

HUMAN-ANIMAL RELATIONS IN BRONZE AGE CRETE

Archaeologists have long admired the naturalistic animal art of Minoan Crete, often explaining it in terms of religion or a love of the natural world. In this book, Andrew Shapland provides a new way of understanding animal depictions from Bronze Age Crete as the outcome of human-animal relations. Drawing on approaches from anthropology and human-animal studies, he explores the stylistic development of animal depictions in different media, including frescoes, ceramics, stone vessels, seals and wall paintings, and explains them in terms of ‘animal practices’ such as bull-leaping, hunting, fishing and collecting. Integrating zooarchaeological finds, Shapland highlights the significance of objects and their associated human-animal relations in the history of the palaces, sanctuaries and tombs of Bronze Age Crete. His volume demonstrates how looking at animals opens up new perspectives on familiar sites such as Knossos and some of the most famous objects of this time and place.

Andrew Shapland is the Sir Arthur Evans Curator of Bronze Age and Classical Greece at the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford. He was previously Greek Bronze Age Curator at the British Museum, where he was co-curator of the exhibition *Troy: Myth and Reality*.

HUMAN-ANIMAL
RELATIONS IN BRONZE
AGE CRETE

A HISTORY THROUGH OBJECTS

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PREFACE

This book has been a long time in the making; it originated in a 2004 Master's dissertation followed by a PhD, completed in 2009, at University College London (UCL) Institute of Archaeology, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board and Arts and Humanities Research Council respectively. I was fortunate to have been supervised in these by Cyprian Broodbank, Louise Martin, Jeremy Tanner and Todd Whitelaw, and am grateful for their advice and guidance during my time at UCL and beyond. Todd also provided me with an introduction to Knossos, through an invitation to take part in the Knossos Urban Landscape Project, a synergasia between the Heraklion Ephorate of Antiquities and the British School at Athens. This provided a wonderful hands-on introduction to the archaeology of Crete, and indeed some of its animals; one morning when I probably should have been looking at the ground for potsherds I noticed a distinctive bird sitting on a fence nearby, a hoopoe, instantly recognisable from the Caravanserai fresco now in Heraklion Museum. Yet it is this romantic moment when past and present seem to merge, as a bird seems to hop out of a Minoan fresco, that this book tries to resist by drawing attention to the gulf between present-day human-animal relations and those of the Bronze Age. The wild goats of Crete, *agrimia*, are easy to spot among souvenirs on the tourist stalls of Knossos but I have never seen one in the flesh, restricted as they are now to the mountains of West Crete and a few islands after almost being hunted to extinction in the twentieth century. Nor do I want to confuse my own, essentially touristic, experience of Crete with that of the present-day local inhabitants or those of the Bronze Age. Each will have encountered different animals in different ways. One of the reasons for highlighting the views of visitors to Crete in this book, particularly those of Sir Arthur Evans and his contemporaries, is to reflect on how outsiders have shaped Cretan archaeology with their various standpoints. My subsequent career path, as a curator at the British Museum and now the Ashmolean Museum, has resulted in an acute sense of the historical background of the discipline of Aegean Bronze Age archaeology. I have been lucky to work daily with objects removed from Crete over the course of more than a century which are both traces of Bronze Age lives and of colonial-era appropriation and exchange. At times, a long history of scholarship and interpretation helps to

trace some of the Bronze Age associations of these objects, but at other times they have become caught up in modern-day concerns. Perhaps human-animal studies is also a modern-day concern, but it helps to highlight the more-than-human relationships of which these objects were once a part, besides their long and complicated route to the collections I work with.

Before turning my attention to animals and objects, I would like to thank the many human collaborators who have helped with this book. Beatrice Rehl of Cambridge University Press first suggested that I turn my doctorate into a book, and has shown great patience as it has gone through a number of rewrites. These, I should say, were the result of the judicious comments and criticisms of two sets of anonymous reviewers. I would like to thank them for helping me move away from a thesis and write a book instead. Ellen Adams, Laura Morley (Preston) and Nico Momigliano kindly read drafts of the book. Andrew Bevan and Carl Knappett examined my doctoral thesis, provided many useful comments and have continued to show an interest in its development. My colleagues at the British Museum and the Ashmolean Museum have also been supportive, but I owe particular thanks to Lesley Fitton, †Ian Jenkins and Paul Roberts, for whom this book has been a familiar item in review meetings.

This book has benefited directly or indirectly from discussions on Aegean Bronze Age archaeology, many of them at Knossos or at the London Mycenaean Seminar, with many people. Those not mentioned above include Lisa Bendall, John Bennet, Camilla Briault, Lesley Bushnell, Gerald Cadogan, Kostis Christakis, †Jo Cutler, Oliver Dickinson, Debi Harlan, Yannis Galanakis, Senta German, Angeliki Karagianni, Thomas Kiely, Antonis Kotsonas, Olga Krzyszkowska (who also generously shared her knowledge of seals with me), Matthew Haysom, Borja Legarra Herrero, Colin Macdonald, Erin McGowan, Margarita Nazou, Kostas Paschalidis, Conor Trainor and Peter Warren. In addition to the Mycenaean Seminar, more formal discussions of the ideas in this book have also taken place in seminars and conference sessions organised by the following: Kristin Armstrong Oma (University of Oslo Seminar on Animals), Jacqui Mulville (International Council for Archaeozoology International Conference), Marcus Brittain, Andy Needham, Nick Overton and Penny Spikins (Theoretical Archaeology Group conference), Chris Watts (Society for American Archaeology Annual Meeting), Dušan Borić and James Whitley (Cardiff University seminar), Branko van Oppen (Animals in Ancient Material Cultures Conference, Allard Pierson Museum), Tatiana Theodoropoulou, Jim Wright and Jenifer Neils (Harvesting the Sea conference, Wiener Laboratory of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens), Yannis Galanakis (University of Cambridge Classical Archaeology Seminar), Irene Lemos and Gian Piero Milani (University of Oxford Greek Archaeology Group and Prehistoric and

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