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CENTRAL GREECE AND CRETE IN THE EARLY IRON AGE*

Antonis Kotsonas

INTRODUCTION

Interconnections in the Mediterranean of the Early Iron Age (11th – 7th centuries) attract an increasing volume of studies¹. Nevertheless, the state of research is quite inconsistent largely due to the poor understanding of the material culture of some regions, the stylistic proximity of the archaeological remains of neighbouring areas and the complexities involved in associating an archaeological culture with particular ethnic and other groups. Accordingly, scholars show a consistent predilection for richly documented cases of interconnections, preferably ones supported by literary evidence and/or involving long distance movement of the finest artefacts. As a result, the Phoenician westward expansion², the interactions of the Euboeans with the Eastern and Central Mediterranean³ and the role of the Corinthians in Magna Grecia⁴ have received considerably more attention than the connections between most Aegean regions or the interactions within most other Mediterranean sub-regions.

By focusing on Central Greece and Crete, this paper is aimed as a contribution to discussions of mobility within the Aegean. Central Greece here refers to the zone that encompasses Phokis, Locris, Boeotia and Euboea and largely corresponds with the modern region bearing the same name⁵; Crete, as an island unit, is clearly marked. The ancient literature on the connections between the two regions has long received an extensive treatment⁶, which will not be repeated here. There is further some scholarship discussing the relevant archeological evidence⁷ and considerable background information on the two areas discussed, despite the dearth of research in some of their sub-regions, like West Crete.

* I wish to thank Professor A. Mazarakis Ainian for his warm hospitality in Volos, as well as Professor N. Stampolidis and Dr. I. Lemos for their valuable comments on the paper.

1. The state of research is summarized in the contributions and exhibition catalogue published in Stampolidis 2003.

2. See, for example, Aubet 2001.

3. See, for example, Bats – D' Agostino 1998.

4. See, for example, Pugliese-Carratelli 1995.

5. Thessaly, the second region treated in the conference, does not display archaeologically identifiable links with Crete in the period discussed, excluding a LPG clay vase of probably Thessalian origin that has been found in Knossos (Coldstream 1996, 403).

6. Guarducci 1943-1946 (also mentioning archaeological finds).

7. See mostly: Morgan 1990, 144-146; Lebessi 1996.

THE MATERIAL RECORD

Archaeologically identifiable connections between Central Greece and Crete are currently rare in the record of the end of the Bronze Age and only include a few Cretan ceramic – and perhaps other – exports to sites like Elateia⁸ and Lefkandi⁹. In the Iron Age, however, these connections seem bilateral and diverse, even if not extensive. Anticipating the following account, I note that, already from the dawn of the Iron Age, Central Greece imported Cretan metalwork, whether actual artefacts or influences, while clay vessels and ceramic influences reached Crete from Central Greece, Euboea in particular, reversing the picture for the end of the Bronze Age.

Only a single metal import from Central Greece has been identified in Crete. This is a bronze Boeotian or Attic fibula that dates to 700 and has turned up in the Idaean Cave¹⁰. Ceramic imports are more numerous, even if they only originate from Euboea and no other Central Greek region¹¹. The earliest Euboean clay imports are amphorae and amphoriskoi of the 10th century found in Knossos (for the location of the Cretan sites mentioned see **fig. 1**)¹². This Cretan metropolis has further produced some Euboean, largely open vessels of the 9th and 8th centuries, including kraters and pendent semicircle skyphoi (**fig. 2**)¹³. On the contrary, only one 7th century piece has been identified¹⁴. Limited examples of Euboean pendent semicircle skyphoi have also turned up in other Cretan sites lying in the south-central part of the island¹⁵, namely Kommos¹⁶, Phaistos¹⁷ and Gortyn¹⁸. Gortyn¹⁹, Knossos²⁰ and a few other sites²¹, have further produced kraters and skyphoi with pendent semicircles, which copy Euboean prototypes. Isolated Euboean clay imports²² and imitations²³ have turned up in East Crete,

8. Dickinson 2006, 69: LM IIIC pottery.

9. Popham – Schofield – Sherratt 2006, 230: LM IIIB stirrup-jar in a LH IIIC context and Cretan ceramic traits on local IIIC pottery. Sherratt 2006, 308-309: IIIC links between Lefkandi and Crete.

10. Γκαλανάκη 1990, 174-176. For Boeotian fibulae, some of which carry ships see Coldstream 2003, 204.

11. The identification of a Boeotian import at Itanos (Τσιμποπούλου 2005, 224-225, no. 1) is doubtful.

12. Coldstream 1996, 403, no. 285.124. Coldstream – Macdonald 1997, 235. For an equally early, possibly Euboean closed vessel (amphora ?) from Kommos, see Johnston 2005, 313, no. 5.

13. Kearsley 1989, 40-41; Coldstream 1996, 403-404; Callaghan – Johnston – Bikai – Hayes – Jones 2000, 332-333, no. 9; Coldstream – Macdonald 1997, 237; Coldstream 2000, 284, H39.

14. Coldstream – Macdonald 1997, 239.

15. These imports are overlooked in Descœudres 2006-2007, 9-16.

16. Johnston 2005, 331, no. 75. References to other Euboean imports or influences occasionally appear in discussions of pottery from Kommos (Callaghan – Johnston – Bikai – Hayes – Jones 2000, 239; Johnston 2000, 224).

17. Kearsley 1989, 57.

18. Kearsley 1989, 31; Johannowsky 2002, 52, n. 119 for Rizza – Scrinari 1968, 28, fig. 51, IV, e.

19. Santaniello (forthcoming).

20. Coldstream 1996, 373-4, type Biii; 382, type Cb; Coldstream 2001, 54. The Knossian MPG-LPG low based, capacious skyphoi with pendent semicircles suggest that Euboean prototypes were imported already in the late 10th century (considerably earlier than documented by the known Euboean SubPG III imports: Coldstream 1996, 403-404).

21. These sites include Kourtes (the two vases mentioned in Λεμπέση 2002, 307, σημ.1346 are imitations rather than actual imports), Prinias (Palermo 1994) and Sybritta (Προκοπίου – Rocchetti – D' Agata 1994, 739, pl. 236ε).

22. Hayden 2003, 19, n. 195; 62-63, no. 159 (Vrokastro). Τσιμποπούλου 2005, 50, no. 3-4 (Vrokastro); 83, no. 5 (Kavousi); 112, no. 6 (Kavousi). Nearly all cases are insecure/controversial.

23. Mook 1993, 197, 247 (Kavousi).

particularly Vrokastro and Kavousi, while West Crete has produced even fewer examples: two Euboean late 8th century vases are known from Khania²⁴ and only one (**fig. 3**) of the nearly one thousand vases from Eleutherna I have studied displays some Euboean affinities²⁵. This vase, which dates to the late 8th century, carries a panel that finds parallels in Lefkandi²⁶ and Eretria²⁷. It is, however, attributed to a local workshop, the style of which shows no further correspondences with Euboean pottery²⁸.

In short, Central Greek exports to Crete largely involve Euboean ceramics. The distribution of the latter within the island is limited and seems considerable only in the late 9th - 8th century. Substantial material has only turned up in Knossos, while other sites with comparable, albeit much sparser, record are located either along the island's north coast, or in the western Mesara. Furthermore, the distribution of Euboean pottery in Crete is quite dissimilar to that of the Attic, Cycladic and Corinthian wares, which are often associated with Euboean initiatives in other Mediterranean contexts²⁹. Lastly, only a single metal artefact found in Crete originates from Central Greece.

The move of metal artefacts or influences mostly followed the opposite direction, from Crete to Central Greece³⁰. A bronze fibula of the 11th century that was probably imported to Lefkandi adheres to a type that is mostly found in Crete³¹. It was, however, another class of Cretan bronzes, namely human figurines, that exercised a significant appeal to the plastic arts of Central Greece. This appeal is documented in Euboea already in the 10th century, when the first Euboean ceramics reached Crete. The earliest manifestation of this appeal is identified in the famous Lefkandi centaur. Angeliki Lebessi has demonstrated that the shaping of the hair and the ears of the centaur, the emphatic rendering of his eyes, the groove on his forehead and, mostly, the conception of the head and the body and the gesture of the arms are matched on Cretan bronze works of the time³². Cretan influences of similar nature have also been traced on a later group of bronze figurines from Delphi³³, which are attributed to the local workshop and are assigned to the 8th century³⁴, as well as on comparable works from 7th century Boeotia³⁵.

Delphi has further produced a sizeable collection of Cretan bronzes that date to the late 8th and 7th centuries. According to Rolley³⁶ and other scholars, the collection includes one or

24. Andreadaki-Vlasaki 1997, 231, no. 71-P 0868; 236, no. 70-P 0216.

25. Stampolidis 2004, 250, no. 281; Kotsonas 2005, 112-3, NDP.37; Kotsonas (in press), 114-115. I am deeply grateful to Professor N. Stampolidis for generously inviting me to study and publish this material, which includes complete or nearly complete vases, but excludes thousands of ceramic sherds recovered from the site.

26. Boardman – Price 1980, 68, no.234.

27. Ανδρειωμένου 1982, 162-163, no. 1.

28. Stampolidis 2004, 250, no. 281; Kotsonas 2005, 112-3, NDP.37; Kotsonas (in press), 114-115.

29. References are collected in Crielaard 1999, 61, n. 83. Add Κούπου 1994, 264-265.

30. For some doubtful cases of Cretan clay exports to Lefkandi, see Jones 2000, 130.

31. Catling – Catling 1980b, 237, S40,s.

32. Lebessi 1996; Λεμπέση 2002, 64-65, 251-255. Add another figurine recently discovered at Lefkandi, Xeropolis (Lemos 2006, 91). Interestingly, suppositions for the impact of Cretan bronzes of the Iron Age on Mainland art go back to the work of Arthur Evans (Prent 2005, 69).

33. Rolley 1969, 38-43, nos. 16-22; 101.

34. Rolley 1977, 146; Λεμπέση 2002, 309-311.

35. Λεμπέση 2002, 291, 293, 311.

36. Rolley 1977, 145-146. The useful collection in Jones 2000, 131 n.217; 298, 300-301, 310 includes pieces the Cretan origins of which are doubted by Rolley. For problems pertinent to Jones 2000 see Kotsonas 2005, 234, n.1849.

more³⁷ helmets (**fig. 4**), one ‘mitra’ (protector of the genital area), at least six votive shields (**fig. 5**), five/six or more³⁸ four-sided stands (**fig. 6**), numerous tripods³⁹ and one or two figurines (**fig. 7**). Although the Cretan origins of some pieces is debatable, the quantity and variety of the collection markedly contrast the overall paucity of comparable Cretan exports. Isolated Cretan bronzes are known from Miletus, Lindos, Athens, Dodona and sites in the Italian peninsula or Sicily⁴⁰, while small groups of Cretan bronze weapons have been located in the sanctuaries of Olympia⁴¹ and Bassai⁴², both lying at some distance from the western coast of the Peloponnese. Interestingly, the Cretan bronzes found in western Greek sanctuaries suggest the interests of a male elite with military concerns, while the temporal (second or third quarter of the 7th century)⁴³ and spatial (geographic) distribution of their majority can be related to the foundation of Gela in 689/688⁴⁴.

Returning to Cretan exports to Central Greece, one notes that no pottery from the former region has been reported in the latter. Furthermore, the appeal of Cretan metalwork seems considerable on only two Central Cretan sites, Lefkandi and Delphi, which lie on the eastern and western end of the area in question. The evidence from the two sites shows, however, considerable chronological discrepancy, with 11th – 10th century examples identified in Lefkandi and 8th – 7th century ones in Delphi. In both sites, the appeal of Cretan metalwork is quite varied and mostly regards anthropomorphic bronzes.

THE ETHNIC IDENTITY OF THE CARRIERS AND VOTARIES: CURRENT VIEWS AND THE CASE FOR AN ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATION

Identifying the ethnic origins of the agents that stimulated the diffusion of particular commodities, especially pottery, has turned out to be one of the most hotly debated issues in the archaeology of the Early Iron Age Mediterranean⁴⁵. Greater complexities emerge with reference to sanctuary contexts, as in the case of Delphi discussed here, regarding the identity of the votaries, which could clearly be other than that of the carriers⁴⁶. The relevant debate cannot possibly be laid out in the constraints of this paper. Suffice it to say that these questions are nowadays tackled through a variety of angles, including literary evidence, manufacturing techniques, site-specific sumptuary attitudes, regional and Mediterranean networks⁴⁷.

37. Snodgrass 1964, 28-29; Hoffmann 1972, 22.

38. Παπασάββας 2001, 165-170, 252-256.

39. Rolley 1983, 110, n. 14.

40. Boardman 1961, 156-158; Jones 2000, 302, 304, 306. For Athens see below. For Sicily see Palermo (in press).

41. Boardman 1961, 156-158; Hoffmann 1972, 27; Morgan (1990, 142) overlooks the finds from Olympia. The Cretan origins assumed for the artefacts other than armour from Olympia cited in Jones 2000, 299, 302, 305, 308, 310, 312, are mostly doubtful.

42. Snodgrass 1974; Jones 2000, 308.

43. For the debate about an early or late 7th century date see Hoffman 1972, 41-46.

44. Thucydides 6.4.3. Coldstream 2003, 289.

45. References are collected in: Crielaard 1999, 61-62. Add: Arafat – Morgan 1994, particularly 113-114; Morris - Papadopoulos 1998.

46. Morgan 1990, 43-47, 61-105, 137-146, 161-171.

47. On Mediterranean networks see Stampolidis 2003, 41-79.

The amount of Central Greek imports, actually Euboean pottery, in Crete has so far not merited any discussion considering the ethnic identity of its carriers. It is the very limited spread of Euboean pottery in Cretan sites other than Knossos and the fairly wide temporal and spatial distribution of less than two dozen imports at the site that leave no ground for complex interpretations. This is reflected in the cynical argument that neither the Euboean pottery found in Knossos, nor the comparable finds from Torone in Chalkidike, could possibly bear any hypothesis for Euboean colonization⁴⁸. Moreover, the identification of a Cretan input in artefacts from Lefkandi is no surprise, given the cosmopolitan character the local community exhibits in the Early Iron Age⁴⁹.

Nevertheless, some reasonable speculation can be raised on the identity of the people who initiated exchanges between Lefkandi/Euboea and Knossos/Central Crete in the 10th century on the basis of a different class of finds. This class includes bronze vessels of Near Eastern origins, situlae and jugs with lotus decoration on the handle, which appear at this time in both Lefkandi and Knossos/Central Crete, but are widely represented only in the latter area⁵⁰. It is possible that the examples found in Lefkandi were imported via Crete. In that case, Crete would provide both bronze-working skills (manifested in the case of anthropomorphic figurines) and finished bronze products (Near Eastern vessels) to Euboea. I find that the hypothesis for an early Euboean interest in bronzes from Crete finds support in the mould deposit found at Lefkandi, which dates to the end of the same century. The bronze tripods (or other items) produced from the moulds of that deposit have long been related to a tripod found in a slightly earlier Knossian tomb and have been taken to suggest a diffusion of metal-working skills from (or via) Crete to Euboea⁵¹. On these grounds, I argue that it was Euboean visits to Protogeometric Crete aimed at the acquisition of bronze-working skills and bronze artefacts that caused the exportation of the limited Euboean pottery of similar date found in the southern Aegean island. This is certainly not to deny the reality of direct contacts between Euboeans and Phoenicians (or Cypriots)⁵², but to suggest the actuality of an area of contact at the point where a major Phoenician sea-route running east-west came closest to Euboea.

On the other hand, the notable collection of Cretan bronzes at the sanctuary of Delphi has stimulated much discussion on the identity of its carriers and votaries. The collection is widely considered as imported and arguments against the possibility of its attribution to itinerant Cretan craftsmen working at the site have been raised⁵³. The dedication of the collection (**figs. 4-7**) is regularly credited to Cretan visitors⁵⁴, on the basis of the rich literary references to mythical or 'prehistoric' connections between Crete and Delphi⁵⁵. Most notable – and earli-

48. Papadopoulos 2005, 577.

49. Crielaard 2006, 286-290.

50. Stampolidis 2003, 50-51. I thank Professor Stampolidis for pointing out to me the role of situlae and jugs from the Near East in this connection.

51. Catling – Catling 1980a, 96-97. Cf. Παπασάββας 2001, 180-181; Dickinson 2006, 150.

52. See lately Dickinson 2006, 210-215.

53. Παπασάββας 2001, 195, n. 32. The case for itinerant craftsmen from Crete has, however, convincingly been raised in the case of some bronzes from Olympia (Borrell – Rittig 1998, 154-161). Similarly, the identification of some of the Cretan bronze armour found in Delphi and Olympia as spoils from a battle fought against Cretans (Hoffmann 1972, 27) has only been accepted in the case of the latter site (Rolley 1977, 146).

54. References are collected in: Prent 2005, 237-238, 362-363, 381, 651 (add Guarducci 1943-1946); some doubt is introduced on page 387 and Morgan's view on Corinthian intermediaries (see below) is cited in n. 954.

55. Cf.: Guarducci 1943-1946; Morgan 1990, 146.

est - among these references is the description of the arrival of Cretans at Delphi found in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo (lines 388-544). The hymn, which dates to the early 6th century⁵⁶, attributes the establishment of Apollo's cult in Delphi to Cretans that the god led to the site. Nonetheless, the association of the finds with the Hymn has been criticised and C. Morgan has noted that the involvement of the Cretans in the Hymn has no particular mythical background⁵⁷. She has further argued that this involvement is connected to the struggles that freed Delphi from local control and established its Panhellenic appeal. The staging of this appeal was, in her view, endorsed by the hymn's reference to the establishment of the cult by natives of a distant Greek land.

The role of Cretans in the export of the island's bronzes to Delphi is similarly downplayed in scholarly interpretations that identify the carriers of those items with maritime people of the time, relying on the widely-held impression that the Cretans were no avid seafarers in the Early Iron Age⁵⁸. N. Coldstream, for example, mapping the spread of the Cretan bronzes in western Greece and Italy, has argued that this accords with a sea-route frequented by the Phoenicians in their westward trips⁵⁹. The scholar, however, published his view at a time when much fewer Cretan bronzes were known from Delphi and limited his comments to those few clearly predating the lower terminus of his study, circa 700. I therefore hold that the amount of Cretan bronzes currently identified and their considerable chronological and typological range argue against Coldstream's view. This view is further in need for assessments of the motives and conditions that repeatedly drove the Phoenicians away from their main sea-routes, deep into the Corinthian Gulf, as well as of the mechanisms that brought the bronzes from the hands of the Phoenician entrepreneurs to the sanctuary of Delphi.

E. Partida, on the other hand, relates individual Cretan bronzes found in Delphi with Cypriot votaries⁶⁰. Her argument relies on the resemblance of those bronzes to Cypriot products⁶¹, as well as on the evidence for the presence of Cypriots in the sanctuary, (mostly bronzes of Cypriot manufacture, including a piece inscribed in the Cypriot syllabary). Any assumption for the role of Cypriots in the export of Cretan bronzes is, however, called into question by the amount of Cretan examples identified and their chronological range, which surpasses that of their Cypriot counterparts. It seems more plausible that sumptuary patterns established with reference to Cretan bronzes stimulated the dedication of at least some of the related Cypriot artefacts.

A fuller interpretation, which discusses both the transport and the dedication of the Cretan bronzes to Delphi, has been put forward by Morgan. She considers that the Corinthians were responsible for the dissemination of Cretan bronzes in western Greece⁶², including Delphi.

56. West 2003, 10.

57. Morgan 1990, 144-145.

58. Coldstream 1968, 382-383; Whitley 2001, 121.

59. Coldstream 2003, 289-290. For Oriental artefacts found in Delphi see: Παρτίδα 1992, 135-137; Παρτίδα 2006, 802-803. For the Phoenicians in Crete see lately Stampolidis – Kotsonas 2006.

60. Παρτίδα 1992, 135-137; Παρτίδα 2006, 802-806. It is unclear whether Partida's listing of a bronze stand of Cypriot type, which is considered as a Cretan product (Παπασάββας 2001, 253-254, no. 52), among Cypriot and Near Eastern offerings involves its attribution to Cypriots votaries or accords with a different view on its place of manufacture.

61. The notion of resemblance is methodologically inadequate in this case and can result in confusion (see n. 59).

62. Morgan (1990, 142) claims that Olympia has not produced any Cretan bronzes, which is not the case (see

Her argument recalls that of Coldstream in relying on the distribution of Cretan bronzes in western Greece. According to Morgan, the western Greek sites that yielded Cretan bronzes also demonstrate strong connections with Corinth at a time during which Corinthian pottery was reaching Crete. Morgan further defends her case against the argument that the assumed Corinthian involvement in the dissemination of Cretan bronzes is not reflected in the record of Corinthian sanctuaries. She notes the problematic preservation of bronzes in the early sanctuaries of Corinth and argues that the sanctuary at Isthmia was not important enough to attract such imports before the 7th century⁶³. The sanctuary of Perachora, she continues, mostly attracted dedications of personal character or votives indicative of established Corinthian interests of commercial nature. Delphi, was to her view, the favourable arena for late 8th century Corinthians wishing to display the fruits of newly established links, such as those with Crete.

Notwithstanding the strong evidence for the role of the Corinthians at Delphi, I am not convinced by Morgan's interpretation for their control over the dedication of Cretan bronzes. Her review of the distribution of Cretan bronzes in western Greece does not mention the then known Cretan finds from Olympia⁶⁴ or the possibility of direct links between Crete and Ithaca⁶⁵. It further takes no account of the distribution of Cretan bronzes in Italy and Sicily, which does not correspond with the distribution of Corinthian colonies and therefore undermines the case for the role of the Corinthians. Lastly, Morgan's claim for the late 8th century establishment of Corinthian links with Crete⁶⁶ is challenged by recent finds from Knossos⁶⁷ and Eleutherna⁶⁸, which demonstrate that Corinthian ceramics were imported in the island already in the mid-9th century. Although the number of these imports is currently limited, their appeal is notable. They introduced two types of aryballoi in Crete, which proved most popular in the following two centuries⁶⁹.

In this light, I reckon that the export of Cretan bronzes to Delphi (**figs. 4-7**), which was probably inaugurated by Cretan visitors (see above), only flourished due to initiatives of people from the mainland part of Central Greece traveling to Crete. Admittedly no seafaring tradition is associated with regions like Phokis, Locris and Boeotia, despite their access to both the Euboean and Corinthian Gulfs, hence the attribution of Near Eastern imports discovered in East Locris to the activities of the Euboeans⁷⁰. Nevertheless, the references of the Boeotian poet Hesiod to sea traveling and the establishment of the colony of Epizephyrian Locroi in South Italy in the 670's⁷¹ suggest that considerable seafaring initiatives were not exceptional in this region at around 700. Further confirmation for such initiatives has turned up in Kommos, in south-central Crete, and involves a group of graffiti dating from the early-mature 7th centu-

below).

63. Nevertheless, a few bronze tripods and perhaps pieces of armour that come from Isthmia and date from the late 8th century were recently published (Morgan 1999, 405-406).

64. Hoffmann 1972, 7, 22, 26-27.

65. Kotsonas 2005, 244.

66. Morgan 1990, 143; Morgan 1999, 422. The Knossian piece is mentioned in Dickinson 2006, 215, where, however, the view for the narrow distribution of early Corinthian pottery is maintained.

67. Coldstream 1996, 402.

68. Kotsonas 2005, 242-243; Kotsonas (in press), 256-264.

69. Coldstream 1996, 357-358, types B-C (Knossos). For the occurrence of the earlier, plain type in Eleutherna and the rest of Crete, see Kotsonas 2005, 175-178, type D; Kotsonas (in press), 176-181.

70. Morgan 2003, 201, 214.

71. Morgan 2003, 30.

ry⁷². These graffiti, which are incised on Cretan cups, but render dialects of Central Greece, excluding Euboea, furnish evidence of outstanding quality for the direct, probably non-sporadic connections between Crete and Central Greece.

Judging by the paucity of evidence for the circulation of ceramics between Central Greece and Crete in the 7th century, it appears that the travelers that produced the Kommos graffiti were not interested in trading pottery of Central Greek or Cretan manufacture or commodities stored in clay vessels of such origins. Notwithstanding the possibility that commodities from other regions or archaeologically invisible commodities were exchanged in Kommos, I assume that those travelers were interested in Cretan bronzes and should be credited with their export to Delphi. This argument ties in with the concurrent importation of Cretan bronzes to Central Greece (see above; such imports also occur in neighbouring Attica)⁷³, the production of the aforementioned figurines of Cretan style at Delphi, as well as the Cretan influence on Boeotian 7th century bronze works, like the Mantiklos Apollo⁷⁴. In any case, Kommos is unlikely to have been the only port of the island that attracted those travelers and the attribution of the Cretan bronze stands found at Delphi to three different workshops⁷⁵ argues in favour of a pattern of interaction that involved more Cretan sites.

The considerable appeal of the Cretan bronzes to Central Greece of the 8th -7th centuries deserves some explanation. It probably stems from their distinctive craftsmanship and 'exotic' origins, which certainly added to their prestige and served attitudes of display. It is, however, perhaps also related to a lost work of the Boeotian poet Hesiod. The work regarded the Idaean Dactyls⁷⁶, Cretan demons widely connected with metallurgy in ancient literature⁷⁷. Hesiod, according to Pliny, credited them with the invention of the iron-working⁷⁸. Hesiod's lost work is perhaps indicative of the reputation of Cretan metalworkers in a part of Central Greece and apparently advertised their skills. In compiling this work, the poet, who, as far as we know, limited his sea-travels to the crossing of the Euripus⁷⁹, probably collected his material from traditions that were circulating in Boeotia and perhaps went back to the 10th century contacts between Euboea and Central Crete. In any case, both archaeological and literary evidence confirm that Cretan metalwork was highly regarded in Central Greece at around 700 and lend support to the suggestion that initiatives taken by people from the latter area account for the deposition of Cretan bronzes at Delphi and perhaps other sites in the same district during that period.

EPILOGUE

Although the connections between Central Greece and Crete commenced well before the Early Iron Age, the dawn of this period witnessed their transformation. In the end of the Bronze Age, these connections were one-sided, with the former area importing from the lat-

72. Csapo 1991; Csapo 1993; Csapo – Johnston – Geagan 2000, 104-105.

73. Λεμπέση 2002, 109, 293 (figurine); Matthäus 1998, 131 (tripod).

74. Λεμπέση 2002, 291, 293, 311.

75. Παπασάββας 2001, 194.

76. Hornblower – Spawforth 1996, 700.

77. Hornblower – Spawforth 1996, 745-746.

78. Pliny, *Natural History*, vii, 56, 197.

79. Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 650-651.

ter ceramics and perhaps other artefacts and influences. Already in the 10th century, however, the connections established between Lefkandi and Central Crete proved bilateral and quite diverse. The connections of the time, which involved Cretan metalwork exported to Euboea and Euboean pottery exported to Central Crete, established a pattern of interaction that would largely persist for the following two centuries or more. During this period, however, an increasing number of sites from both regions was involved in the interaction.

Central Greek exports to Crete largely include Euboean pottery of the 9th – 8th centuries, which has turned up mostly in Knossos and sporadically in sites on the island's north coast and the western Mesara. On the other hand, 11th – 10th century Lefkandi and 8th – 7th century Delphi have furnished considerable evidence for the appeal of Cretan bronzes, including anthropomorphic figurines, to Central Greece.

Although the temporal and spatial distribution of Euboean pottery in Crete has left no much ground for scholarly speculation on the mechanisms that generated it, I argued that the earliest ceramics probably reached Crete as a by-product of Euboean visits aimed at the acquisition of Cretan bronze-working skills and Near Eastern bronze vessels that were arriving at some quantity in Crete. On the other hand, the Cretan bronzes found at Delphi have raised considerable debate over the identity of their carriers and votaries. Common opinion regards these finds as dedications of Cretan visitors, while other scholars prefer to attribute their circulation to seafaring peoples of the Early Iron Age, including the Phoenicians, the Cypriots and the Corinthians. I personally, however, maintain that it was the Central Greeks themselves that largely pursued the importation of Cretan bronzes. The direct involvement of those people in exchanges with the Cretans was established on the basis of graffiti discovered in the port of Kommos, which render dialects of Central Greece. The fondness of Central Greeks for Cretan bronzes was further argued on the basis of archaeological finds from Delphi and elsewhere, and also in the light of a lost work of the Boeotian poet Hesiod regarding Cretan metal-working daemons.

Generalising from the argument of this paper, I maintain that in the 8th and 7th centuries, if not earlier, interconnections in the Aegean and beyond were quite complex and involved a variety of ethnic groups. The recurring scholarly attribution of the circulation of a wide array of commodities to the initiatives of a limited range of such groups must be reconsidered.

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ**ΚΕΝΤΡΙΚΗ ΕΛΛΑΔΑ ΚΑΙ ΚΡΗΤΗ ΚΑΤΑ
ΤΗΝ ΠΡΩΙΜΗ ΕΠΟΧΗ ΤΟΥ ΣΙΔΗΡΟΥ***Αντώνης Κοτσώνας*

Ο αυξανόμενος αριθμός ευρημάτων που πιστοποιούν τη διακίνηση ανθρώπων, κεραμικών και μεταλλικών αντικειμένων αλλά και επιρροών ανάμεσα στην Κεντρική Ελλάδα και την Κρήτη κατά την Πρώιμη Εποχή του Σιδήρου αποτελεί αφορμή για τη διερεύνηση του όγκου και της φύσης των επαφών των δύο περιοχών. Πήλινα αγγεία από την Κεντρική Ελλάδα, κυρίως την Εύβοια, έχουν εντοπιστεί στην Κρήτη, ιδίως την Κνωσό, ενώ κρητικά έργα χαλκούργιας ή η επιρροή τους αναγνωρίζονται σε θέσεις της Κεντρικής Ελλάδας, κυρίως τους Δελφούς. Με βάση αυτά τα ευρήματα, διερευνώνται τα κίνητρα της σύναψης των επαφών κατά τις απαρχές της Εποχής του Σιδήρου. Επιπλέον, επανεξετάζονται καθιερωμένες απόψεις που αποδίδουν τις υστερότερες επαφές μεταξύ των δύο περιοχών στις δραστηριότητες άλλων, ποντοπόρων πληθυσμών του Αιγαίου και της Ανατολικής Μεσογείου και θέλουν τους Κρήτες και τους κατοίκους της Κεντρικής Ελλάδας (με εξαίρεση τους Ευβοείς) να μην αναπτύσσουν ναυτικές πρωτοβουλίες κατά την Πρώιμη Εποχή του Σιδήρου.

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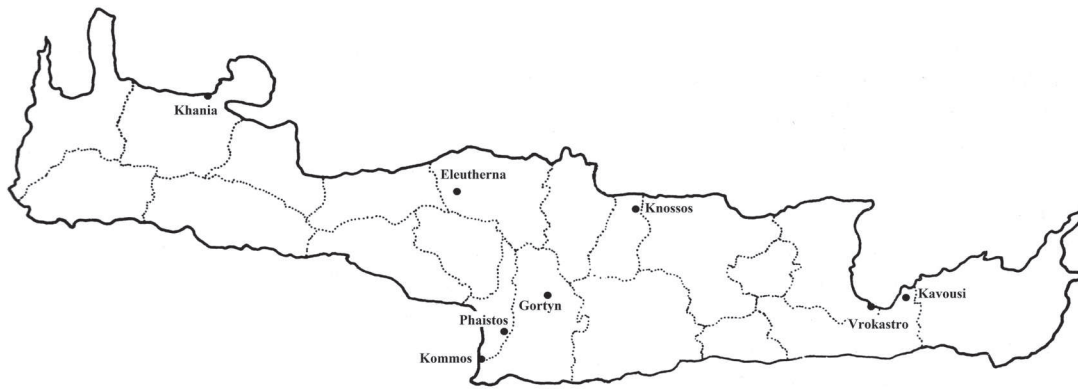


Fig. 1. Map of Crete showing the location of all Cretan sites mentioned in the text.

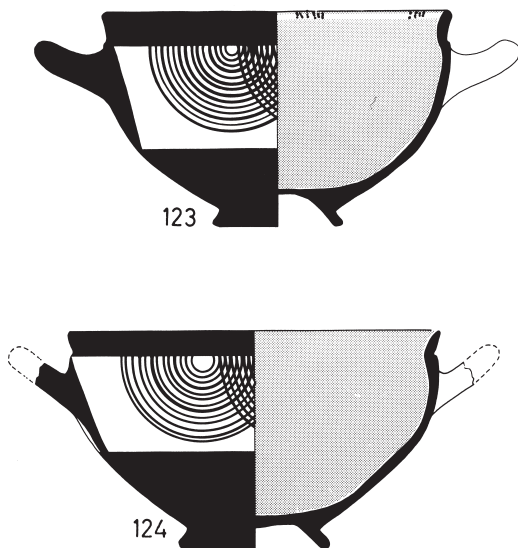


Fig. 2. Euboean clay vases imported in Knossos (courtesy of the British School at Athens).

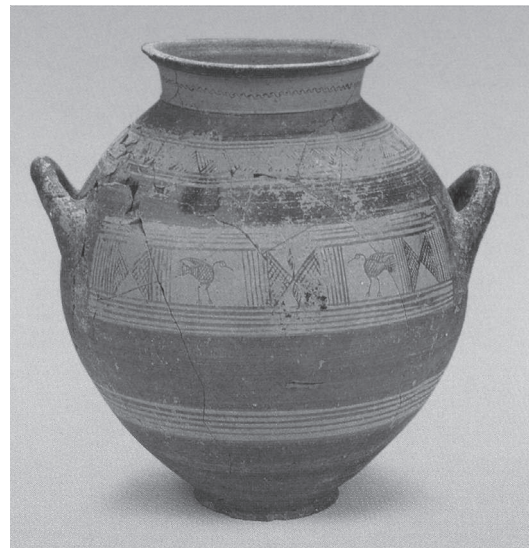


Fig. 3. Unpublished clay vase from Eleutherna (reproduced with permission by Professor N.C. Stampolidis).



Fig. 4. Cretan bronze helmet found at Delphi (courtesy of the École française d'Athènes).

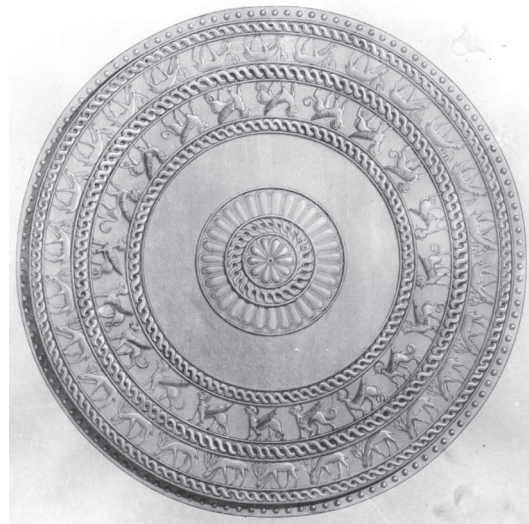


Fig. 5. Cretan bronze shield found at Delphi (courtesy of the École française d'Athènes).

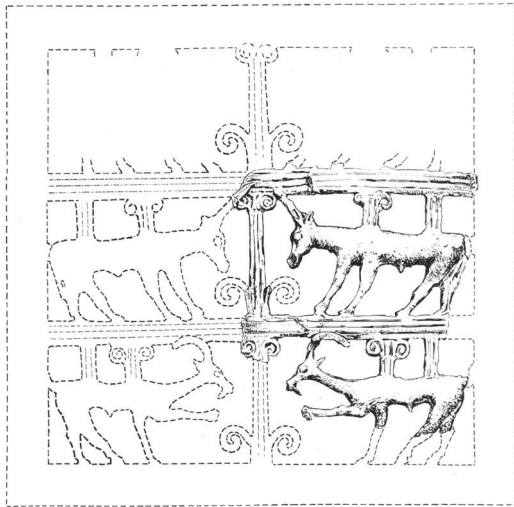


Fig. 6. Cretan bronze stand found at Delphi (courtesy of the École française d'Athènes).



Fig. 7. Cretan bronze figurine found at Delphi (courtesy of the École française d'Athènes).