the garments worn during their adolescence for the garments denoting manhood, a warrior's costume.²⁷ Participation in this festival marked the final stage in a process of initiation which had begun with the youth's entry into a herd, called the *agela*, entailed a period of seclusion in the country, and ended with his return to society as a fully accepted man.²⁸ The return was thus celebrated with a change in his physical appearance, manifest in a new costume, and the young man was now entitled to join a men's dining club, called the *andreion*. At the conclusion of the Ekdysia, the newly enfranchised young men also participated in mass marriage ceremonies.²⁹

The Cretan civic festival of the Ekdysia thus contains all of the elements which typify the 'rites of passage' to puberty, both in the actual customs as preserved and their symbolic undercurrents.³⁰ The period of seclusion and separation from the mother signifies the departure from childhood, which represents symbolically the death of the initiate. The initiate's return to society symbolizes his rebirth, now as a man, and is accompanied by a change in appearance to signify his newly achieved adult status.

Several scholars have recognized that this cycle of symbolic death and rebirth, enacted in the social setting of a puberty rite, also corresponds in a mythological setting to the Cretan story of Glaukos, the son of Minos.³¹ The narrative relates the disappearance of Glaukos during puberty, his death in boyhood, and subsequent rebirth. These events which occur in a mythological structure are parallel to the elements which compose the social institution for a rite of passage. According to a version preserved by Apollodorus (III 3), Glaukos was found only after his father, Minos, had consulted the Kouretes, the semi-divine beings who were noted in antiquity for their

²⁵ The term 'rite of passage' appears first in the seminal work by A. van Gennep, *Les rites de passage* (Paris 1901; trans. *The rites of passage* Chicago 1960). For a more recent study, see M. Eliade, *Rites and symbols of initiation* (New York 1958). The following discussion is based largely on these sources. The suggestion that changes in hair styles correspond to stages of initiation in Minoan Crete has also been made by C. Verlinden, *Les statuettes anthropomorphes crétoises en bronze et en plomb, du IIIe millénaire au VIIe siècle av. J.-C.*, *Archaeologica Transatlantica IV* (Louvain-la-Neuve 1984) 94-6. On the meaning behind haircutting and growing rituals and their relation to various social institutions, including initiation rites, see E. Leach, 'Magical hair,' *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* lxxxviii (1958) 147-164. I am grateful to Professor Anthony Paredes for this reference.

²⁶ Eliade (n. 25) 108-109. The most comprehensive study remains H. Jeanmaire, *Couroi et Couretes* (Lille 1939). For a recent study which recognizes the survival of a Bronze Age initiation rite in an Athenian festival of

the Classical period, see W. Burkert, 'Kekropidensage und Arrhephoria', *Hermes* xciv (1966) 1-25.

²⁷ Ant. Lib. *Met.* 17. This passage is cited and discussed by R. F. Willetts, *Aristocratic society in ancient Crete* (London 1955) 120-2; R. F. Willetts, *Cretan cults and festivals* (London 1962) 175-6. The following discussion of Cretan social institutions of the post-Bronze Age which related to age distinctions largely derives from the studies of Willetts. The main Classical source is Strabo x 480-2.

²⁸ Willetts 1955 (n. 27) 120-2; Willetts 1962 (n. 27) 175-6.

²⁹ Willetts 1955 (n. 27) 121.

³⁰ Idem.

³¹ Willetts 1962 (n. 27) 63-7. See also P. Callaghan, 'KRS 1976: excavations at a shrine of Glaukos, Knossos,' *BSA* lxxiii (1978) 1-30, especially 24-9, for the identification of a hero shrine to Glaukos at Knossos and a discussion of its cult and concomitant role in initiation rites.

role in protecting the infant Zeus from Kronos while Zeus was hidden in the cave on Mount Dikte.³²

These same Kouretes figure prominently in the interpretations of a document which is considered by many scholars to be evidence for a Cretan social custom involving another element in the cycle of initiation rites. This fragmentary poem, known as the Palaikastro or Dictaeon Hymn of the Kouretes, was found near the Temple of Dictaeon Zeus at Palaikastro in eastern Crete and was inscribed on a stone, perhaps in the third-century AD, copied from a fourth or third-century BC text.³³ Some scholars believe that the Kouretes were a group of young men who have themselves already been initiated into a special 'order' and who will in turn initiate others into their ranks.³⁴ In their role as initiators, the Kouretes abduct the initiates from their mothers, take them into the woods to teach them the skills of hunting and dancing and then return them as 'newborn, grown youths, full members of their tribe'.³⁵

A passage in Strabo (x 483-4) which quotes Ephoros' comments on the love affairs between Cretan young men and youths has also been understood by many scholars actually to describe a 'primitive' initiation ceremony.³⁶ A man would select a particular youth, called a *parastatheis*, who was distinguished not only for his comely appearance but by his courage and manners, and with the help of the boy's friends, capture and take him to the abductor's *andreion*. After having given the boy presents, the abductor, called the *philetor* or lover, would take him into the country, accompanied by the friends who helped in the abduction, and spend two months hunting and feasting. At the end of this period, the lover would give the youth three gifts which were in fact, required by law: military garb, an ox and a drinking cup, as well as other, unspecified but costly gifts. Upon returning to the city, the youth sacrificed the ox to Zeus and feasted with his friends. After this episode, the *parastatheis* continued to receive honours. In dances and races he would hold a special place, and was permitted to dress in special clothing so that, when he had grown to manhood, his distinctive dress denoted his adult status as *kleinos* ('famous' or 'renowned').

This passage contains all of the familiar elements which suggest the enactment of a rite of passage celebrating an initiation into a select group: the separation from society, a period of seclusion in the country in the company of an elder who will teach the initiate the required skills, in this case hunting, and the return of the initiate to society, having achieved a new status, signified by a change in appearance. This change was made manifest by the special garments he was now permitted to wear.

H. Jeanmaire has suggested that the passage testifies to the means by which a particular cast of aristocratic warriors was recruited from among the citizenry and that this caste was officially or legally recognized.³⁷ R. F. Willetts, however, suggested that the passage might document a Minoan initiation rite whose participants were the elite corps of aristocratic youths that Evans also believed to have formed part of the court life at Minoan Knossos.³⁸ The initiate's sacrifice of an ox is a ritual that Willetts derives from the Minoan practice, thus supporting his notion of a Minoan origin for the rite.³⁹

³² Strabo (x 468). For additional references, see Willetts 1962 (n. 27) 216, n. 113.

³³ The text was originally published by R. C. Bosanquet, 'The Palaikastro Hymn of the Kouretes', *BSA* xv (1908-9) 339-56 and G. Murray, 'The Hymn of the Kouretes', *BSA* xv (1908-9) 357-65. For a recent study of the poem, see M. L. West, 'The Dictaeon Hymn to the Kouros', *JHS* lxxxv (1965) 149-59. I owe the latter reference to Michael Jameson.

³⁴ This interpretation was first proposed by J. Harrison, *Themis* (Cambridge 1927) 16-29. See also, M. P. Nilsson *The Minoan and Mycenaean religion and its survival in Greek religion* (Lund 1949) 546-51; Willetts 1962 (n. 27) 211-4.

³⁵ Harrison (n. 34) 20.

³⁶ Ephoros *FGH* 70 F 149 (Strabo X 483-4). For this interpretation see Harrison (n. 34) 27 n. 4; Jeanmaire (n. 26) 450-5; Willetts 1962 (n. 27) 116-17, 205; W. Burkert *Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassischen Epoche* (Stuttgart 1977) 391-2; W. Burkert *Structure and history in Greek mythology and ritual* (Berkeley 1979) 29.

³⁷ Jeanmaire (n. 26) 453-4.

³⁸ Willetts 1962 (n. 27) 116-17; PM IV 397.

³⁹ Willetts 1962 (n. 27) 117. On the evidence for Minoan bull (ox) sacrifice, see J. A. Sakellarakis, 'Das Kuppelgrab A von Archanes und das kretisch-mykenische Tieropferitual', *Præhistorische Zeitschrift* xlv

Willetts also speculated that the pattern of this particular ritual bears a marked similarity to the myth of Zeus and Ganymede. He recognized traces of a Minoan initiation rite in this myth by recalling statements of Plato (*Laws* 636d), who believed that the myth was invented by the Cretans.⁴⁰ A version of the myth recorded by Athenaeus (xiii 601 f.) maintains that the abductor of Ganymede was not Zeus, but King Minos himself. In this same vein, I would suggest that the myth of Ganymede, with the substitution of Zeus for Minos during the Classical period, might actually have been created as an apology or justification for this same, rather 'specialized' Cretan initiation rite, which had its origin in the Minoan era. Thus, the myth recorded by Athenaeus, which sees Ganymede as the cup-bearer to the legendary Minoan king of Knossos, would be the original and most authentic version. This initiation rite, as Ephoros described it, comprised the abduction of a youth by a young man who gave a drinking cup to his abducted lover as part of the three gifts required by law. The role of Minos then would not merely be a Classical interpolation but the vestige of an authentic tradition that had its background in a Minoan social institution.

As stated above, a Minoan origin for this initiation rite was suspected by Willetts, based on Evans' hypothesized youthful corps of palatial elites and the sacrifice of an ox. Keeping in mind the passage by Ephoros, the so-called Chieftain Cup may now be interpreted in a new light and, in addition, may substantiate the suspicions that the post-Bronze Age Cretan rite of passage originated with the Minoans. I would suggest that the long-haired figure A is not receiving but is actually presenting the military gear, an ox hide and the cup itself to the top-knotted figure B as the gifts which Ephoros states the *philetor* offers his chosen one, the *parastatheis*, as required by law.⁴¹ Interpreted as such, the scene on the cup would represent the stage of initiation after the period of two months in the country had ended and the participants have returned to society. The ox would have been sacrificed for feasting and the hide turned into the familiar figure-8 shield, as part of the youth's full complement of military gear. The representation of three ox hides on the Chieftain Cup may indicate that three initiation ceremonies were being conducted simultaneously although only one initiate is actually represented. Or it may indicate that in the Minoan period all three ox hides were given to the single initiate, while in the post-Minoan age he received only the one.

The purpose of the cup and how it was used might now also be explained. Ephoros states that the young initiates were called *parastathentes*, literally 'those who stand beside,' but until now the origin of the term has been unexplained. It is at a banquet or symposium that a young serving boy or cup-bearer stands beside the seated or reclining banqueter, just as Ganymede was the cup-bearer who stood beside Zeus or Minos.⁴² I suggest that the initiate was called a *parastatheis* since he would have stood beside his lover at meals in the *andreion* in order to serve him from the cup, here a chalice, given him as a gift by his lover.⁴³ During the period that the

(1970) 135–219. For a study which derives a sacrificial ritual of the Classical period from a Bronze Age predecessor, see E. Simon, *Festivals of Attica* (Wisconsin 1983) 8–12.

⁴⁰ Willetts 1962 (n. 27) 117. This tradition is also discussed in F. Buffière *Eros adolescent: la pédérastie dans la Grèce antique* (Paris 1980) 60–1.

⁴¹ The identification of the object held in the left hand of figure B, the so-called 'sprinkler' remains uncertain (supra n. 7). While it would not at all be inappropriate for the youth to be given an object with a religious significance in the context of an initiation rite, an explanation for the object, closer in date or culture to the Minoans, would be more satisfactory. I would like simply to draw attention to an object well-known in Hittite texts and representations, the *Kalmush*. For a brief discussion and illustrations of these, see E. Akurgal, *The art of the Hittites* (London 1962) 112, 114, 119, 127;

figs. 84, 85, 92. These all show an object held with the curved end at the bottom. For an object held with the curved end at the top, see fig. 101 and K. Bittel, *Die Hethiter. Die Kunst Anatoliens vom Ende des III bis zum Anfang des I Jahrtausend vor Christus* (Munich 1976) fig. 247.

⁴² The representations of Ganymede acting as serving boy to Zeus and representations of youths standing beside dining couches as serving boys are collected in J. M. Dentzer, *Le motif du banquet couche dans le proche-orient et le monde grec du VII^e au IV^e siècle avant J.C.* (Rome 1982). See e.g. pl. 21, figs. 113, 114, 115; pl. 26, fig. 154; pl. 63, fig. 325; pl. 64, fig. 356; pl. 65, figs. 360, 362, 363; pl. 70, figs. 410, 411, 415, 416.

⁴³ To my knowledge there is no attestation for the use of the verb *παρίσταναι* nor of the noun *παρασταθεῖς* in the same sense that I have suggested here. However, its use metaphorically in *οἶνος παρίστα-*

initiate served as cup-bearer, having now completed one initiatory cycle to become a *parastatheis*, he may have undone his top-knot and begun to grow his hair into the style appropriate for the next and higher stage, as a *kleinos*.

I would further suggest that the group of young men with long, freely hanging hair may represent the Minoan counterpart of the young friends of the *parastatheis* who helped in his abduction. These would be the larger, more general body of young aristocrats, Evans' young corps of aristocratic elites, out of whom the young *parastatheis* had been chosen. In Minoan art they appear in representations of processions, both in the palace at Knossos and, according to the Chieftain Cup, at Ayia Triada. Perhaps this larger group of young aristocrats might be distinguished further from the *parastathentes* by the type of chalice they appear to be holding in the 'Camp Stool' fresco. Theirs is either a tall-stemmed chalice with a rounded bowl, like the typical Late Minoan II kylix, or a cylindrical bowl, like the famous 'Nestor Cup' from Grave Circle A at Mycenae.⁴⁴ The form of chalice associated here with the *parastatheis* sits on a low, ringed foot and has a conical bowl.⁴⁵

The origin of the initiation rite preserved in Ephoros and recorded in Strabo has been linked to a Minoan social institution, based largely on the preceding iconographic interpretation of the Chieftain Cup. That this institution continued after the end of the Bronze Age can now be deduced from the archaeological evidence discovered in the recently excavated rustic sanctuary of Hermes and Aphrodite at Kato Syme in the region of Viannou on Crete.⁴⁶ It is here that stone and clay chalices of Middle Minoan III date which are similar in form to the Chieftain Cup were dedicated.⁴⁷ Even more significant is the discovery of two bronze figurines dated to the eighth-century. One depicts a naked male who holds in his hands a chalice with the same conical form as the Chieftain Cup.⁴⁸ The other is a representation of two helmeted but otherwise naked males with erect phalli who stand beside each other holding hands.⁴⁹ Their difference in age is clearly indicated by their difference in height and the nature of their affiliation is apparent from their hand-holding gesture and aroused state.

Kato Syme is also the site that had yielded a series of seventh-century bronze cut-out relief plaques depicting long-haired youths and bearded, long-haired young men who carry hunting paraphernalia and animals for feasting and/or sacrifice.⁵⁰ The finding of these plaques at Kato Syme secured the source for similar plaques in Oxford, Copenhagen and the Louvre.⁵¹ On the

ται, wine improves or becomes fit for drinking (Thphr. CP6.14.10) carries the connotation of maturation and drinking. Another possibly related use, ἵπποισι παρ-εστρωτες (Hp. Ep. 17) suggests passionate devotion. Michael Jameson suggests as possible analogies the Attic παρῶσιτοι, one who dines with a superior officer (Arist. Fr 55) and the Tiryinthian *plati-woinoi*, 'those who take wine beside' (N. Verdelsis, M. Jameson, I. Papachristodoulou, 'Archaikai Epigraphai ek Tiryinthos', *ArchEph* [1975] 150-205). Professor Jameson has also pointed out that the noun παραστάτης from παρίστημι is used in the Athenian Ephebic Oath, of hoplites standing beside their comrades. For a discussion see Sophocles *Antigone* 671, with comments by R. C. Jebb (Cambridge 1902) and P. Siewert, 'The ephebic oath in fifth-century Athens', *JHS* xviii (1977) 102-11.

⁴⁴ On the Late Minoan II kylix with rounded body, see M. R. Popham, *The Minoan unexplored mansion at Knossos*, B.S.A. Suppl. xvii (Oxford 1984) 165-8, pls. 54-8. For the 'Nestor Cup', see G. Karo, *Schachtgräber von Mykenai* (Munich 1930) pl. 109. For a convenient illustration, see Marinatos and Hirmer pl. 210.

⁴⁵ This type was distinguished from the tall-stemmed variety by Warren (n. 1) 36, who, in addition to the Chieftain Cup, includes another stone example from Psaira. For an illustration, see Zervos pl. 489. While there is a difference in date between the 'Camp

Stool' Fresco, which is probably Late Minoan II (Hood n. 21 68), and the Chieftain Cup, which is dated to Middle Minoan III-Late Minoan I, the form of the Chieftain Cup is shown below to have continued in use, albeit restricted, into the eighth-century. The more recently discovered clay chalices from Kato Syme Viannou are discussed below.

⁴⁶ For preliminary reports on the excavations, see A. Lembesis in *Praktika* (1972) 193-203; (1973) 188-99; (1974) 222-7; (1975) 322-9; (1976) 400-7; *AAA* vi (1973) 104-14. For a recent summary in English, see A. Lembesis, 'A sanctuary of Hermes and Aphrodite in Crete', *Expedition* xviii (1976) 2-13.

⁴⁷ For illustrations of these see Lembesis *Expedition* 1976 (n. 46) 8 fig. 5, right; 9 fig. 8-10.

⁴⁸ *AR* 1978-79, 38, fig. 50.

⁴⁹ Lembesis *Praktika* 1972 (n. 46) pl. 188d (also illustrated in Lembesis *Expedition* 1976 [n. 46] 4, fig. 4).

⁵⁰ Lembesis *Praktika* 1972 (n. 46) pls. 191, 192, 193; Lembesis *Expedition* 1976 (n. 46) 6 (also illustrated in Lembesis *Expedition* 1976 [n. 46] 6, fig. 1; 7, fig. 7).

⁵¹ These plaques are illustrated in H. Hoffmann, *Early Cretan armorers* (Mainz 1972) pls. 48-9 and discussed, pp. 32-3. For additional discussion of these plaques, see J. Boardman, *The Cretan collection in Oxford* (Oxford 1961) 46-9.

plaque in the Louvre (PLATE VII*b*), which is among the most completely preserved, two figures face each other. The one on the right, identified by his beard as the elder, has hair bound with two fillets and a beard that comes to a point with a rather fanciful long twist.⁵² With his left hand he holds a bow and long goat's horn and with his right hand he holds the forearm of the facing youth. The youth has long, loosely flowing locks, and a curl over his forehead which bears a striking resemblance to the familiar type of Minoan coiffure as seen, e.g., on figure A of the Chieftain Cup. A sense of intimacy is created between the two figures by the older figure's holding the youth's arm and touching his foot and is further underscored by their mutual gaze.

The iconography of these plaques and the meaning of the eighth-century figurine of the two ithyphallic males may be explained with reference to the passage by Ephoros as representing the young man, the *philetor*, with his willingly abducted youthful lover, the *parastatheis*, during their two month period of seclusion hunting and feasting in the woods.⁵³ From this interpretation it may well follow that the sanctuary of Kato Syme was actually situated in the region where this stage of the initiation rite occurred from the Minoan period onwards. The mountainous region of Viannou would have served well as the locale for the two-month period of seclusion away from the city, hunting and feasting in the country. Evidence from inscriptions proves that the shrine at Kato Syme was visited during the Hellenistic period by worshippers from as far away as Knossos and Tylissos.⁵⁴ During the time that the initiation ritual discussed here may have been in practice, i.e., from the Bronze Age into the seventh-century, the area around Viannou could certainly have been the locale for the participants from the cities of south-central Crete, including the Mesara Valley and the Lasithi Plain.⁵⁵ As a nearby rustic sanctuary it would have served appropriately as a repository for the pairs of 'hunter-lovers' commemorative gifts.

The setting for the other activities associated with the initiation rites described by Ephoros, those of feasting and drinking, is located in the *andreion*. It was here that the *parastatheis* was brought after his abduction prior to the period of seclusion in the country. The Cretan *andreia* normally served as the place where communal meals were taken by its members. Here, too it is suspected that unmarried members of the club could spend the night and guests find lodging.⁵⁶ New members were selected for admission to an *andreion* from among the youths who had earlier been admitted into an *agela*.⁵⁷ Admission into an *agela* functioned as a Cretan social institution for initiating a large body of youths into the status of manhood for training as soldiers.⁵⁸ A possible Minoan prototype for the Cretan *agela* might be the same youthful corps of palace elites whom we have already suggested as the youths depicted on e.g. the back of the Chieftain Cup and on the 'Camp Stool' fresco. The social institution described by Ephoros, however, and argued above to have originated in the Minoan period, represents an even smaller and more elite class. The *parastathentes* were probably chosen out of the herd and received special attention by a member of an *andreion* whom we can suppose was himself a *kleinos*.⁵⁹ I maintain that it was at the meals held in the *andreion* that the *parastatheis* acted as cup-bearer, like Ganymede, to his *philetor*, offering his drink from the chalice given him as a gift of initiation into a new highly distinguished class.

⁵² The stylistic affinity of these figures to Minoan representations was noted by Boardman but denied; see Boardman (n. 51) 47. A connection to Minoan Crete is, however, noticed in R. Hampe and E. Simon, *The birth of Greek art* (New York 1981) 114, where 'the heritage of the Minoan style is still felt'.

⁵³ This interpretation is also suggested by Hampe and Simon (n. 52) 113–14, 292.

⁵⁴ Lembesis *Expedition* 1976 (n. 46) 13.

⁵⁵ I was able to discuss my ideas on the function of the sanctuary at Kato Syme with one of its excavators, Dr Polymnia M. Muhly, at a lecture given by her at the Institute of Fine Arts in New York on March 24, 1985.

She informed me that several of the workmen from the site commuted daily on foot to their homes over the mountains in the Lasithi Plain.

⁵⁶ Jeanmaire (n. 26) 421–7; Willetts 1955 (n. 27) 18–26.

⁵⁷ Strabo X 482; Willetts 1955 (n. 27) 22–4.

⁵⁸ Jeanmaire (n. 26) 425–6.

⁵⁹ Although this is not actually stated, the passage by Ephoros stresses that the *philetor* can only obtain a *parastatheis* if he is socially his equal or superior. The gifts that he is required to give certainly presuppose great wealth.

We may now turn our attention to the implications of such a ritual for the origin of the Cretan social institution suggested by the *andreion*. The institution of communal men's dining is clearly established in the Dorian world, e.g. the Spartan *syssition*. While the relationship between the mainland custom and that on Crete cannot be explained with surety, the considerable Dorian presence on Crete may be cited as evidence that the Cretan *andreion* had its roots in mainland Dorian custom.⁶⁰ However, in view of our interpretation of the Chieftain Cup, we may now consider the possibility that the origin of the *andreion* is to be found in the Minoan era.

The villa at Ayia Triada seems to have functioned in part as a centre for the performance of various rituals or cult activities, as suggested by the rather large number of palatial quality objects found at the site connected with ritual.⁶¹ These would include the stone rhyta, chalices and conch shells of Middle Minoan III to Late Minoan I date as well as a Late Minoan III shrine. Still, the specific function of an important suite of rooms in the villa is a vexing scholarly problem. The rooms, 4, 4a, 49, 12 and 3, until recently identified as the main residential quarter, are now thought by L. V. Watrous not to have all been strictly private.⁶² Watrous has suggested that the main suite, composed of a room surrounded on three sides by benches (room 4), could seat around 17 people and that the kitchen and pantry to the south exceed the requirements for a single family residence. He implies that this room and the adjoining halls 3, 12 and 49, a light well, may have functioned as an audience hall, on the analogy of the Roman *tablinum*, where a patron received clients, aides and supporters, rather than a living area.⁶³ Watrous argues well that we should rethink the function of this part of the villa; however, I would suggest that the Cretan *andreion* may offer a better analogy than the 'audience hall'. Not only does room 4 contain benches suitable for seating or reclining at a banquet, but actual evidence for meals having been eaten there exists in the form of animal bones which were found in the drain of the light well, 49, as well as tripod cooking pots and 20 conical cups discovered in rooms 12 and 49.⁶⁴ The proximity of the pantry (room 15) and kitchen (room 45) only strengthens the interpretation of the primary function of this suite. The rooms identified as bedrooms (4a and 14) by the presence of sleeping platforms are the additional components that would satisfy the architectural requirements for the Cretan *andreion*. The special association of males suggested by the initiation rites for which I have argued would strengthen such an interpretation. This suite of rooms could have served the needs of men in their formal dining and drinking, an activity suggested also by the presence of rhyta and chalices.⁶⁵

Thus the Chieftain Cup may now be understood in its proper setting, and its iconography interpreted in harmony with its function within that setting. It was a chalice given to a youth by the young man who had chosen him to be initiated into a special class within Minoan society. The boy was selected not merely for his beauty but for his bravery and deportment. That bravery would be emphasized as an important character trait is easily understood in light of the activities in which this class of males participated, including boxing and bull games, as witnessed by the Boxer rhyton.⁶⁶ Nor did this elite class disappear with the end of the Bronze Age. The

⁶⁰ On this question, see Willetts 1955 (n. 27) 19–22, 158.

⁶¹ L. Banti, 'I culti minoici e greci di Haghia Triada', *ASAtene* III–V (1941–3) 10–74.

⁶² L. V. Watrous, 'Ayia Triada: a new perspective on the Minoan villa,' *AJA* lxxxviii (1984) 125.

⁶³ Watrous (n. 62) 125 n. 14.

⁶⁴ Watrous (n. 62) 125.

⁶⁵ On the functions of rhyta, see R. B. Koehl, 'The functions of aegean bronze age rhyta', in R. Hägg and N. Marinatos, *Sanctuaries and cults in the Aegean Bronze Age* (Stockholm 1981) 179–88.

⁶⁶ For detailed illustrations see Marinatos and Hirmer pls. 106–7.

In the light of the foregoing interpretation of the

Chieftain Cup it may be worth considering the possibility that the Boxer rhyton also depicts events associated with initiation rites. On the Boxer Vase, see F. Halbherr, E. Stephani, L. Banti (n. 19). For illustrations, see Marinatos and Hirmer pls. 106, 107; see too, J. Coulomb, 'Les Boxeurs Linoens,' *BCH* cv (1981) 27–40. The vessel is divided into four registers depicting athletic events (from top to bottom): a type of boxing/wrestling; bull leaping; boxing with helmets and gloves; boxing without helmets and gloves. The bear-headed figures have been identified above as *kleinoi* based on their distinctive hair style of long lock and vestigial top knot.

Two scholars have recently demonstrated that the origin of the Arcadian festival of the Lykaion and the

rite of passage which was practised by the Minoan elite can now be seen to have been maintained by the Doric-speaking aristocratic population of Crete into the eighth- and seventh-centuries, as suggested by the statements of Ephoros and the interpretation of the bronze votives from the shrine at Kato Syme Viannou. We can see, too, that the idea of this rite, if not the actual practise, survived through the Classical period in the form of the myth of Zeus and Ganymede.

ROBERT B. KOEHL

Florida State University

Olympic games can be traced to initiation rites for adult males. These are respectively, W. Burkert, *Homo necans: the anthropology of ancient Greek sacrificial ritual and myth*, trans. P. Bing (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1983) 84–93 and G. Nagy, *TAPA* cxvi (1986) (forthcoming). I am grateful to Professor Nagy for sending me a copy of his article and discussing the topic with me.

I should like to suggest that the athletic competitions

depicted on the Boxer rhyton form part of the rituals associated with the initiation of a particular class of Minoan young men into adulthood. Here again a Minoan social institution of male initiation rites, now into adulthood, would form the background to the post-Bronze Age institution of athletic events as initiation rites. I hope to take up these ideas in a further study of the Boxer rhyton.



(a) The Chieftain Cup. Courtesy Herakleion Archaeological Museum.



(b) Seventh-Century bronze relief plaque. Courtesy Louvre Museum.



(c) The Temple of Apollo at Didyma: colossal 'window' above pronaos wall.

THE CHIEFTAIN CUP AND A MINOAN RITE OF PASSAGE

THE TEMPLE OF APOLLO AT DIDYMA