



The Department of Aegean Archaeology
Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw



presents

The Book of Abstracts

for

THE 3rd YOUNG RESEARCHERS' CONFERENCE IN AEGEAN ARCHAEOLOGY

April 24th, 2015

Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw, Poland

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Animals In Insular Environment:

*The Case Of Bronze Age Crete Through Minoan Art**

Depiction of animals constitutes probably a pivotal choice in Cretan art in the course of the Bronze Age. Whether appearing alone or accompanied by other animals or humans, existent or imaginary and mythological, in a narrative scene or simply in a decorative manner, animal was a lively and -in most of the cases- familiar model for Minoan artist in order to transmit his embedded message.

This paper tries to shed light on that fact with the employment of a statistical approach conducted upon animal figures on three distinct media of representation, each of which is related to a different context of interpretation:

- firstly, animals engraved on seals or stamped as sealings, which constitutes the most populous group, basically focusing on humans in their everyday activities as long as their economic and social transactions within a vibrant community,
- paintings on the surfaces of clay funerary larnakai, associated with burial activities and ancient Minoan's beliefs about the afterworld,
- as exceptionally made frescoes on walls or floors from obviously rich houses, connected with elite groups from big Minoan centers and the need to display their social status in the eyes of their coevals.

Data processing at different periods throughout the Bronze Age Crete leads us to conclude that the meaning of specific animals is not irrelevant to the -anyway- distinctive temperament of ancient Cretans, while it allows us a fruitful insight into human-animal interrelations through time and the evolution of insular fauna, as it has been formed at the transition to the Iron Age.

*This research has been co-financed by the European Union (European Social Fund – ESF) and Greek national funds through the Operational Program "Education and Lifelong Learning" of the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) Research Funding Program THALIS-UOA: Island biodiversity and cultural evolution MIS375910, KA:70/3/11669).