Minoan Zoomorphic Iconography and the Relevance of Identification:  
A Case Study on the Gold Figurine from Akrotiri, Thera

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ABSTRACT

Minoan Zoomorphic Iconography and the Relevance of Identification:
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The so-called “Golden Ibex” was discovered at the Bronze Age site of Akrotiri on Thera in 1999. The agrimi (Cretan Wild Goat) is the second most common depicted animal in Minoan and Mycenaean art but are rarely ever identified as agrimi by art historians and archaeologists; scholars tend to present a conservative identification of the animal, referring to it as an ibex, wild goat, or just goat. This thesis argues that the so-called “Golden Ibex” is an agrimi and not an ibex, suggesting a local origin within the Minoan world, but also provides a counter argument that aims to suggest potential influence or origin by a foreign culture, which would suggest the artifact is in fact an ibex. Through scientific, archaeological, zoological, and art historical analysis, the two arguments explore the presence of capridae iconography and their role as both animal and image in cultures from various societies of the ancient world.
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INTRODUCTION

Housed in the Museum of Prehistoric Thera, on the island of Santorini, is a small and mysterious gold zoomorphic figurine. Referred to as the “Golden Ibex,” this figurine is the only gold artifact to be unearthed at the Bronze Age site of Akrotiri, Thera (modern day, Santorini).¹ The figurine’s stylistic and metallurgic composition has mystified archaeologists since it does not appear to match with contemporaneous zoomorphic figurines found at Minoan and Mycenaean sites. While the current scholarship claims that there is no Minoan/Mycenaean comparanda for this figurine, this thesis counters that notion and presents ample evidence that proves this figurine and its iconography had a major cultic presence in Minoan/Mycenaean culture. This thesis challenges the current zoomorphic identification of this artifact and asserts that it should be recognized as a Cretan agrimi (Cretan Wild Goat). Regionally, this makes more sense because ibexes are not found within the Aegean and the agrimi is the second most common depicted animal in Minoan and Mycenaean art.² Ibexes and other wild goats are not commonly found in art in the regions that archaeologists are currently claiming that the figurine originated from, including the Near East and Mesopotamia where rams are more popular than [wild] goats in iconography. The

¹ A gold pin was also discovered at the site but was clearly left behind unintentionally. The so-called “Golden Ibex” is the only gold object to have been discovered as intentionally left at the site, making it far more curious of a find. For more information please refer to Christos Doumas’ “Bringing Life to a Dead City at Akrotiri on the Island of Thera” ΑΛΣ 1 (2003): 20-76, Chr. Boulotis’ “Aspects of Religious Expression at Akrotiri” ΑΛΣ 3 (2005): 43-61, and Katherine Trantalidou’s “Archaeozoological Research at the Akrotiri Excavation: The Animal World in Everyday Life and Ideology,” ΑΛΣ 6 (2008): 26-69.

² Over five-hundred known instances of goats in Minoan art have been discovered, majority of which are agrimia. Scholars studying the agrimi, like Edmund Bloedow, suspect the true extent of agrimi iconography is far greater than and is unrepresented by the over five-hundred known instances of agrimi in Minoan art.: Edmund Bloedow, “The Significance of the Goat in Minoan Culture,” Prähistorische Zeitschrift 78 (2003): 1-2, 6.
The predominant theory being pursued by scholars studying the figurine is that it had to originate outside of the Aegean because they claim its stylistic and compositional uniqueness is too greatly divergent from known Minoan/Mycenaean zoomorphic iconography. This thesis addresses the original zoomorphic identification and the theories presented by current scholarship and considers what could lead scholars to ignore completely the agrimi identification.

The agrimi is frequently misidentified as an ibex and is often overly simplified as being a goat without mention of the wild, feral, or domestic taxonomy; other misidentifications include being labeled as a ram, antelope, or deer. The purpose of identifying the figurine as an agrimi is not only taxonomically relevant, but indicates a form of local ownership, symbolism, and significance visible in the iconography associated with the Minoans. This also requires an examination of non-Aegean cultures such as the Balkans, Anatolia and Levant, Egypt/Nubia, and Mesopotamia, gold production, trade, and evidence of interactions with the Minoans and Mycenaeans.

**Historical Context of Akrotiri**

Akrotiri, Thera was a major port city and outpost for Minoan Crete; archaeological evidence such as faience ostrich egg rhyta, Egyptian clappers, Canaanite wares, a transport ewer with an incised pentagram or pentalpha, specimens of Lebanese cedar and pomegranate, among other evidence, are all signs of exchange with foreign or non-Aegean cultures. Thera’s location was also ideal for the copper trade, being situated in between Cyprus and Crete, which further

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facilitated the exchange of other goods and ideas.\(^5\) In the late 17\(^{th}\) century BCE (ca. 1636-1600 BCE; more narrowly, ca. 1628-1625 BCE) a series of earthquakes on Thera resulted in a cataclysmic volcanic eruption, one of the most devastating natural disasters in known history and prehistory. The eruption has been labelled as having a 7.0 VEI (Volcanic Explosivity Index); as a point of context the VEI scale only goes up to 8.0 VEI.\(^6\) Evidence of volcanic boulders and layers of ash covered the island, resting atop signs of possible repairs and disaster relief following the earthquakes.\(^7\) The stratigraphic evidence from Akrotiri indicates that the removed debris and the city’s repairs occurred after the earthquakes and before eruption. Furthermore, the ashfall preserved much of the city as it stood during the eruption; Akrotiri is known by its nickname the “Bronze Age Pompeii,” which was also preserved by ashfall.

No human remains contemporaneous with the eruption have yet to be discovered in Akrotiri, but archaeologists have hypothesized that since only about one-fifth of the city has actually been excavated there exists a possibility of finding Bronze Age human skeletal remains.\(^8\) The lack of human remains suggests that the island’s inhabitants likely fled Thera prior to the eruption. Further evidence that the locals may have intended to return to the island has been found in the preserved food storage within the homes and shops of Akrotiri. No signs of a return to the island by the Bronze Age populations, however, have been documented.

The eruption is categorized as a plinian eruption, often associated with an ash column and mushroom cloud and is described as an explosion-collapse eruption, which is identified with a


\(^7\) Doumas, “Bringing Life to a Dead City at Akrotiri on the Island of Thera,” 55, 58-59.

\(^8\) *Ibid.*, 55.
collapsing caldera. The eruption likely occurred in four phases over an estimated four days, and includes the caldera collapse and subsequent tsunamis that dispersed away from Thera in every direction. The tsunamis are estimated to have reached the Cycladic Islands, the northern coast of Crete, and the south-western coast of Turkey. Scholars believe that the caldera collapse caused extremely chaotic tsunami waves of high amplitude, reaching a maximum height of 50m and a collapse volume up to 34km³; it took an estimated thirteen minutes for a tsunami to reach Crete from Thera.

The ash column is suggested to have been up to 36km tall and had numerous base surges that produced powerful waves of tephra; overall, an estimated 14m³ of pumice and ash had been expelled from the volcano. Winds carried the ash and pumice as far as the Black Sea, the Nile Delta, and Turkey, and sea-borne pumice matching the pumice from Thera has been found as far as Jaffa, Israel. Reports of panic, food and fresh water shortages, storms, and constant darkness immediately following the eruption are noted by scholars.

Ultimately, the eruption created the most ideal archaeological conditions, as the ash perfectly preserved a singular moment in time. The island remained uninhabited and the Bronze Age site was left untouched for thousands of years, which allotted for zero contamination of the ancient city. No one truly knows what they will find at Akrotiri, as the extraordinarily fantastic

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10 Refer to Novikova, Papadopoulos, and McCoy, “Modelling of Tsunami Generated by the Giant Late Bronze Age Eruption of Thera, South Aegean Sea, Greece,” 665-680.

11 Doumas, “Bringing Life to a Dead City at Akrotiri on the Island of Thera,” 59.

preservation even protected an olive branch that was later used to date the eruption with the Carbon-14 method.\textsuperscript{13} The gold figurine is a testament to the site’s preservation by eruption, being found \textit{in situ} at the southern-most point of Akrotiri in the Benches Square, a \textit{locus sanctum}; the find-spot of the gold figurine is further discussed in Chapter 2.

\textbf{Methodology}

This thesis evaluates the level of significance that archaeologists and art historians place on animal identifications in art and examines if taxonomic specificity is needed for understanding zoomorphic imagery in the context of the culture in which it was found. The information presented here is approached through scientific, art historical, and archaeological evidence, all of which help to form a more well-rounded understanding of the Gold Agrimi/Ibex and its relationship to Thera and its neighboring cultures. The overarching and focal question is whether or not the Gold Agrimi/Ibex should be considered a Minoan/Mycenaean object or if it should be identified as a product of trade and relationships within groups of the Bronze Age Mediterranean. Such a broad-sweeping question must be broken down into more specific queries; each chapter will address specific aspects of this inquiry.

Chapter 1 examines the origin and production of the gold that the figurine is comprised of and the taxonomic animal identification; both questions are approached scientifically, along with a supporting historical perspective. The type of evidence seen in Chapter 1 is a combination of chemical and metallic composition, and zoological and biological data regarding animal DNA and genetic make-up. Chapter 2 focuses on \textit{agrimi} iconography and the animal’s placement in Minoan and Mycenaean culture; the questions asked in this chapter primarily have an archaeological and

art historical approach. This analysis begins with an examination of the archaeological context (physically and historically) and if any comparanda of the artifact exist in the Minoan and Mycenaean world. The bulk of the chapter considers the types of iconographic and symbolic themes the agrimi appears in, or is associated, and how its archaeological context fits with its meaning or its use. The chapter is then divided into the following themes: Sacrifice, Predator/Prey, Animal-Companion to the Deity, Sexual Potency and Fertility, and Natural World. The final and most crucial question in the chapter is to what category the Gold Agrimi belongs? This last question is answered by considering the archaeological context in which the artifact was found and how that relates to the comparanda and iconographic categories.

Chapter 3 applies the conclusions from Chapter 2 concerning the gold figurine and its relationship to the iconographic themes and archaeological contexts from the Aegean and considers if parallels exist if non-Aegean cultures. This chapter focuses on non-Aegean gold, iconography, trade relationships, archaeological setting, and the presence of contextual parallels with Minoan/Mycenaean artifacts. The main question of the chapter is what evidence can be drawn from each region that indicates a possible connection to the artifact or the Minoans and Mycenaean. This chapter is divided by region: Balkans, Egypt and Nubia, Anatolia and Levant, and Mesopotamia.

This thesis is geographically bound to the Aegean, Peloponnese, Balkans, Egypt, Nubia, Anatolia, the Levant, and Mesopotamia (Maps 1 and 2). The Aegean and Peloponnese are allocated as the Minoan and Mycenaean world and includes all of mainland Greece and the Cycladic Islands; Troy and Cyprus are also identified as Minoan/Mycenaean despite their proximity to Anatolia. The Balkans is a large region to the north of the Aegean and is discussed on its own. Egypt and Nubia, to the south, are discussed as a single entity for the purposes of this thesis. Anatolia and the
Levant are discussed together in order to contain generally the Hittite world into a single entity. Lastly, Mesopotamia is discussed on its own. The pairing of the Minoan and Mycenaean (Aegean), Anatolia and Levant, and Egypt and Nubia are done because of the overlapping societies and the cultures present in the linked regions. The Minoans are mainly associated with the Early and Middle Bronze Age and the Mycenaecans are mainly associated in the Late Bronze Age; much of Minoan culture is adopted and amplified by the Mycenaecans. Anatolia and the Levant are discussed together because the Hittite empire extends over both regions during the Bronze Age and have a shared culture and iconographic canon. Egypt and Nubia are often discussed as having a kind of partnership during the Bronze Age, particularly when it comes to gold production and iconography. The chronological frame of this thesis is between ca.3500-1000 BCE; however, some of the artifacts included precede 3500 BCE.

**Terminology:**

While a range of species and subspecies are discussed, all animals mentioned fall under the *Bovidae* family. *Bovidae* or *Bovid* is the taxonomic classification for ruminant and cloven-footed mammals, including various goats, cattle, deer, sheep, and related animals. *Capra* is the genus that consists of a variety of goats, including various *ibex* and *wild goat* species. The *Cretan agrimi* is a subspecies of *wild goat*, but the two types of *ibex* mentioned in this thesis—the *Alpine ibex* and the *Nubian ibex*—are each their own species. The *agrimi* is a native subspecies in the Aegean, dating to the Neolithic; taxonomic ibexes are not found in the Aegean other than as a result of human intervention. Refer to Table 4 for further information on these and other animals mentioned in this thesis, such as the wild bezoar goat, the Asiatic mouflon, domesticated goat, domesticated sheep, the roe deer, the red deer, and the aurochs.
Lastly, for the purposes of this thesis, when referring to an ancient site the contemporary name is used if known. The modern names of sites are only used for clarification or if in reference to the modern location. For example, the modern island of Santorini is referred to as the island’s ancient name Thera throughout the thesis.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{14} The island’s name ‘Thera’ dates to the 9\textsuperscript{th} century BCE, being named after the mythical Spartan ruler Theras; Pausanias identified the former name of the island as ‘Calliste/Kalliste’; Pausanias, Description of Greece, Volume II: Books 3-5 (Laconia, Messenia, Elis 1), trans. W.H.S. Jones and H.A. Ormerod, Loeb Classical Library 188 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), III.15.6.
CHAPTER 1: VISUAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND TAXONOMIC ANALYSIS

The primary goal of this chapter is to define visually and compositionally the gold figurine through using morphological cues and scientific data relating to the artifact. First, this is done by presenting a detailed visual description of the figurine that is followed by a discussion on the chemical composition of the gold used to make the object. This discussion leads to an explanation of gold production and general trade in the Aegean and Mediterranean during the Bronze Age in order to understand a possible timetable for its creation and any potential non-Minoan/Mycenaean influences. The final section of this chapter applies the physical description of the artifact and looks to determine an Aegean animal identification. This section explores both Aegean and non-Aegean species to form a more developed regarding any possible influence, insular or otherwise in the Minoan/Mycenaean world.

Visual and Scientific Analysis

This figurine has been dubbed the “Gold[en] Ibex” by archaeologists and the Museum of Prehistoric Thera;\(^\text{14}\) despite this identification, the artifact will remain unlabeled until after the taxonomic analysis. The figurine commonly called the “Golden Ibex” is a small, three-dimensional, and hollow gold zoomorphic figurine, measuring 11cm in length and weighing 180g (0.397lbs), standing on a thin, rectangular gold sheet (Figure 1).\(^\text{15}\) The figurine is a quadruped with

\(^{14}\) Doumas, “Bringing Life to a Dead City at Akrotiri on the Island of Thera,” 55, 58, Fig.35.; Christos Doumas, *Prehistoric Thera* (Greece: John S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation, 2016), 210, ISBN: 978-618-82150-2-3.

\(^{15}\) Dr. Zdeněk Kratochvíl, Email, January 20, 2018.
no obvious genitalia present, creating an androgynous and a generalizing effect. A small, egg-shaped tail is attached to the rear, and there are a pair of small oval ears flanking two horns on the top of its head. The horns follow the natural curve of the head, arching backward and twisting inward; when viewed from overhead, they nearly touch at the tips, creating a leaf-like shape. Lines and coloration changes present on each limb, the ears, horns, and tail, suggest that the figurine was made in multiple pieces. The artifact is stylized and has a similar compositional form to other zoomorphic figurines common to the Aegean region during the Bronze Age.16

Gold, such as the zoomorphic artifact from Akrotiri, is generally found as a gold-silver alloy with copper and—in the form of alluvial gold as cassiterite—tin. Most of the gold artifacts that date to the Bronze Age or earlier are identified as native gold can be refined through the processes of cupellation and cementation.17 Cupellation is the process of removing base elements or metals and platinum group elements (PGE) through oxidation, and cementation “is the separation of gold and silver by reacting the latter with salt or sulfur.”18 The PGEs provide specific information about the provenance of native gold, which, as shall be discussed later in this section, can be highly valuable to understanding the native sourcing and metallurgic capabilities of a society. Unfortunately, identifying the provenance of gold is often rather difficult because most of the mines used in antiquity are now exhausted, which prevents any comparative analysis of gold and mine sourcing. The common practice of recycling gold artifacts can cause the loss of trace

16 The cultural periods are referenced throughout this thesis for the dating and a chronological chart is provided in Table 1 and details the dates of each period with both the relative and absolute chronology.
17 Native gold is naturally occurring as either alloyed or pure-form. The native gold deposits are mined as naturally occurring nuggets, dust, wire, and veins.; Maria Filomena Guerra and Thomas Calligaro, “Gold traces to trace gold,” Journal of Archaeological Science 31 (2004), 1199.
18 Guerra and Calligaro, “Gold traces to trace gold,” 1199.
elements, and the “debasement of gold by addition of silver and/or copper ores” complicates processes for determining the source identification and provenance of gold.\textsuperscript{19}

X-Ray Floreescence Analysis (XRF) performed on the so-called “Golden Ibex” in a 2002 analysis of the artifact found that the gold originated from the Balkan or Aegean regions.\textsuperscript{20} XRF is a form of analysis which examines the fluorescent x-rays of a material in order to determine its elemental composition. The elemental composition reveals information about the origin of the material or how it may have been chemically altered.\textsuperscript{21} When studying ancient gold artifacts, “chemical analysis is aimed at getting information on the manufacture technology of the objects and the provenance of the ores.”\textsuperscript{22} The study analyzed six spectra taken from the following parts of the figurine’s body: the main body, the stain/weld spot under the neck, the area near the weld spot of the rear left leg, the weld spot at the tail, the right horn, and the bottom red spot (Table 2). These specific points were taken in order to study both the welded and non-welded areas of the artifact, as the combined data can present a more well-rounded understanding of its production.\textsuperscript{23} The analysis of the welded areas found an increase of concentrated Cu (copper) and no significant change in the Ag/Au (silver/gold) concentration ratio; this led the team of scientists and archaeologists to determine the welding process likely involved the use of a copper mineral, chrysocolla or malachite, and the solid-state diffusion bonding process.\textsuperscript{24} Through this welding process, the welder or craftsman “begins by heating, but not melting, the high purity gold alloy in

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\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Ibid.}, 1200.
\textsuperscript{20} T. Pantazis \textit{et al}., “X-Ray Fluorescence Analysis of a Gold Ibex and other Artifacts from Akrotiri,” (presentation, 9\textsuperscript{th} International Aegean Conference: Metron, Measuring the Aegean Bronze Age, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, April 18-21, 2002), 3.
\textsuperscript{21} For more information on the step-by-step procedures of an XRF analysis, the following website link provides a great and simplified explanation of the technology and how the XRF data is interpreted: \url{https://www.thermofisher.com/us/en/home/industrial/spectroscopy-elemental-isotope-analysis/spectroscopy-elemental-isotope-analysis-learning-center/elemental-analysis-information/xrf-technology.html}.
\textsuperscript{22} Guerra and Calligaro, “Gold traces to trace gold,” 1199.
\textsuperscript{23} Pantazis \textit{et al}., “X-Ray Fluorescence Analysis of a Gold Ibex and other Artifacts from Akrotiri,” 3.
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Loc. cit.}
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the presence of a copper powder.” The process ultimately creates an Au-Cu alloy with a melting point far lower than gold on its own, “which fills the gap between the two components.”

All of the spectra taken from the non-welded areas of the figurine average 0.55% Cu, and data collected from native gold grains/nuggets and objects possibly made from native ore suggests that, on average, gold’s copper content rarely exceeds 1%. The XRF study also found that the so-called “Golden Ibex” has an Fe (iron) content of 0.34%.

The XRF study presents gold *comparanda* from Bulgaria, Macedonia (Nigrita and Thassos), and a non-specified Chalcolithic hoard to determine a possible provenance for the gold used to make the so-called “Golden Ibex” (Table 3). With regards to the silver content, gold from the fifth millennium BCE Chalcolithic cemetery near Varna, Bulgaria were found to have only a few examples of artifacts with a high silver content percentage—20-25% Ag for a small figurine, 39-50% Ag for most beads. Scholars believe that intentional alloying is unlikely to have taken place with the Varna artifacts, and that the gold likely originated from a primary source—i.e., a non-alluvial source. The majority of the cemetery’s gold has a silver content ranging from 7% to 17%. Gold placer deposits from the St. Mandilios river near Nigrita in Macedonia were found to have an average 6% Ag content, silver content in natural gold grains from Thassos (14-17% average Ag content), and twenty-seven out of fifty Neolithic gold pendants from a non-specified confiscated hoard typologically similar to the Chalcolithic period (majority had less than a 10% Ag concentration, and averaging around 5% Ag content concentration). Silver content in native gold typically ranges from less than 1% and can exceed 50%, but it primarily ranges between 5% and 30% Ag content. Native gold usually is found to have less than 1% copper content and can be

25 *Loc. cit.*
26 *Loc. cit.*
27 *Loc. cit.*
28 *Loc. cit.*
found as high as 2.5%, although native gold rarely exceeds 1% Cu content. Iron in native gold is present only as a trace element, typically never exceeding 0.5% Fe content.\(^{29}\)

The XRF study also compared the results of the spectra taken from the figurine from Akrotiri with gold from a non-specified Mycenaean site (Table 3). The silver concentration of the figurine from Akrotiri averaged 14.9% Ag content and the silver content for the Mycenaean site’s gold was 16.0% ± 7.5%; these results associate the silver concentration of the figurine from Akrotiri with native gold from the Aegean. Ultimately, the XRF study found that the gold figurine from Akrotiri is chemically similar to gold from the Balkans and the Aegean. The XRF study’s team also suggest that further in-depth study of the figurine’s PGEs—including Pt (platinum), Ir (iridium), Os (osmium), and Ru (ruthenium)—might be able to determine a more precise provenance of the gold.\(^{30}\)

Not only is the gold’s composition relevant to deciphering the figurine’s origin, but so is determining the technology that was used to produce it. Being hollow, the figurine was likely made using the lost wax process. Lost wax casting, or *cire perdue*, is a casting technique that can produce hollow metal or glass objects through the use of a mold;\(^{31}\) in the case of the gold figurine from Akrotiri, the mold applied the use of a wax core that melted during the casting process. The name comes from the part of the process which involves a wax model that is covered with clay or plaster; the wax is melted and poured from the plaster or clay mold, hence “losing” the wax. The use of the lost wax method for crafting gold objects is fairly rare in the Aegean, especially during the EBA and MBA. Gold and silver items were often made from hammered sheets or foil and soldered

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\(^{29}\) *Loc. cit.*  
\(^{30}\) *Loc. cit.*  
or welded sheets. Gold in the EBA and MBA is primarily used for jewelry, nearly all of which apply the use of hammered and welded sheet metal or foil. Some gold vessels have also been found in the Aegean, but these also apply hammered sheet metal techniques with soldering or welding.\textsuperscript{32}

The creator of the gold figurine not only used lost wax casting but also hammered sheet-metal in constructing the artifact. While most of the body and limbs were produced via the lost wax casting technique, the gold sheet that the figurine stands on was most likely produced by hammering. The horns are so small and thin that they could have either been cast or hammered. If the horns were produced using hammered sheet-gold, then the delicate twisting of the horns would have required manual twisting of the gold.\textsuperscript{33} Gold, being a very soft and pliable metal, would not have been difficult to hammer and twist to the desired form. Yet, the “knob” connecting the horns and the head could be a sign that they could have been cast-made using a mold. The “knob” is reminiscent of the tang of a blade and perhaps was conceived as a brace or joint for the horns. Beyond the “knob,” the slight thickness and symmetry of the horns could suggest a mold, but both the “knob” and horn composition could have been produced with hammering techniques. The possible use of both casting and hammered gold in the production of the figurine exemplifies the technical abilities of the craftsman and informs archaeologists of the metallurgic capabilities of the Minoans. Furthermore, if it does in fact date to the EBA or MBA periods, the rarity of gold and gold casting suggests that the figurine was likely recognized as a valued object or icon by and for the Minoan community.

\textsuperscript{32} Keith Branigan, \textit{Aegean Metalwork of the Early and Middle Bronze Age} (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 89-93. \textsuperscript{33} Unfortunately, there are no publications that specify whether or not the horns were hammered or cast so the suggestion of sheet gold used for the horns is entirely based on observation. The horns are thicker than normal sheet gold, so the proper classification for production is probably the use of sheet gold and hammering techniques and not that the horns were made using pre-existing gold sheets.
The probability that the figurine was created during the LBA is unlikely,\(^3^4\) as the site of Akrotiri was abandoned around 1628-1625 BCE and based on the find-spot, which is discussed further in Chapter 2, there already appears to be a strong relationship between the gold figurine and the city.\(^3^5\) If it was created during the LBA, it would have had to occur at the very beginning of the Late Minoan I period based on the chronological context in which it was discovered: in situ and dating to the eruption of Thera in the LM IB. Formally speaking, a visual comparison between the gold figurine and other similar terracotta zoomorphic objects that date to the Middle Minoan II-III period (such as Figure 11) secure a stylistic presence possibly within the Middle Minoan period, if not earlier. A longstanding presence and tradition surrounding the artifact, extending back numerous generations, is the only conclusion that could explain the apparent level of value associated with it and likely relates to the reason it was left at Akrotiri—which is also discussed further in Chapter 2. Thus, a very conservative estimate would be to suggest that the figurine dates to the MBA, presumably even late EBA.

As previously discussed, the XRF study found that the gold used for the figurine could either originate in the Aegean or Balkans. The possibility of the figurine being produced with Balkan gold is discussed more in Chapter 3. While the figurine does not match gold from Anatolia/Levant, Egypt/Nubia, or Mesopotamia, trade relationships and cross-cultural interactions need to be reviewed for their gold usage, metallurgic abilities, exchange, and potential iconographic or symbolic influence in art. Theoretically speaking, the gold could have been mined in the Balkans, sold to a merchant in Anatolia, who then traded it to a craftsman in Mesopotamia, who then cast the gold, and then sold or gifted it to a Minoan who brought it to Akrotiri. In an

\(^{3^4}\) Currently, there are no published estimates concerning the dating of the gold figurine due to the debate over its stylistic context, so any suggested date or date range proposed is entirely theoretical and should be regarded as being based on this author’s personal observations.

\(^{3^5}\) The city of Akrotiri, as a whole, has a vast array of agrimi iconography.
email correspondence with Dr. Lolita Nikolova, she suggests that such a level of exchange cannot be discounted merely on the premise that it seems excessive, and that any and all levels of interaction should be considered.36

Before discussing the history and archaeological evidence of interaction and metallurgy, it should be noted that there is an unfortunate and apparent bias in favor of a Classical and Mesopotamian dominance in scholarly writing. During the research process it became clear that numerous scholars seem to focus only on Mesopotamia and Egypt as the primary developers of metallurgic practices and either completely or partially ignore the role and involvement of the European cultures. Often, scholars seem to discredit regions like the Balkans by suggesting their influence was only a result of exchange occurring in the Aegean. Others suggest that the Balkans were introduced to metallurgy from eastern cultures without consideration of the reverse flow of contact.37 Increasingly, it seems that the scholarship has become aware of this disparity and has begun addressing the European influences and role in early metallurgic traditions. Now, more scholarship also appears to challenge whether some of the metallurgic traditions could have originated in the Balkans and then transferred to the east based on material sourcing.38

Gold importation was seen as a necessity across the ancient Near Eastern and Mesopotamian world. Anatolia and other Sumerian regions had little to no gold and thus relied on imports, likely receiving much gold from Egypt or the Balkans.39 Gold is also very heavy and

36 Dr. Lolita Nikolova, Email, November 228, 2017-December 26, 2017.
39 Jack Ogden, Jewelry of the Ancient World (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1982), 11, 13, 15.; Despite its extensive gold production in the prehistoric and ancient world, Egypt is not a contender for the origin of the gold or casting. Based on the XRF study, the gold is not Egyptian nor Nubian, and from there it can be easily
expensive, so long-distance trade of gold is not a common occurrence. When gold sources are
discovered in a particular region the local group(s) tend to obtain gold only from their own reserves
and do not usually outsource it. This is the precise reason why archaeologists have yet to find
evidence of, for example, Balkan gold in Egypt.

The Minoans were involved in trade throughout the Aegean as early as Early Minoan I,
when metallurgy was first introduced to Crete; EBA II saw an overall rise in trade and interactions
throughout the Aegean, as is noted “by the widespread adoption of common forms of ceramics,
metal and stone artefacts.” Egyptian and Levantine influence and contacts with the Minoans
appears predominantly in southern Aegean metalwork during the EBA III-MBA I. EM I shows
signs of exchange between Crete and the Cyclades, as well as some possible interaction with the
western coast of Anatolia and the Troad. No direct trade seems to have occurred between the
Minoans and the Near Eastern cultures during EM II, but the presence of a few molds and
fragments found on Crete suggest some level of trade likely occurred via the Troad. By EM III,
Minoan sailing ships had been constructed which resulted in the creation of eastern Crete harbor
cities at Mochlos, Palaikasto, and Zakro. At this time, foreign goods were increasingly imported,
including Syrian or African ivories and Egyptian stone vases and scarabs. Minoan goods also
appeared at this time in the eastern Mediterranean, including metalwork and pottery; these objects
were still likely being traded through independent commercial traders and merchants. The lack
of direct trade with Near Eastern groups prior to EM III but extensive and growing interaction
among islands within the Aegean suggest that the Minoans were developing a strong and insular

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41 Branigan, Aegean Metalwork of the Early and Middle Bronze Age, 122-123.
42 Ibid., 119-121.
43 Branigan, “Minoan Colonialism,” 23.
identity among the various islands. The gold figurine may very well be a testament of this growing insular identity within the Aegean.

Hittite texts refer to a group of people by the name of Ahhiyawa, which scholars accept as being the Mycenaens. Ahhiyawa is associated with Achaia, the region in the Peloponnese thought to be home to the Achaeans, and the connection to the Peloponnese connects them to the Mycenaens.\(^{44}\) The Mari letters inform scholars of the diplomatic exchanges and relationships not only between the Hittites and the Mycenaens, but also amongst all the surrounding ancient powers including, but not limited to, Egypt and Mesopotamia.\(^ {45}\) While textual evidence presents an informative narrative of diplomacy, trade, and cultural values, archaeological evidence provides tangible evidence for these interactions. Evidence of Aegean goods from the EBA are found in western Anatolia, including some Cycladic sauceboats and Aegean round-headed daggers with two to four rivets. Other archaeological evidence of Minoan interaction with Anatolia includes the prominent double axe, which has been found in miniature and as a pendant. Various types of Aegean daggers, spearheads, miniature metal pendants, toggle pins, and even an example of an animal-headed pin have found in southern Anatolia and the Levant.\(^ {46}\) Minoan metalwork from the MM has been found in the Levant; a few examples from Byblos include a scraper, a long-sword, and a votive \textit{agrimi} horn that will be discussed later in Chapter 2.\(^ {47}\)

Additional Late Bronze Age texts such as Linear B provide informative administrative record-keeping and intake of goods, including some information regarding trade import and

\(^{44}\) Despite some of the debate over the identity of Ahhiyawa, for the purposes of this thesis, the name is being aligned with the general scholarly consensus—Ahhiyawa=Mycenaen. For clarity, the term “Mycenaean” is primarily used, and “Ahhiyawa” is applied in reference to or in citations of certain texts.; Eric H. Cline, “Orientalia in the Late Bronze Age Aegean: A Catalogue and Analysis of Trade and Contacts Between the Aegean and Egypt, Anatolia and the Near East” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1991) 154.

\(^{45}\) Cline, “Orientalia in the Late Bronze Age Aegean,” 154-164.

\(^{46}\) Branigan, \textit{Aegean Metalwork of the Early and Middle Bronze Age},120.

\(^{47}\) \textit{Ibid.}, 121-123.
The Knossos Mc Linear B series documents numerous agrimi horns being given as tributes to unknown parties and possibly refers to the agrimi horns in relation to their use in composite bows (Table 4). The agrimi horns were a major commodity in antiquity, as depictions of agrimi-horn composite bows have been found in Egypt, and ancient authors like Pausanias (1.23.4), Plato (Laws I 625d), and Aelian (Varia Historia 1.10) make references to the power, durability, and even the process of obtaining the agrimi horns for the Cretan composite bows. Linear B tablets have also been found to describe the dedicated offerings; Pylos Tn 316 describes a series of gold vessels and even a bull with foliage being given as offerings to six named female divinities, three identified male divinities, and royal kin (Table 4), all of which suggests extensive and direct access to gold at Pylos. The immediacy and extent to which gold was attained in the Aegean, reflected by the extent of gold mentioned in Pylos Tn 316, needs to be considered when contemplating whether the so-called “Golden Ibex” is made of Aegean or Balkan gold. The record-keeping in Linear B can be used by scholars to track rates of production, access to goods and materials, and rates of trade, exchange, and interaction between Minoan/Mycenaean and non-Aegean groups to obtain certain resources and commodities; the frequency of trade and expenditure for particular goods are also determinable. As previously mentioned, determining the provenance of gold is quite difficult due to the frequent recycling of the material because of its high value, which can skew how archaeologists perceive the level and extent of gold usage in a region or era. Through referencing Linear B tablets to the archaeological record, a clearer picture begins to unfold regarding Minoan/Mycenaean gold use, and texts like the Mari letters produce

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written documentation about diplomatic exchange, giving historical precedents for diplomatic relationships and trade.

**Taxonomic Analysis/Animal Identification**

The so-called “Golden Ibex” is clearly a zoomorphic ungulate with arched horns. In order to determine its taxonomy numerous animal species and subspecies found in the Aegean, Balkans, Anatolian, Levant, Egypt/Nubia, and Mesopotamia shall be discussed here to find the closest parallel. For further clarification, please refer to Table 5 which provides photographs, descriptions and details, and artistic representations from their respected regions during the Bronze Age. The taxonomic families include *bovidae* and *cervidae*; the presented genera of the *bovidae* family are *capra*, *ovis*, and *bos*, and the *cervidae* genera are *capreolus*, *cervus*, and *dama*. The animals that fall under the *capra* genus are wild and domestic goats—the Cretan agrimi (*Capra aegagrus cretica*), Alpine ibex (*Capra ibex*), Nubian ibex (*Capra nubiana*), wild bezoar goat (*Capra aegagrus*), Asiatic mouflon (*Ovis gmelini*), markhor (*Capra falconeri*), and domestic goat (*Capra hircus*)—the *ovis* genus includes only domestic sheep and ram (*Ovis aries*), and the *bos* genus includes the now extinct aurochs (*Bos primigenius*). The genera from the *cervidae* family are each different types of deer—roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), and fallow deer (*Dama dama*) (Table 5).

The Aegean species considered as parallels in the identification of the figurine are the *agrimi*, domestic goat, domestic ram, aurochs, and deer (roe, red, and fallow); ibexes are not found in the Aegean and thus none can be included as local taxa. As stated in the introduction, the focus

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50 Taxonomy is a form of scientific classification, particularly applied to organisms, such as an animal’s genus or species.

51 Genera is the plural form of genus.
on local Aegean taxa stresses the theory that the figurine was produced within the Aegean and uses Minoan/Mycenaean ungulate iconography, particularly that of the goat. Of the selected animals found in the Aegean, the most likely animal being depicted is the agrimi. Among the agrimi are two varieties: the Cretan agrimi (Capra aegagrus cretica) and the Aegean agrimi (Capra aegagrus pictus). For the purposes of this thesis, only the Cretan agrimi is being discussed, as Crete was the ruling center of the Minoan thalassocracy.

Visually speaking, the figurine’s composition does not match with the morphology of both the real and the artistic renderings of the other Aegean animals being considered (Refer to Table 5). Domestic goats’ horns are smaller than wild goat horns and are often depicted with short and straight horns in Minoan art, as opposed to the scimitar shape of an agrimi’s horns (Table 5). In the case of the ram, the agrimi and ram are often mistaken for each other in art, but a standard way to precisely identify a ram is through the directionality and placement of the horns. Ram horns are nearly always wrapped around the ears, beginning at the top of the head and bending under the ear or curls up to make a complete circle (Table 5). Nonetheless, the horns of the figurine do not match the horn formation of the ram in Minoan and Mycenaean art. The deer found in the Aegean—roe, red, and fallow—can also easily be discounted due to their horns. Deer in Minoan and Mycenaean art tend to have spiked or branched-like horns that match those of the real animals (Table 5); the figurine’s horns clearly are not branched or spiked. Lastly, the aurochs, an extinct species of wild cattle, is possibly the very species seen in a good deal of the depictions of bulls in ancient art.

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53 The choice to focus only on the Cretan agrimi rather than include the Aegean agrimi is both for simplicity and because the two variants of agrimi were likely the same subspecies in antiquity but breeding and habitat likely caused phenotypic alterations over time. Minimal research appears to have been done on the genetic differences between the Cretan and Aegean agrimia, so this also impacts how the animal identification is being approached for this thesis.
including the bull leaping scenes of the Minoan world. Bull horns are very specific in ancient art, in that they either come out to the side of the bull’s head, with a slight inward arch, and have an upwards direction, or the horns are depicted similar to a tilde—upward and outward turn at the base, forward direction with and upward and inward curve (Table 5). As seen by the aurochs horns, the figurine cannot be a bull. Thus, the figurine, if identified as a Minoan or Mycenaean product, is likely an agrimi.\textsuperscript{54}

Despite identifying the figurine as an agrimi, other species still need to be considered if any evidence were to arise that indicates a non-Aegean origin or influence. The non-Aegean taxa being considered for the figurine include the domestic goat, domestic ram, deer, aurochs, ibex (Alpine and Nubian), markhor, mouflon, and the wild bezoar goat. Just as with the analysis of the Aegean animals, the domestic ram, deer, and aurochs are not viable identifications for the figurine. The domestic goat shall remain as a possible identification, but only due to the slight ambiguity and variability between wild and domestic goats based on the medium and region (Table 5). The ibex—a species of wild goat—is also considered for the figurine’s identification, but only in the generic ibex form and not necessarily specific to a region. This shift away from the specificity being applied to the Aegean identifications is based primarily on the widespread and non-specific usage of the term “ibex” by scholars when classifying wild goat imagery; while the preference would be to provide more specific identifications of ibex, a more general one must suffice for the present research. The markhor—a wild goat with twisting horns—is not likely the identity of the figurine, as their twisting horns are very distinct and are often emphasized in art (Table 5). Due to the slight twist of the figurine’s horns, the markhor shall remain a reference but not an

identification. The Asiatic mouflon is not thought to be the identification of the figurine based on the directionality of its horns (Table 5). The wild bezoar goat is considered for the figurine’s identity, but primarily only in the guise of a generic wild goat, like the ibex. The bezoar is incredibly difficult to differentiate from other wild goats in art, and so the actual identification that will be referred is “wild goat” (Table 5). Thus, overall, it appears that the likely identification is a form of wild goat, whether that be an ibex or the wild bezoar. The non-Aegean animals being considered are discussed further in Chapter 3, and the remainder of this chapter focuses on the Cretan agrimi identification.

The Cretan agrimi (pl. agrimia) (Capra aegagrus cretica) (άγριμι) also known as the Cretan wild goat, the Cretan Ibex, or the krikri is a subspecies of wild goat found in the Aegean. The name ‘agrimi’ means “game,” likely in reference to the animal’s long history of being a traditionally hunted wild animal. The known use of the name ‘agrimi’ dates back to 1549, when Pierre Belon visited Crete, but the name likely extends at least to Mycenaean Greek via agrimaion; KN C 7064 a-ki-ri-ja is used to describe “goats of both sexes: perh[aps] agria (neut. plur.?) ‘wild creatures’. [ἀγριος].” The attachment of a-ki-ri-ja with the logograms for male and female [domestic] goats solidifies the identification of the animals as wild goats, and are thus

55 Despite the nickname “Cretan Ibex,” the agrimi is not an ibex. While the ibex is a species of wild goat, the agrimi is a subspecies of wild goat that is not related to the ibex.
56 The name ‘agrimi’ is generally associated with the males and ‘sanada’ is associated with the females. For the purposes of this thesis and for simplicity, the name ‘agrimi’ will be applied for both the males and females.; José R. Castelló, “Tribe Caprini” in Bovids of the World (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016), 353. Jstor E-book.
58 Pierre Belon misidentified the agrimi as an ibex in his description of the agrimi, mistaking it for an Alpine ibex.; Porter, “The Cretan Wild Goat (Capra aegagrus cretica) and the Theran ‘Antelopes,’” 298.
60 Michael Ventris and John Chadwick, Documents in Mycenaean Greek (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973): 529.; Please refer to Table 4 for the Mycenaean ideograms relating to the agrimi.
recognized as *agrimi*[a], such as in KN C 7064 (Table 4).

J. Pashley noted an ancient source that referred to the “*agrimaion* as meaning animals of the chase as opposed to tamed animals,” further acknowledging their association with the hunt. Linear B also has a specific logogram for the *agrimi* or its horns—the ideogram is a horn with three bumps (Table 4).

The Knossos Mc Linear B tablet series from the Arsenal and palace indicate various uses of the different parts of the *agrimi*—such as the horns, tendons, meat, and fur—and they “represent at least one collection cycle for wild goats. [Massimo] Perna’s figures represent the lowest possible number of *agrimia* removed from their habitat, 154 males and 208 females, 326 *agrimia* in all.”

The Mc series is, overall, a list of commodities including the *agrimi* horn. Scholars seem to believe that the reference to the *agrimi* horn in the Mc series is contextually related to the manufacturing of composite bow, which are primarily made with *agrimi* horns (Table 4). Ventris and Chadwick cite an observation made by Evans that suggests some *agrimia* could have been semi-domesticated to prevent a shortage of or lack of access to *agrimia* for their horns. Due to the references both to *agrimi* live and deadstock some now interpret parts of the Mc series as also describing the other

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63 Palmer, “Managing the Wild: Deer and *Agrimia* in the Late Bronze Age Aegean,” 321 FN 2, 395-396, Pl. CXVIIa.; Ventriss and Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*, 301-302.; Bennett et al, *The Knossos Tablets: A Transliteration*, 63-65.; The ideogram for the agrimi/agrimi horns is labeled as CORN by scholars because the Latin word for ‘horn’ is *cornu*. Based on the context of the logogram, scholars think CORN may be a specific reference to the *agrimi*’s horns and may not refer to the entire animal. Suggestions that the ideograms for male and female goats when attached to *a-ki-ri-ja* might be referring to the animal in particular. Some scholars also suggest that there is not a clear differentiation between types of goat (other than gender) and that the tablet’s context is key to the decipherment of taxonomic goat type. Refer to Table 4 for further examples of Linear B tablets.

64 Palmer, “Managing the Wild: Deer and *Agrimia* in the Late Bronze Age Aegean,” 396.; Ventriss and Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*, 301-303.
various ways to avoid wasting the *agrimi* carcass—such as meat provisions, rugs, and so on.\(^{65}\)

Such extensive use of animals in antiquity is even mention in the Homeric epics.\(^{66}\)

The modern name, “*krikri,*” first appeared in 1950 when President Truman received an *agrimi* from the people of Chania; the Americans had linguistic difficulty pronouncing the name, so “*krikri*” formed as an easier substitution. Contemporary Cretans pronounced *άγριμι* without the ‘ά-’ and ‘-μί’ ([ά]γρί[μι]) which shortened the name to γρί/γρι; γρί/γρι then reduplicated to γρίγρι. Over time the terminology morphed into χριχρί/κρικρί, likely as a result of non-native Greek speakers rapidly reporting and using the name for a non-Greek speaking or reading audience.\(^{67}\)

Today, the *agrimi* is a protected species and is recognized as the national animal of Greece.\(^{68}\)

*Agrimia* were first introduced to the Aegean during the Neolithic, corresponding with the islands’ initial settlement phases.\(^{69}\) The earliest goat bones (unclear if wild, feral, or domesticated) on Crete were located in Stratum X at Knossos, dating to the 7\(^{th}\) millennium BCE and were found with other domesticated animals. Specifically concerning the *agrimi*, the earliest identified bones on Crete date to the 6\(^{th}\) millennium BCE and were found with domesticated goats and sheep at numerous excavation sites.\(^{70}\) Artistic, archaeological, and zoological evidence suggests that at some point *agrimia* were present throughout the Aegean and Greek mainland, but eventually died off. Today, due to diminished populations, *agrimia* only are found on Crete, Montecristo,

\(^{65}\) Palmer, “Managing the Wild: Deer and *Agrimia* in the Late Bronze Age Aegean,” 395.; Ventris and Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*, 301-302.


\(^{67}\) Bloedow, “The Significance of the Goat in Minoan Culture,” 2.

\(^{68}\) The continued cultural importance associated with the *agrimi* has continued from the Bronze Age into the modern era. The strength and power of the continuity of the *agrimi* into modern Greek culture and society cannot be ignored.


\(^{70}\) Ibid., 123, 128.
Antimilos, and Youra, but can be observed in zoos and in nature reserves around the world; the *agrimia* is endangered and is identified as a protected species.\(^71\) Despite being a protected species, the *agrimi* is still hunted; as many as ten to fifteen are poached per year by Cretan locals due to the *agrimi*’s association with being a traditional game animal.\(^72\)

The natural habitat of the *agrimi* is in high elevations on mountains and cliffs; on Crete, the *agrimi* population is centralized in the White Mountains in western Crete and the island’s three islets: Dia, Theodorou, and Agii Pantes.\(^73\) The *agrimi*’s natural habitat ultimately led the Minoans and Mycenaens to associate it with liminality, and their shared elevation with peak sanctuaries solidified a relationship between the *agrimi* and divinity in the eyes of the Minoans and Mycenaens. The relevance of the *agrimi*’s natural habitat is discussed further in Chapter 2.

The taxonomic status of the *agrimi* as being wild or feral is highly contested among scholars and remains uncertain. DNA analysis using samples from both modern and ancient *agrimia* indicate that it retained the wild phenotype of the wild bezoar goat and the Asiatic mouflon, as well as possessing a genotypic affinity to the domestic goat (*Capra hircus*) and domestic sheep (*Ovis aries*).\(^74\) The DNA analysis suggests that imported wild and domestic animals were most likely released into the wild and indicates a certain level of cross-mating between the wild and domestic types.\(^75\)

\(^71\) Ibid., 124-126, 129.
While some animals lose their horns without major injury or threat to their life, the agrimi’s horns are attached to the skull and cannot be removed without killing it. The horns continue to grow throughout the agrimi’s life and their age can be estimated based on the number of V-shaped grooves. Agrimi horns are typically thicker at the base and become thinner towards the tip, have a flat inner-side and rounded outer-side, and typically form a V- or teardrop shape that curve inward at the tips. Female horns are at most 30cm with shallow grooves and arch. Male horns can grow up to 84cm; two to three-year-old male horns are sickle-shaped, and by five or six years old the males have long and elongated horns that are known to develop a sudden recurved hook.\footnote{Porter, “The Cretan Wild Goat (\textit{Capra aegagrus cretica}) and the Theran ‘Antelopes,’” 300-303.}
CHAPTER 2: IDENTIFICATION WITH AGRIMI ICONOGRAPHY

Chapter 2 focuses on the Minoan and Mycenaean iconography associated with the agrimi and aims to determine the most probable use and symbolism of the figurine, as well as consider why it may have been left at Akrotiri. For the remainder of the thesis, the figurine is exclusively referred to as the Gold Agrimi. A major problem must first be addressed concerning non-art historians attempts to identify abstracted or stylized imagery—such as the Gold Agrimi. While the published works of Marco Masseti have been deeply informative and influential in consideration of the scientific and zooarchaeological portions of this thesis, he is not an art historian and has made a grave error in his own research on the Gold Agrimi. Despite the fact that a large percentage of the depictions of goat heads in the ancient Aegean include a detail of a small or large beard, a known characteristic of the agrimi, there are still a vast quantity of artistic representations of the agrimi without a beard in Minoan and Mycenaean art (such as Figures 6, 10, 20, 24a-c, 32, 38). Masseti describes the agrimi’s portrayal in Minoan and Mycenaean art as following a strict standardized format, but, as will be discussed in this chapter, the agrimi appears in a variety of ways that contradict Masseti’s statements. Further, compositional desires and constraints led the Minoans and Mycenaeans to alter known forms and styles.

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78 Refer to Marco Masseti, “A Zoomorphic Gold Figurine from the Late Bronze Age on the Island of Thera (Santorini), Greece,” Travaux de la Maison de l’Orient et de la Méditerranée 49, no.1 (2008): 553-559.
79 Masseti, “A Zoomorphic Gold Figurine from the Late Bronze Age on the Island of Thera (Santorini), Greece,” 555.
Dr. Christos Doumas, the director of excavations at Akrotiri, has stated a number of times that such a figurine does not exist within a known stylistic continuum of Minoan or Mycenaean zoomorphic art, writing, “the figurine is of a type unknown in the toreutic art of the prehistoric Aegean and parallels for it should perhaps be sought in the Near or Middle East.” Unusually, he does not recognize the non-gold parallels including clay or bronze figurines of agrimia (Figures 10, 11, 12). Understandably, Dr. Doumas is likely searching for other hollow gold figurines of a similar formal composition, but he may want to explore the possibility that the Gold Agrimi was an intentionally unique object. Or perhaps that the figurine was intentionally replicating stylized clay votive figurines. By presenting numerous depictions of the agrimi in Aegean art, it shall become clear that Doumas’ assessment of Aegean zoomorphic art is incorrect, as the presence of an object made from a unique material does not completely discredit its parallels made by other means.

**Find-spot of Artifact**

The Gold Agrimi (Figure 1) was discovered in 1999 during the construction of the modern roof complex that covers the archaeological site of Akrotiri. Found in an open-air or semi-sheltered space between the House of the Benches and Xeste 3, referred to as the Benches Square, there the small, gold figurine was located inside a clay larnax (Figures 2a-b, 3a-b). A rectangular depression inside the larnax, encasing the Gold Agrimi, indicates there was also evidence that a wooden box once held the Gold Agrimi (Figure 3a-b).

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81 Boultois, “Aspects of Religious Expression at Akrotiri,” 44.
The Benches Square is identified as a *locus sanctus*, or holy place, by archaeologists who believe the space was associated with cultic activity. This particular *locus sanctus* dates to the Late Cycladic period, at least as early as ca.1700 BCE; as excavations continue in that area, further evidence may support an even earlier date. The Benches Square is south of Xeste 3, a public building associated with cultic activities including ritual rites of passage, and is east of the House of the Benches, an administrative building; these buildings are located at what is believed to be the city’s main entrance (Refer to Map 3). Evidence of a temporary shelter with wooden beams is present in the enclosure; based on the presence of the temporary shelter and the wooden and clay boxes, there appears to have been a great deal of care and concern for the protection of the small gold figurine.

The figurine was discovered, as previously mentioned, inside of a wooden box, whose indentation is all that remains now, which was inside of a clay larnax (Figure 3a-b). The larnax was set atop a pile of arranged debris from the earthquakes preceding the eruption, and was buried under layers of pumice and ash which led archaeologists to confirm the larnax and figurine were placed in the *locus sanctus* after the earthquakes but before the eruption. Additionally, the larnax was located next to a pile of up to 691 single animal horns, 95% of which were male and 512 were ram horns (Figure 4). Thirty-four horns were “sprinkled with ochre after their severance from the rest of the skull,” and at least two horns were found with painted red parallel bands (Figure 5). The quantity of horns in a single enclosure, and the decorations are suggestive of some sort of

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82 *Loc. cit.*
84 Doumas, “Bringing Life to a Dead City at Akrotiri on the Island of Thera,” 58.; Boultois, “Aspects of Religious Expression at Akrotiri,” 44.
85 Boultois, “Aspects of Religious Expression at Akrotiri,” 44.
86 Trantalidou, “Archaeozoological research at Akrotiri,” ΑΛΣ 6, 66.
ritual or cultic event taking place. “The accumulation of horns at Akrotiri could not have taken
place later than the celebration of blood sacrifices aimed at offering food to and securing
reconciliation with the deity.”

Unfortunately, there are no publications that provide a stylistic and typological analysis of
the larnax, and the only published pictures of the larnax appear to be of it in situ (Figure 3a-b).
The lapse in record of the larnax’s structural and formal design is disappointing and should be
considered for future archaeological and art historical research. Based on personal
communications and careful examination of the photographs of the larnax in situ, the clay larnax
is most likely undecorated and very simple. The larnax also lacks any apparent applied pole or
rope loops along the sides of the chest, suggesting that while perhaps it resembles a larnax, it may,
in fact, simply be a clay box used to store and protect the Gold Agrimi.

The wooden box poses another mystery, as it no longer exists and thus cannot provide any
stylistic information (Figure 3a-b). A recent publication on artifacts in the Museum of Prehistoric
Thera notes that the box was actually painted red, but does not cite the original research or provide
an explanation concerning how such exciting information was determined. The box was likely
considered an elite or luxury item, as wooden chests were used in wealthy burials during the
MMIII-LM periods. When examined all together, the larnax, wooden box, Gold Agrimi, and the
horn pile come together and resemble some form of ritual or sacrificial burial in a sacred cultic

87 Loc. cit.
88 Personal communication with Dr. Angelos Papadopoulos while at ASOR in Boston, MA, November 2017. Dr.
Papadopoulos noted that he was able to see the artifacts within a few days following the discovery and stated that
the larnax was still somewhat dirty when he saw it but said he was fairly certain it was not painted or incised.
222-223.; For more information about the use of wooden coffins, refer to Robin Hägg and Franciska Sieurin’s “On
the Origin of the Wooden Coffin in Late Bronze Age Greece,” The Annual of the British School at Athens 77 (1982):
177-186.
space. The Gold Agrimi’s placement within the wooden box, which is often associated with elite burial, as well as inside the clay larnax, the ritual replication of a funerary burial is very evident.

**Direct Comparanda to Gold Agrimi**

Two additional gold agrimi or goat artifacts are noted as comparanda of the Gold Agrimi from Akrotiri. The British Museum currently houses a gold pendant in the form of a reclined agrimi (Figure 6); the object dates to Late Bronze Age (ca. 1700-1500 BCE) and is far more detailed and naturalistic than the figurine from Akrotiri. Based on the pendant’s meticulous detail, it should be considered that the Gold Agrimi possibly predates the pendant. The pendant is from the famed Aegina Treasure collection, which consists of jewelry and gold plate objects; the collection supposedly originated in a tomb on the island of Aegina.\(^9\) Later, scholars found evidence to suggest that the hoard of jewelry and gold likely came from Crete, possibly even from a royal tomb at Mallia. The gold was thought to have been stolen and melted down, a common practice among looters, and later French excavations found evidence supporting the looting theory.\(^9\) The reclining pose demonstrated by the agrimi pendant is also commonly seen in other Minoan and Mycenaean figurines, seals, wall paintings, and vessels from a variety of contexts (Figures 8a-b, 11a-b, 51, 53a-b, 58).

The Metropolitan Museum in New York is home to a gilt terracotta statuette of a goat from Dendra (Figure 7), dating to the Late Helladic III period, discovered in the vicinity of a royal tomb belonging to a princess at Dendra in the Peloponnese.\(^9\) The Mycenaean statuette from Dendra has a comparable pose to the Gold Agrimi, although the upturned tail, small horns, curved nose, and

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dipping stomach all indicate a style and technique very different from the Gold Agrimi. The drooping stomach body type is similar to depictions of agrimia on two kymbi from Akrotiri (Figure 54a-b), suggesting that such a design was not unknown to the inhabitants of Thera. The statuette’s short horns indicate that it might be a domestic goat, whose horns are smaller than wild goats; the agrimia on kymbi have similarly stunted horns and could also indicate a juvenile or young female agrimi (Figure 54a). While the gilt statuette and the pendant were not discovered in similar contexts as the Gold Agrimi, they are still identifiable as elite objects and signify that the agrimi and, more generally, the goat was highly symbolic and revered in Minoan and Mycenaean culture.

**Iconography**

The agrimi is the second most commonly depicted animal of the Minoan and Mycenaean world, with the bull as the most common. In Minoan and Mycenaean works, the agrimi is portrayed in five categorical types: Sacrifice, Predator/Prey, Animal-Companion to the Deity, Sexual Potency/Fertility, and Natural World. The agrimi is depicted in a variety of styles and techniques, including as glyptic on seal stones and signet rings, in wall paintings, on ceramic vessels, as figurines (clay or terracotta, bronze, gold), in ivory plaques, and even as faience. The objects being discussed in this section were found at a variety of locations and contexts including peak sanctuaries, urban spaces, homes, and in cultic and funerary contexts, as well as unknown or unrecorded. These artifacts range in value from elite to lower class objects, as the agrimi appears to have been valued by all levels of society.

Understanding the iconography both in tandem and separate from the archaeological contexts is necessary for developing a narrative of the iconographic reception and its existence.

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94 Bloedow, "The Significance of the Goat in Minoan Culture,” 1-2, 6.
within the culture and society. During the research process it became clear that not every item found in a particular context had iconography that directly matched its setting, although the majority did express iconographic relevance. Based on this observation, the following analysis is organized by putting an emphasis on the iconography, and then further considering the location or context in which it was discovered to contextualize the symbolism and purpose of the object. This places greater value on the object and its iconographic symbolism as being reflective of the Minoans and Mycenaeans, which also influences how the archaeological context and record is interpreted, and vice versa. This decision was, in part, influenced by the apparent flexibility in which certain objects are discovered and how two objects with the same original use may be found in two distinctly different contexts. The clay larnax that the Gold Agrimi was discovered in, for example, is a funerary object and yet it was found in a non-funerary context (Figure 3a-b).

Another influencing factor for the initial focus on the figurine’s iconography is that by understanding how the Minoans and Mycenaeans represented the agrimi in art better informs about the meaning and purpose of the Gold Agrimi as a culturally and societally valued object. The expectation of the following iconographic analysis and discussion of the five categorical types, in combination with the above discussion of the find-spot and comparanda is that the greater sphere of influence of the agrimi in Minoan and Mycenaean iconography will become evident. Furthermore, being able to grasp the role and symbolism of the agrimi in art will further art historical and archaeological understanding of the animal and icon.

Sacrifice

Sacrificial scenes consist of both direct or implied representations. Direct sacrifice scenes portray the animal on, or in, the vicinity of a sacrificial table, as well as in the form of three-dimensional animal figurines. Three-dimensional figurines from cultic contexts are interpreted as
being substitutional sacrificial offerings and votives. Implied sacrifice scenes depict an animal in the vicinity of specific imagery associated with cultic spaces and sacrifice, but without visual representation of the sacrifice. Such imagery includes trees, which are the most common symbol used to identify a sacrificial or sacred space; columns and pillars have a similar role as the tree but they are usually found to represent a sacred space in an urban area, often thought to indicate a local shrine. When horned animals are depicted with a tree, it should be understood that the creature is being designated and identified as the sacrificial victim in that scene. Animals are often portrayed as heraldically flanking columns and pillars or at the very least nearby them. Agriculture also played a key role in cultic activity because, unsurprisingly, the majority of the participants were farmers. A great deal of cultic power and influence was associated with animals and the natural world. If and when the Minoans and Mycenaeans needed to restore equilibrium to the world they would do so through animal, or in rare and extreme cases, human sacrifice. Sacrifice iconography appears in a number of contexts, including wall painting, figurines, sarcophagi and larnakes, and glyptic seals and signets. The primary archaeological locations that these objects are found in usually consists of cult sites, such as funerary contexts, peak sanctuaries, sacred spaces, and other cult locations. The examples of sacrifice being discussed below include the famous Hagia Triada sarcophagus, five three-dimensional figurines, two pairs of bronze horns, and five glyptic seals (Figures 8a-b -18).

The Hagia Triada sarcophagus depicts a bull being sacrificed on an altar or table with a pair of agrimi underneath (Figure 8a-b); at the right of the scene are two pairs of horns of

consecration flanking a tree which are next to a large double axe. The figure to the right of the table is likely the one who is performing the sacrifice or is at least directly involved in the cultic activity. The placement of the agrimi under the sacrificial table suggests that they are the next to be sacrificed, and thus the viewer instinctually knows that the agrimi are being sacrificed. This immediate understanding that the agrimi are going to be sacrificed means that this is a direct representation of sacrifice.98

A sacrificial table or altar is depicted in a number of seals such as the Mycenaean cylinder seal portraying two agrimi standing on a platform being flanked by a sacred tree and a human figure (Figure 9). The agrimi are contorting their bodies to look towards the sacred tree, likely as an acknowledgement of the cultic nature of their location. Since humans and trees also appear with the agrimi in non-religious imagery, they need to be accompanied by additional details to signify a cult orientation. On the cylinder seal, the platform expresses the cult context through being physically connected to the tree; based on the iconography, the platform should be identified as an altar. By placing the agrimi on the altar it becomes clear that they are, in that moment, about to be sacrificed. Also, this scene is likely showing off the wealth of the seal’s owner. While the dedication and sacrifice of a single agrimi would have been highly valued, the fact that he or she was able to dedicate two agrimi indicates that the individual had enough personal means either to capture, or pay someone, to hunt the agrimi on their behalf.

The Mycenaean cylinder seal is not only a direct sacrificial scene but is a sign of personal wealth and dedication to the cult (Figure 9); it even can be speculated that the seal’s owner may have inserted himself into the scene, further developing a personal connection and relationship.

with the cultic ritual. If the owner appears in the scene, then the seal itself is not only representative of direct sacrifice by way of a visual representation but is also a substitutional sacrifice. The representation of the sacrifice could have been just as powerful as the actual sacrifice, and by being a personal item the seal and its iconography has a close bond with the owner. Ultimately, the personal nature of the relationship between the seal and its owner suggests that the seal may have been perceived as a repeating sacrificial dedication by the owner. The object’s discovery in a grave is indicative of the original owner’s desire to continue his relationship with the cult and that particular sacrifice, even in death.

Three-dimensional animal votive figurines and metal horns found in cultic contexts are interpreted as sacrificial substitutions for actual animal sacrifices. These artifacts are identified as direct sacrificial representations on account of their role as a substitutional sacrifice (Figures 10-14). As a substitution, the figurines embody the role and spirit of the sacrificial victim and, in order to be representative of the animal sacrifice, they tend to be generic and stylized in appearance, as in the case of the Gold Agrimi. The generic and stylized forms allow for the dedication to remain non-specific so as to represent the species as a whole and not a specific and single animal within the larger grouping. Additionally, these votive figurines and the metal horns were likely a financially beneficial alternative to bringing live animal sacrifices to peak sanctuaries and other cult locations on a regular or semi-regular basis. Just like the seal (Figure 9), they could act as a long-term sacrificial offering. All of the examples of the votive figurines and metal horns were discovered in cult contexts at sites such as Petsofas, Hagia Triada, Patso Cave, Porti, and Platanos (Figures 10-14).

Depictions of implied sacrifice are also found in several mediums (Figures 15-18). The implied type is very common among Minoan and Mycenaean sacrificial scenes, as they express an entire event or story into a compressed image. As mentioned previously, implied sacrifice types evoke the sacrifice but do not show it; these include the use of imagery such as a sacred tree or tree of life, column, pillar, or other religious imagery such as the sacral horns. A three-sided prism seal that shows the head of a priest, a running agrimi, and a bucranium; each image is on its own side of the prism and they each represent different stages of the implied sacrificial event in each image (Figure 15). The priest is shown with a bow and arrow, a common weapon depicted with priests, emblematic of their power and authority, along with their ability to kill or maim; such iconography is necessary in order to evoke the priests’ ability to perform sacrifices. The bucranium is applied to suggest a cultic setting or context for the sacrifice, and the agrimi is the animal recognized as the sacrificial victim. Some scholars have suggested that this prism seal is actually presenting a predatory hunt narrative; the bucranium muddies that theory, as it tends to be associated with sacrifice and cult.

Other scenes of implied sacrifice show the agrimi in the vicinity of objects that are associated with sacrifice and cult, but without the presence of the altar or table as emblematic of the ritual (Figures 16-18). Through depicting the agrimi near a sacred tree or a pillar, the observer is made aware that the animal is in a cultic location associated with sacrifice, as described previously. A gold ring from Mycenae depicts an agrimi with a tree or plant growing out from its back (Figure 16); this iconography identifies the agrimi as the sacrificial victim by combining the animal with the sacred tree. A seal from Knossos portrays an agrimi in the foreground and a grand

pillar in the background (Figure 18); while the proximity of animal to architecture is enough to link the *agrimi* with being a sacrificial victim, the *agrimi* is possibly being tethered to the grand pillar. A cylinder seal from Mycenae shows an *agrimi* flanked by humans near a sacred tree (Figure 17). This grouping of the *agrimi* with humans is non-aggressive and thus not a hunt, and the sacred tree informs the observer about the precise nature of the gathering: a sacrifice. The majority of the seals identified as having sacrificial imagery, both direct and implied, were found in funerary contexts (Figures 9, 16-18).

**Predator/Prey**

Predator/Prey scenes depict the hunt of an animal, whether the hunter is human, creature, or both. The *agrimi*, in particular, was the most commonly depicted animal of prey in Minoan and Mycenaean art.\(^{102}\) Predator/prey scenes appear as either direct or implied, and they are differentiated by a human’s presence or lack thereof, similar to the sacrifice type. The elites are not known to have partaken in *agrimi* hunting, as it was primarily performed by the middle class; scenes of *agrimi* hunting occasionally, but not typically, appear in prestige art or goods.\(^{103}\) Hunting the *agrimi* was perceived as a test of one’s abilities, due to the *agrimi*’s primary habitat on high cliff-faces, and to symbolize a man’s “dominance and masculine prowess.”\(^{104}\) *Agrimi* hunting scenes appear on stone seals more frequently than on gold rings, which were an elite item; the stone seals were primarily associated as objects belonging to the lower classes.\(^{105}\) The disassociation from the elite likely was a result of the fact that hunting was a regular activity,

\(^{102}\) Bloedow, "Notes on Animal Sacrifices in Minoan Religion," 37.


\(^{104}\) Hussein, “Minoan Goat Hunting: Social Status and the Economics of War,” 563, 566.

whether for sport, food, or religious purposes, performed by lower and middle-class citizens, similar in the way that agriculture and farming was deeply rooted in cultic ritual.

Just like sacrificial scenes, predator/prey is further defined by direct and implied representational types. Direct predator/prey scenes generally show the human hunter’s active involvement in the hunt. The human hunter is often accompanied by fellow hunters and/or one or more dogs; hunting items, such as a chariot, weapons, or boots, are also found in these scenes. Implied predator/prey scenes usually exclude the human hunter completely, substituting the hunter with other predators, such as animals or weapons. Similar to the implied sacrifice type, implied predator/prey scenes are intended to evoke and express the essence of the hunt and present a condensed version of events. As for being hunted by non-domesticated predatory animals, *agrimei* are often depicted being chased by lions and griffins, are rarely pursued by marine life, and are portrayed with an array of mythical and real creatures. Contrary to what these scenes depict, lions were not present on Crete and the Aegean islands, griffins are mythical creatures, and “other predators such as the octopus and fish or dolphin would never have engaged in hunting wild goats.” Despite being problematic with regards to realism, the predator/prey scenes are simply meant to identify the *agrimei* with being the primary, appropriate, and ideal animal of prey. The variety of visual form the predator takes—human, mythical or real animal, or inanimate object—emphasizes the *agrimei* as the paramount prey and indicates that the *agrimei* is prey to any and all predator forms. Furthermore, it indicates that the ultimate goal is to hunt and catch an *agrimei*; anything and anyone can act as predator, but the *agrimei* has a distinctive societal role as the animal of prey.

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108 *Loc. cit.*
As mentioned above, the predator/prey scenes appear frequently on seals, but they are also found on wall paintings, pottery, ivory goods, weapons, and larnakes. Among the objects being presented are one ivory game box, two larnakes, eight seals, one krater, and a gold sword handle (Figures 19-31a-d). Of these objects, the ivory game box, the two larnakes, and three seals fall under direct predator/prey categorization (Figures 19-24a-c), and there are five seals, a larnax, a gold pyxis, and the gold sword handle which are examples of indirect predator/prey depictions (Figures 24a-c -31a-d); one of the larnakes (Figure 24a-c) shows depictions of both direct and indirect predator/prey scenes, and thus can be associated with both categories.

The ivory game box (Figure 19) depicts two different hunts, each involving a chariot and archers. Sides A and B both show animals fleeing from the hunters, being overcome with flying arrows. Similar to the game box, the two larnakes (Figures 20, 24a-c) present extreme and aggressive actions by the human predators. Larnakes (Figure 20) from the Postpalatial period often present a story or scene by combining various viewpoints, causing the landscapes to compress into a rather unusually rendered final image.\(^{109}\) This presents a more flexible reading of the scene while getting across the primary, and direct, message of the hunt.

Predator/prey scenes are very common on seals; two direct predator/prey seal depictions show the human predator’s immediate involvement in the hunt (Figures 21, 22). Just like the Postpalatial larnax (Figure 20), the human has a canine companion to help in the hunt (Figure 21). In contrast to the human and canine hunting scene, the seal of the hunter stabbing the agrimi includes a bucranium in between the human’s legs (Figure 22). Aniconic animal heads appear on a number of seals and pottery, some of which have a narrative that may not be always immediately

recognizable. The aniconic animal head may not be limited to the predator/prey type, as the three-sided prism seal with the priest, agrimi, and bucranium acts as an example of sacrificial context (Figures 15, 22, 30). Not all direct predator/prey scenes show the action or the precise moment of the hunt; some depict the aftermath of the hunt with the human predator carrying deceased agrimi on a pole; this image is referred to as a ‘quarry catch’ (Figure 23). The scene is not an implied hunt because the seal’s observer knows that the man in the scene killed the two agrimi. These after-hunt scenes (Figure 23) are still representative of the hunt because depicting the human predator carrying their deceased prey is suggestive of direct human involvement; such visual cues inform the observer of exactly what happened just moments prior. The victorious carrying of the dead prey is just another part of the hunting event.

The larnax from Episkopi (Figure 24a-c) has both direct and implied predatory/prey associations. The majority of the larnax directly shows the humans and their hunting dogs pursuing the agrimi, but three of the panels depict implied scenes. In these three panels, the hunting dogs are attacking the agrimi without a human directly immediately present. The dogs imply the presence of the human hunter, thus making the observer interpret the scene as if the human is rendered in the panels.

A common implied predator/prey motif shows an agrimi with a spear or arrow hovering over their back, appearing as if it were flying through the air and perpetually in the moment just before the kill (Figures 25-27). These are very simple scenes and are often definable by the shagginess of the animal’s back fur and the spear or arrow. These depictions allow for a quick assessment of the iconography and meaning of the scene. As previously mentioned, animals are

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often depicted hunting without any obvious or recognizable human intervention (Figures 28-31a-d). The predatory animals in these scenes are often lions, dogs, and birds of prey which, as described above, are not always accurate to the ecosystems known to the Aegean. For example, one seal portrays the *agrimi* as prey to a bird, squid/octopus, and a demon (Figure 28); this is clearly meant to heighten the *agrimi* as an animal of prey, as none of these could realistically entertain or be entertained as hunting the *agrimi*. More often dogs are depicted as biting, or in pursuit of the *agrimi* (Figure 29); the presence of a dog as a predator is less fantasy-based and more likely a reflection of the common practice of hunting with dogs. Artifacts like the ivory game box (Figure 19) and the gold pyxis (Figure 30) are well recognized in the Aegean for their hunting scenes portrayed on a small or personal box. In regards to the pyxis, the repeated scene all the way around is clearly meant to invoke a sense of power and prestige. Not only would the pyxis have been an elite object based on the wood and applied gold materials, but it would also recognize the predatory power of the lion with the symbolism of the *agrimi*.

Animal predator scenes are frequently displayed in a circular format: the animals uniformly surround the *agrimi*, as in the seal with the bird, squid/octopus, and a demon (Figure 28). The Mycenaean seal depicting a dog and an *agrimi* (Figure 29) also has a cyclical format, as they are parallel and in motion, indicating movement in tandem with one another. The structure of the pyxis allows for the cyclic chase of the deer and the *agrimi* by the lion to continue for eternity (Figure 30). The guard on the handle shows a twisted and recumbent *agrimi* and lion that are watching one another, forever being frozen in a moment of awareness and recognition of their roles in the dynamic of predator and prey (Figure 31a-d). These scenes inform the observer that both man and animal want to hunt the *agrimi*. 43
While the *agrimi* was hunted for a number of reasons, the horns themselves are known to have been used to make archery bows. The composite horn bows made from the *agrimi*’s horn were known as extremely strong and durable and were greatly treasured by the Minoans.\(^{112}\) The bow in the seal depicting a dog and an archer hunting an *agrimi* is likely a composite horn bow, whose shape matches the recurved bow on the seal (Figure 21).\(^{113}\) The use of the *agrimi* horn as a bow further reflects upon the *agrimi*’s title as an animal of prey and is now also adjusted to being a protective and predatory creature. The composite horn-bow was used to hunt and for battles, making the *agrimi*’s horn associated with being a provider of both food and security. The hunt and its associated tools were highly valued by the Minoans and Mycenaeans, who are often found buried with their bows, arrows, and other weaponry.\(^{114}\)

The Late Minoan II bronze sword with a gold handle (Figure 31a-d) is an example of the Minoan and Mycenaean tradition of being buried with a weapon. The sword may only have been decorative and not actually used in battle based on its condition of the blade, the use of gold for the entire handle, and the finely chased decoration. The gold handle is decorated with depictions of lions hunting *agrimia*. Just as with the composite horn-bows, the sword handle aligns the *agrimi* with being both prey and predator because the *agrimi* are being pursued by the lions, while also being a part of a hunting and fighting tool. Here, the *agrimi* being pursued are meant as a reflection of the violent and murderous acts in which a sword is necessary for survival, whether that means the continuation of the group through providing hunted prey or the defeat of an enemy in battle. In forming this dual association of both prey and predator in these contexts, the larger role of the *agrimi* can be understood as transcending the role of prey. In these circumstances the *agrimi* is


\(^{113}\) Crowley, *Iconography of Aegean Seals*, 185.

thus identifiable as the all-encompassing conception and notion of “hunt,” encompassing both the prey and the predator. The sword’s iconography thus informs that the agrimi, although only ever visualized as the prey, was also understood as the complete embodiment of “hunt” and all things associated with it: violence, security, provisions, life and death, et al.

**Animal-Companion to the Deity**

The animal-companion motif is represented by two types: familiar and attendant. The familiar is an animal or fantastic creature that has a special relationship with a human figure designated as a Lady or a Lord. The attendant is an animal or fantastic creature that “attends a VIP Mistress or Master or where it attends a central construction.”¹¹⁵ The Lord, Lady, Master, and Mistress are all given their names based on the animals they are represented with and the type of relationship being depicted; when represented with the agrimi, they become the Agrimi Lady, Agrimi Lord, Agrimi Mistress, and Agrimi Master. To clarify, the Lady/Lord are not necessarily recognized as a divine being, but more along the lines of an elite; this may include a high priest or priestess or perhaps a member of a ruling family. The Mistress/Master are specifically understood as divine beings. This terminological differentiation is not agreed upon by all but is often recognized and applied by the scholarly community as a way of distinguishing a suggestive visual hierarchy in which the Lady/Lord are reflective of elite human status but they remain as lesser than the Mistress/Master divinities. Beyond the Agrimi Lady/Lord/Mistress/Master, the agrimi has been associated with the Mistress of Animals, Master of Animals, Goddess of the Mountain, and Goddess of Nature;¹¹⁶ only the Agrimi Lady and Lord, Master and Mistress of/with Animals, and Agrimi Master and Mistress are discussed.

Glyptic and wall paintings appear to be the most common representational medium, with seals being the more popular or commonly found of the two (Figures 32-43). The glyptic objects appear across the Minoan and Mycenaean world and at varying levels of quality, and likely were owned by people of all social strata. The examples discussed were found primarily in funerary contexts, and a single fresco from the “villa” at Hagia Triada. No three-dimensional depictions of the agrimi as a familiar or attendant were uncovered during the course of this research.

The familiar-Lady/Lord relationship very much resembles that of a pet and its owner because the animal is often depicted on a leash or is being handled or embraced by the Lady/Lord in a personal way.117 One of the most common of these embracing gestures is of a sitting or standing Lady with an outstretched hand in the direction of the familiar (Figures 32-34).118 The outstretched hand gesture is usually read as the Lady feeding her familiar or touching its nose (Figures 32-34); these scenes are typically interpreted as evoking a tender moment.119 The Agrimi Lady’s relationship in these scenes is clearly very intimate and friendly. The Lady and Lord are also seen riding the familiar in one of two ways: on the familiar’s back or in a chariot drawn by the creature (Figure 35). The riding imagery reportedly appears both with the Lord and Lady together and individually (Figure 35). Overall, as previously mentioned, the Lady and Lord are recognized as being elite and important figures, but it remains unclear if that status is due to “religious, aristocratic or royal power.”120

The Master of Animals type generally appears with flanking and heraldic creatures (Figures 36 and 37). The Master of Animals often appears being flanked by lions, just as he does

117 Crowley, Iconography of Aegean Seals, 256.
118 Ibid., 362.
119 Marinatos, Minoan Religion, 152.
120 Crowley, Iconography of Aegean Seals, 361.
on the cylinder seal from Cyprus (Figure 36). The seal from Cyprus symbolically represents divine and natural hierarchies by depicting agrimi being attacked by predatory animals at the same time as the predators are being subdued by the Master of Animals. The pack of lions or dogs attacking the single agrimi is an additional way of indicating the lower status of the agrimi in this context. The flipped position of the lions, which are being held by their tails suggests the power of the Master, who has power over the lions.121 “A hierarchy of power is thus expressed in which the predator (lion) threatens its prey (goat), and yet the predator is in turn subdued by a superior master.”122 In this context, the Master of Animals is associated with being a dominant source of power in the natural world and is thus depicted demanding worship and respect (Figure 36). Other depictions of the Master of Animals represent the animals as willing participants (Figure 37). One such example comes from Kydonia and it depicts fictional creatures worshipping the Master of Animals (Figure 37). The Master of Animals is depicted standing on or between the horns of consecration and is being flanked by a winged agrimi and a demon (or genius) with an offering.123 The winged agrimi, or “goat-griffin,” is a type of hybrid animal depiction, and, in this case, indicates that the agrimi as having a special or possibly “magic” association. The demon is a common iconographic motif, especially in the Late Bronze Age.124 The Master of Animals does not need to demand respect from the winged agrimi and the demon; they already are submissive and respectful to the deity. The connection between the man and the sacral horns further acknowledge the central male figure as significant, and when paired with the flanking creatures, he is recognized as a Master of Animals. Unlike the Master of Animals who is shown with a variety

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121 Marinatos, Minoan Religion, 167-168.
122 Ibid., 168.
123 Ibid., 167-168.
of animal attendants, the representations of the *Agrimi* Master are only ever depicted with *agrimi* attendants (Figure 38).

The *Agrimi* Mistress is often depicted carrying an *agrimi* over her shoulder (Figure 39) or holding the *agrimi* by the base of its horns (Figure 40). The lifting and carrying of the *agrimi* over her shoulder, as well as by the horns, indicates the power or [spiritual] strength of the Mistress; the Mistress dominates the creature in the same context of the Master of Animals and *Agrimi* Master. The *Agrimi* Mistress also appears in the same, or similar, flanked stance as the Mistress of Animals: wearing the stacked composite horn bow headdress and accompanied by flanking attendants (Figure 41). Whether a Master or Mistress, the consistency of the iconography of the flanking attendants with a central figure suggests widespread and defined cultic imagery. The power of an image depicting animals flocking to a central male or female human figure is indicative of the strong relationship between the Minoans and Mycenaeans and their surrounding environments. The desire to hold a command over the natural world is conveyed through these figures who could control nature, an unattainable ability or skill for the Minoans and Mycenaeans. The Master and Mistress also further exemplify the centralized role of agriculture in Minoan and Mycenaean cultures, as the Master and Mistress represent the desire for control over the land and fertility.

The Hagia Triada wall painting (Figure 42) depicts either a Lady (*Agrimi* Lady) or Mistress (*Agrimi* Mistress or Mistress of Animals) with an outstretched arm directed towards a pair of *agrimia*. The wall painting is divided into a tripartite mural, as it shows three different but related

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125 Janice L. Crowley, “The Aegean Master of Animals: The Evidence of the Seals, Signets, and Sealings,” in *The Master of Animals in Old World Iconography*, eds. Derek B. Counts and Bettina Arnold (Budapest: Archaeolings, 2010), 85, Fig.35.
scenes. The far-left panel shows a female with exposed breasts in a submissive kneeling pose and is facing the central panel; the woman is associated with being a human attendant or worshipper. The agrimi on the far-right are running in the direction towards the central panel and are generally regarded as an attendant; if one assumes that this is a Lady and not a Mistress, then they could be familiars. The woman with exposed breasts in the central panel—who is either a Lady or Mistress—appears to be by an architectural structure and is leaning towards the agrimi with a slightly outstretched hand.

The apparent focus of the tripartite mural is the central female and her location. Based on the architectural structure behind the woman and the low ground line contrasts with the high ground line of the left and right panels, one can surmise that she is positioned in front of a peak sanctuary. Based on the direct interaction between the agrimi and the central woman, clearly the agrimi are her animal attendants or familiars despite the additional presence of the wild cats and birds. Most scholars identify the central female as a Mistress, likely a Mistress of Animals or Agrimi Mistress, but the more accurate identification is that she is an Agrimi Lady. There is no clearly defined distinction between the Mistress and Lady types, but it can be assumed that there is a slight hierarchical or divine variance. Some scholars have suggested that the Lady and Mistress types are just different personas of the same female divinity, so the ambiguity present in the Hagia Triada wall painting is understandable.127

An epiphany scene on a seal ring from Pylos shares in the ambiguity noted in the Hagia Triada fresco, as the divinity’s identity is completely unknown to modern scholars (Figure 43). Iconography of the epiphany of a deity derived from a cultic ritual, which results in the appearance

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of a deity and the exchange or communication between the divinity and a worshipper. The most common type of epiphany ritual involved the presentation of gifts or libations for the deity.\textsuperscript{128} Little is known about what happened during the actual epiphany ritual, but a theory suggested by Pötscher posits that it may have involved, or had an association with, \textit{hieros gamos} ("sacred/holy marriage").\textsuperscript{129} Represented on the seal ring is a worshipper, a deity, and an \textit{agrimi}, and they appear to be located at a mountaintop shrine (Figure 43). The \textit{agrimi} likely had no purpose in this scene other than to possibly identify the deity, or perhaps to suggest a specific location, as there is no known evidence of the \textit{agrimi} being involved in \textit{hieros gamos}. The \textit{agrimi}’s scale might suggest that it held particular significance to that site or was associated with the deity, potentially as an attendant. The \textit{agrimi} also looks as though it could be an attendant to the deity based on the way that it appears to be flanking the male divinity. While the body language of the deity and worshipper suggests that the \textit{agrimi} is not directly involved in the ritual taking place, the Minoans and Mycenaeans likely still perceived the \textit{agrimi} as being an attendant (or equivalent role) to the deity.

The Lady/Lord and Mistress/Master are widely debated, much of the time being questioned as to whether or not they are the same male and female deities or if they represent separate figures. For future research, to limit the variability, a possible solution for avoiding the semantical differentiations would be to simply address the female deities as \textit{Potnia Theron} and the males as \textit{Potnios Theron}; these can act as umbrella terminology for all Lady/Lord/Mistress/Master types. In the meantime, whichever side of the debate one leans towards, the underlying iconographic and thematic symbolism continues to remain the same: the predominance of nature in the Minoan and

\textsuperscript{128} Marinatos, \textit{Minoan Religion}, 175.
\textsuperscript{129} Dietrich, “Aspects of Minoan and Mycenaean Iconography,” 6.
Mycenaean world and the delicate relationship between humans and their environment. The agrimi is a liminal creature, existing both among the people, yet also being associated with the divine, where they live among the peak sanctuaries. The attachment of the agrimi to these divine and powerful figures is, at least in part, based on the Minoan and Mycenaean association of peak sanctuaries and higher powers, and the presence of the agrimi in the vicinity of these mountain top sites.

**Sexual Potency and Fertility**

Scenes of sexual potency and fertility appear in two main visual types: (1) depictions of mating (Figures 44-46) and (2) the mother-juvenile relationship (Figures 47-49). Male and female agrimia take on different associative roles when it comes to scenes of sexual potency and fertility. Individually, male agrimia tend to be associated with virility and potency, as well as aggressive behaviors linked with masculine sexuality, while the female agrimi are associated with nutrition and nurturing qualities and characteristics. As a whole, male and female agrimi are associated with life-bringing or rejuvenating qualities related to agriculture and animal reproduction.

Representations of agrimia associated with sexual potency and fertility are often represented through depictions of mating or of suckling kids and understood as connected to agricultural wellbeing and reproduction. Sexual potency both relates to human and natural mating, as humans to reproduce was recognized as being equivalent to the need for animal reproduction. Scenes of sexual potency and fertility are representations and reminders of the cycle of life and cyclic nature. Depictions of sexual potency and fertility appear in numerous archaeological

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132 Bloedow, “The Significance of the Goat in Minoan Culture,” 31-34.
contexts and in the form of ivory plaques, a gold ring, and seal stones (Figures 44-49); this type also may be depicted on pottery and wall painting but neither were uncovered during the process of this research.

A gold ring known as the Burgon Ring depicts a male *agrimi* mounted on top of a female *agrimi* in the midst of copulating (Figure 44). The scene is overtly sexual and aggressive, indicating the primary narrative is male dominance and sexual potency. Fertility and reproduction are innately understood aspects of the sexual action currently underway, but they are not the primary thematic objective of this precise scene. If the symbolic objective focused on fertility and reproduction then the male and female would potentially be depicted closer in size like two additional Minoan seals (Figures 45 and 46), all of which are rendered as equating the role of the female and the male in the act of reproduction, though gender equality was not likely the motive. Representing the *agrinia* as equal in scale was likely due to the hyper-focus on the act of copulation and the concept of reproduction in nature.

On a practical level, identifying the gender of each *agrimi* is still relevant, but can be done without the drastic differentiation in scale. The gender-ambiguous seals (Figures 45 and 46) distinguish between male and female based primarily on the position of the body (i.e., males are always depicted mounting a female) and horn size when possible (i.e., larger horns for males, shorter horns for females). While female *agrinia* are known to be smaller than their male counterparts, overt or extreme size divergence—such as in the Burgon Ring (Figure 44)—is likely indicative of a focus on the male *agrimi* as a sexually aggressive and powerful creature. Thus, the Burgon Ring’s primary objective is to represent the power and stamina of the male, rather than indicate reproductive activities of animals, nature, or humans.
Depictions of the female *agrimi*, as previously mentioned, are identified with fertility as opposed to male sexual aggression. Most often, female *agrimi* are shown nursing or feeding a juvenile (Figures 47 and 48). The female *agrimi* is both nurturing and providing the juvenile with nutrients, which aid in their growth and development into an adult *agrimi*. The suckling motif symbolized the fertility of both the mother, animal and human, and nature. The female *agrimi* is paralleled with the sustenance and nutrition of the natural world because she provides for her offspring in the same way that nature supplies food and resources for humans and animals. Scenes that depict a mother and her offspring, including suckling and non-suckling iconography (Figures 47-49), represent the cycle of fertility and prosperity within the natural world. They signify the cycle of life and can be understood as an acknowledgement of nature and all that it is capable of doing.

Overall, sexual potency and fertility imagery appear to be one of the least commonly found motifs in *agrimi* iconography. Despite being linked with agriculture, which connects to sacrifice and predator/prey, the copulation motif does not appear often.

**Natural World**

Depictions of *agrimia* in the context of the natural world that have no overtly discernable or standardized symbolism are fairly common. These types tend to be identified as landscape or genre scenes in which the *agrimi* appears in a vast array of stances and contexts (Figures 50-62). These scenes appear on stone and clay vessels, seals, and wall paintings; the objects being discussed include items from burial and grave contexts, palaces, urban settings, and unspecified

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locations. They span a range of status and quality, as the intricacy of design, composition, pigments (if any), and fineness of material, which may or may not also reflect the locations they were found.

Scenes of the natural world inform scholars about the seasonal patterns, habits, and characteristics of the agrimi; the iconography of the agrimi also may change based on the season and environment. For example, the presence of the autumn crocuses signifies the end of the dry summer and the start of the rainy season in October and the agrimi’s mating season is during the cool and wet months (Figure 50). Scenes that include both the autumn crocuses and the agrimi represent a shift in season and informs the observer about the agrimi’s habits at that particular time of the year (Figure 50). Symbolically, the autumn crocuses represent a rebirth of the landscape and the agrimi signifies the rebirth of a species. Another flower, the crown daisy, appears from March until June, which corresponds with the agrimi’s birthing period. When considered together, the animal and plant symbolize seasonal cycles; these types of scenes were likely incredibly popular and informative as calendrical markers for farmers and hunters. Recognizing the seasonal habits and behaviors of the agrimi as paralleling the climate shifts throughout the year likely would have resulted in a better understanding of the landscape, seasons, and climate.134

Scenes depicting the natural world are often associated with prestige items linked to the ruling and elite class. These prestige items often portray the agrimi existing in a world of the non-human and the allegorical, such as the Zakros Rhyton (Figure 51a-b) and agrimi appliqués (Figure 50).135 The Zakros Rhyton depicts a peak sanctuary at the top of a mountainous landscape with agrimi reclining, posed heraldically, and prancing or leaping (Figure 51a-b). The Zakros Rhyton is the perfect example of agrimi being shown in their natural habitat. The variety of indicated

134 Porter, “The Cretan Wild Goat (Capra aegagrus cretica) and the Theran ‘Antelopes,’” 297.; Porter also suggests that the presence of ivy was associated with heightened aggressive male behaviors seen during the rutting season.
135 Hussein, “Minoan goat hunting” 560-561.
actions and stances of the *agrimi* in the mountainous landscape suggest that the species is very
comfortable in that habitat and can easily maneuver. The inclusion of the peak sanctuary likely has
no symbolic significance, but more likely the peak sanctuary acts as a location marker recognizable
for an intended audience.

Depictions of *agrimi* in the natural world often have fairly simple compositions, usually
including a tree, the ground-line, or a plant other than a tree. Two painted kymbi and a decorated
pithos from Akrotiri each depict the *agrimi* interacting with its environment and other animals
(Figures 52a-b and 53). The two kymbi (Figure 52a-b) present a parallelism of *agrimi* and their
mountainous and cliff-face habitat with the watery habitat of the sea-dwelling dolphins. This
parallel was likely intended to display two extremes of the natural world and the creatures that
possess it. The pithos (Figure 53) shows an *agrimi* interacting with a bull in an abstracted but
recognizably natural environment, based on the floating nature of their bodies accompanied by the
plants; a deeper symbolic meaning of this scene is unlikely. Visually, works similar to two kymbi
and the pithos are simple and are non-narrative; the scenes present the world as the Minoans and
Mycenaeans saw it—a reflection of their surroundings (this observation extends to Figures 54-62).

The *agrimi* is repeatedly shown in connection with their natural environment, such as being
surrounded by plants (Figure 54). Depictions of the *agrimi* completely alone and without any
additional decoration are incredibly popular as well, especially in the earlier periods (Figure 55).
Non-abstract depictions of the *agrimi* make up a large percentage of natural world depictions, as
they typically are intended to depict the *agrimi* as the sole focus of the scene, occasionally with
small details like ground-lines which are used to contextualize the image (Figures 55 and 56).
Other popular natural world types include small groups or pairs of *agrimi* (Figure 57, 60-62) and
contorted *agrimi* that often have no known context (Figure 58 and 59).
Among the ‘natural world types’ are also some combative representations that do not fit in the predator/prey or sexual potency and fertility categories. These show male *agrimi* fighting, leaping, and rearing, all of which are aggressive behaviors known to be presented by male *agrimi* once they reach sexual maturity (Figures 60-62). These aggressive behaviors are often for dominance over the other male or group of males, and each of the provided examples depicts the *agrimi* at different stages of the fight.136

The Importance of the Agrimi

Based on the evidence presented in this chapter, the *agrimi* clearly held an obvious and salient status in Minoan and Mycenaean iconography. This is not a new idea, but it merits reiteration, particularly when discussing the Gold Agrimi; other scholarship has already posited that the *agrimi* was sacred to the Minoans by the Protopalatial/Middle Minoan IB-II.137 The popularity of and the proliferation of *agrimi* iconography over the entirety of the Aegean Bronze Age clearly defines the *agrimi* as being a prominent animal for the Minoans and then the adoption and continuation of its symbolism by the Mycenaeans supports the ever-increasing role and value that the *agrimi* has in Aegean society. The most valuable supporting evidence of Early-Middle Bronze Age significance of the *agrimi* in Minoan society come from contemporaneous artifacts depicting the *agrimi* (Figures 10, 13-14, 23, 25, 45-46, 54-55). The evidence suggests that the earliest depictions of the *agrimi* focus on the *agrimi* as an animal no matter the context in which the imagery is found. They highlight the form of the *agrimi*, naturalistic or not, and there is frequently an emphasis on the horns in particular. The proportions do not always have to be

137 Bloedow, “The Significance of the Goat in Minoan Culture,” 38.
accurate and often are not in Minoan art, but the message is always clear nonetheless: the figurine is an agrimi.

Its appearance in the Minoan artistic program as early as the Early Minoan I (Figures 45 and 54), should signify to scholars that the agrimi is already relevant within Minoan society. The two examples of Early Minoan I art in this thesis depict the agrimi copulating (Figure 45) and alone in nature (Figure 54). These examples suggest that the earliest depictions of the agrimi can be perceived as being nature studies that, as previously mentioned, were entirely intended for the focus on the agrimi as an animal. The copulating agrimi and the solo agrimi reflect a basic principle of nature: existence through procreation. The agrimi are frequently associated with fertility, but that extends to the notion of fertility in every sense, including humans and the whole of nature. Thus, it makes sense for the Gold Agrimi to have been given as a sacrificial offering at Akrotiri. Gold does not deteriorate, making it a symbol for youth and prosperity, and the agrimi’s association with the fertility of nature altogether would have resulted in the Gold Agrimi becoming the ultimate symbol and icon for perpetual fertility and prosperity. Leaving the Gold Agrimi would have been perceived as the only, or perhaps final, option for the island locals to save Akrotiri. Whether interpreted as a sacrificial offering or an apotropaic device, the Gold Agrimi’s iconographic symbolism is rooted in Early Minoan I nature studies of the agrimi and fertility in nature.
CHAPTER 3: NON-MINOAN/MYCENAEAN COMPARANANDA

This chapter explores evidence of gold as a raw material and wild goat iconography from the Balkans, Anatolia and the Levant, Egypt/Nubia, and Mesopotamia. Based on the conclusions drawn in Chapter 2, only sacrificial or cult-related “goat” iconography is being examined. This chapter considers whether wild goats depicted in sacrificial contexts, both in iconography and in the archaeological record. Additionally, do depictions of wild goats originate in the Aegean, or do they occur elsewhere? If such representations occur elsewhere, then the next step is to consider the level of divergence recognizable in each culture’s sacrificial wild goat iconography. The reusability of gold is another issue that must be addressed. Due to gold’s non-corrosive properties, gold was frequently reused, and the same nugget can be melted down and recast over and over. This makes using the data from the XRF study as absolute fact somewhat dangerous and forces the question of where else the Gold Agrimi might have originated, if not the Aegean.

Unlike the other regions discussed in this chapter, the Balkans are primarily being considered as a foreign smelter and provider of the gold used in the Gold Agrimi and not as an iconographic influence because of the lack of zoomorphic art during the Bronze Age. The Balkans were actively involved in gold trade and commercial activities with the Aegean. Egypt and Nubia are discussed based on iconographic parallels with the Aegean, and while they had copious amounts of gold as a raw material, this region will not be considered for the gold used for the Gold Agrimi. Anatolia/Levant and Mesopotamia are evaluated for iconographic and archaeological parallels with the Aegean regarding the wild goat in sacrificial and religious contexts. This chapter
addresses the visual, cultural, and archaeological environments that are indicative of interactions between cultures via trade, technology, and diplomacy.

**Balkans**

Based on the similar chemical make-up of Balkan and Aegean gold, as discussed in Chapter 1, the gold was very likely sourced in the Balkans. Zoomorphic art is not common in the Balkans during the Bronze Age and thus is unlikely that the Gold Agrimi could have been designed or made in the region.\(^{138}\) Although, zoomorphic art has been found in the Balkans dating to the Neolithic and Chalcolithic, and thus the existence of an earlier tradition of animal art can be attested to some extent in the Balkans.\(^ {139}\) Essentially, the lack of a strong tradition of zoomorphic art during the Bronze Age does not equate to an utter non-existence of animal art in the Balkans (Figure 63a-b). The earlier traditions may not necessarily be applicable as a comparison to the Gold Agrimi due to the gap in chronology, but the Chalcolithic zoomorphic art is still worth exploring for the sake of understanding possible cultural overlap in the form of Balkan-Aegean interaction.

Majority of the zoomorphic figurines in the Balkans seem to appear in the Neolithic and Chalcolithic; S. Nanoglou postulates that the introduction and presence of zoomorphic depictions was a result of the changing relationship between humans and nature. Nanoglou proposes that the introduction of agriculture changed not only how humans interacted with animals but also how they perceived nature as a whole. This required the development of human and animal art in order to visualize and categorize the past (hunter/hunted) and present (farmer/farmed) roles of humans.

\(^{138}\) Dr. Lolita Nikolova, Email, November 28, 2017.

and animals. Additionally, Nanoglou suggests that this need to categorize the relationships ultimately led to the development of the fictional or “fantastic” creatures, like a “human-plus-ovicaprid-plus-cattle.” Between the Neolithic and Bronze Age, it appears that possible animal-related cults may have sprung up in the Balkans and across Europe, which could have easily spread further south to the Aegean through exchange. Archaeological evidence has proven that interactions between the Balkans and the Aegean occurred as early as the Neolithic, which corresponds to the initial transmigration and settling of people in the Aegean. Some have theorized that some of the early settlers in the Aegean may have actually originated in the Alpine region, which would have had direct contact with much of the Balkans.

Gold products in the Balkans, and even Europe as a whole, appear to be more abstract with repeated motifs and there is less evidence of strict depictions of nature. Fertility appears to be one of the major cultic and social symbols in Balkan nature and animal iconography in the Neolithic and Chalcolithic but, as previously mentioned, this does not appear to continue into the Bronze Age. If this iconography did persist in the Bronze Age, archaeologists have yet to uncover substantial evidence. Such archaeological evidence includes shells that may have acted as a form of currency; evidence of continued interaction into the Bronze Age is suggested, for example, by

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141 Nanoglou, “Representations of Humans and Animals in Greece and the Balkans During the Earlier Neolithic,” 5.
144 Demakopoulou *et al.*, *Gods and Heroes of the European Bronze Age*, 142.
the overlapping characteristics in Balkan and Minoan/Mycenaean burial practices, including grave mounds and urns.\textsuperscript{145}

An example of gold zoomorphic art from the Balkans is in the form of two gold application pieces found in an elite burial context from the necropolis at Varna; unfortunately, they are bovine, not caprine (Figure 63 a-b). Despite the taxonomic discrepancy of the zoomorphic artifacts, both the material and the archaeological context suggests major symbolic and/or elite nature of the applications. While the funerary context might not immediately indicate a sacrificial or cultic connection, the gold evokes a certain level of prestige for both the deceased and the iconography.\textsuperscript{146} Due to the limited presence of zoomorphic art in the Balkans, it should be understood as a highly elite and rare motif. The rarity of zoomorphic art in the Balkans should further be perceived as the heightened value of animals. The extreme rarity can also be interpreted as a lack of craftsmen with the abilities to create zoomorphic motifs. Although, this is not as likely because while there very well could be a lack of craftsmen with this skill, the more likely suggestion is that the rarity is a sign of being highly symbolic elite goods.\textsuperscript{147}

Ultimately, the overall lack of zoomorphic art in the Balkans during the Bronze Age should not completely discredit the possibility of a connection between the Balkans and the Gold Agrimi. The evidence of interactions with the Aegean dating as early as the Neolithic strongly suggest that major ties could have solidified the Balkans as a major metals-trade partner for the Aegean. As stated in Chapter 1, the XRF study provides evidence that might tie the gold used in the Gold

\begin{footnotes}
\item[147] Nanoglou, “Representations of Humans and Animals in Greece and the Balkans during the Earlier Neolithic,” 3-10.
\end{footnotes}
Agrimi to the Balkans, as its composition is chemically similar to gold found at Varna (Table 3). In actuality, the overall likelihood that the gold is Balkan is questionable because of the cost, weight, and transport of the gold from the Balkans to the Aegean. Due to the geographic proximity of the Balkans to the Aegean (Map 2), and trade known to occur during the Bronze Age, the gold theoretically could have come from the Balkans but the Minoans most likely would have sourced it themselves. The theory of outsourcing the gold to the Balkans makes little sense since there are known gold resources within the Aegean. The findings provided by the XRF analysis prevents the Balkans from being completely discounted.

**Egypt and Nubia**

Evidence of exchange between the Aegean and Egypt/Nubia is prevalent in the archaeological record in each region, both in the form of material transference (i.e., goods from Egypt/Nubia found in the Aegean, and vice versa) and through artistic depictions, such as the Minoans and Mycenaeans who are depicted in Theban tombs. The seemingly boundless natural gold resources present Egypt and Nubia as ideal sites for the Gold Agrimi, except for the fact that the gold did not come from Egypt or Nubia. The XRF study on the Gold Agrimi, discussed in Chapter 1 and above, designates the gold as either originating in the Balkans or within the Aegean (Table 3). While it may be possible, and even worth further consideration, the likelihood that Egypt or Nubia would choose to outsource gold for the Gold Agrimi is not very likely. The cost of obtaining gold from the Balkans or the Aegean and have it sent to Egypt to manufacture would have been an unnecessary expense.

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The domestic goat is depicted more often than the wild goat in Egyptian art, although goats altogether are not a common iconographic canon in Egypt. None of the Egyptian gods are associated with goats, although Herodotus does make reference to a god by the named of Mendes who is supposedly the Egyptian equivalent of Pan. Unfortunately, translations of this passage vary between using ram and goat; others only use goat or only ram.\textsuperscript{149} This lack of consistency prevents any serious and in-depth investigation of a possible goat-centered religious tradition within Egypt.

The few occurrences of goats in Egyptian or Nubian art appear primarily in tomb-wall and other funerary art (Figure 64 and 65). Tomb-wall art depicting domestic animals tends to represent the perpetuity of the animal and its role to nourish the deceased in the afterlife (Figure 64). Animal mummification is not uncommon in elite tombs and Egyptologists suggest that the animals may have acted as offerings to the gods in the afterlife, or to ease the deceased’s journey into the afterlife. Among these mummified animals and animal sarcophagi are often dogs and cats, but there have been at least three instances that include a goat. Unfortunately, there is a lack of published materials specifically discussing goat mummification, which attests to only minor interest in goats in Egyptian society and culture.\textsuperscript{150}

Goats are also found depicted heraldically with Tree of Life iconography, as is found in the Aegean (Figure 65). The prominence of this iconography throughout the ancient world suggests that the Minoans/Mycenaeans could have adopted the imagery from Egypt/Nubia, but


\textsuperscript{150} The lack of published materials extended to the point that an online database with the sole purpose of providing catalogue information and publications about animal mummification could not provide adequate information regarding dating and, in one instance out of the three goat mummies, could not provide excavation information. All three entries in the database lack photographs and the only listed publication for all three mummified goats is a museum catalogue from the Cairo Museum published in 1905. http://www.virtual-egyptian-museum.org/Collection/FullVisit/Collection.FullVisit-FR.html.
they just as likely could have learned it from the Levant or Mesopotamia. Based on the obvious lack of a vital religious and sacrificial value being associated with either the domestic and/or wild goat types in Egypt, there is no reason to consider any cultic context for the Gold Agrimi in Egyptian society.

Although not necessarily a cultic artifact, a silver wine jug with a gold goat handle was discovered by archaeologists at the Temple of Bastet (Figure 66), and it shows the drastically different styles between Egyptian and Minoan/Mycenaean art; the artifact dates to the reign of Ramesses II and is thus much later than the Gold Agrimi. Despite its find-spot being in a temple, the handle appears more decorative and likely is meant to add to the inscribed nature scene on the cup. The goat handle is not unique, as another wine jug was discovered at the Temple of Bastet with a feline-headed handle and nature scene engraved as well. Perhaps these wine jugs were used in a particular festival, but the late introduction of wine and wine vessels to Egypt suggests a more recent practice or tradition by elites. The lack of domestic or wild goat associations with cult and sacrifice immediately invalidates Egypt as a host for the source of influence or iconographic origin of the Gold Agrimi. Stylistically speaking as well, the Gold Agrimi does not match with any style of art native to the Nilotic region.

**Anatolia and the Levant**

Caprid and ovid iconography is quite prevalent in the Anatolian and Levantine regions, as the arid and mountainous lands were popular habitats for the wild goat. Domestic goats and rams also are present throughout these regions as some of the most commercially valuable.¹⁵¹ A

¹⁵¹ This value is placed on the coat and milk production of the animals. Their economic benefits are also felt in Mesopotamia, which will be discussed later in this chapter.; Justin Lev-Tov, “A Plebian Perspective on Empire Economics: Faunal Remains from Tel Miqne-Ekron, Israel,” in *Anthropological Approaches to Zooarchaeology: Colonialism, Complexity and Animal Transformations*, eds. Douglas V. Campana et al. (Oxbow, 2014), 94-96.
substantial portion of the depictions of goats from the Near East are likely domestic goats, as early
domestication in the Paleolithic and Neolithic led to extremely low wild populations. The wild
bezoar (Table 5) is the predominant wild goat in Anatolia and in the Levant, and if proven that the
Gold Agrimi originated in this region, then it would be regionally specific as a bezoar or as a
generic wild goat.

Ahhiyawa (Mycenae) is mentioned in Hittite texts, such as the Mari letters, which provides
a written record of interactions between the Mycenaeans and the Hittites, along with other
regionally contemporary groups. Unfortunately, the references to the Mycenaeans (Ahhiyawa) in
the Mari letters are sparse, and the few that have been noted do not relay any relevant information
concerning cult or animals. The majority of the interactions appear to have an administrative and
loan or trade purpose, but one text may suggest a possible connection to a religious meal.

Some cultural and iconographic parallels can be drawn between the Aegean and
Anatolia/Levant, particularly the Levant. In contrast with the Balkans and Egypt/Nubia, the goat
appears more often in religious iconography which is paralleled across the Aegean. Levantine art
in general is stylistically different from the works produced by the Minoans/Mycenaeans. An Early
Bronze Age alabaster slab found under an altar dedicated to the goddess Ninhursanga depicts

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Near East, edited by Billie Jean Collins (The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill, 2002), 10-14.; Donald P Hansen, “Art
of the Early City-States,” in Art of the First Cities: The Third Millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus,
153 Jack Sasson, Dated Texts from Mari: A Tabulation (Malibu: Udena Publications, 1980), 60, 64, 68, 70, 72; Refer
to Jack M. Sasson, From the Mari Archives: An Anthology of Old Babylonian Letters (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2015)
and Wolfgang Heimpel Letters to the King of Mari: A New Translation, with Historical Introduction, Notes, and
Commentary (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2003). For more information about Ahhiyawa’s communications with other
groups refer to Gary M. Beckman, Trevor R. Bryce, and Eric Cline, The Ahhiyawa Texts (Atlanta: Society of
Biblical Literature, 2011).
154 Ninhursanga is a Sumerian goddess associated with mountains and is a mother goddess identified as the “Mother
of the Gods.”; Joan Aruz and Ronald Wallenfels, eds., Art of the First Cities: The Third Millennium B.C. from the
Mediterranean to the Indus, 27-28, 163.
an abstract female form and has animals, including wild goats inscribed around her pubis (Figure 67). The slab itself is a fantastic representation of the goddess’ identity and the association between the goddess of the mountain and the creatures who live on mountainous cliffs, i.e., the wild goats (the bezoar). This item directly connects the goddess with the wild goat, preventing any and all potential confusion as to who is being represented. The strong evocation of Ninhursanga’s identity through the pronounced pubic region which signifies her womanhood and motherly role, and by depicting the herd of bezoars speaks to the artisan capabilities of the Levantine peoples. The powerful iconography could very well have played an influencing factor in the Minoan religious beliefs and how the early Minoans were able to express those very beliefs.

The gilded bronze bull from Byblos, although a bull and not a goat, provides ample stylistic evidence of divine representations in animal form (Figure 68). Here, the bull is meant to represent either Reshef or Baal, known as the god of storms, and was found with other comparable works of the same purpose—depicting a god in animal form. This was likely a temple offering and would have been highly valued. The rather precise yet generic body morphology is reflective of the Gold Agrimi, although the production technique is different. The bull is slightly more specific than the Gold Agrimi, as its genitalia is clearly prominent and the face is more detailed.

**Mesopotamia**

The practice of animal sacrifice was performed throughout ancient Mesopotamia, as it was deeply rooted in their beliefs regarding the gods. Animal sacrifice was often understood as a way to provide sustenance for the gods, as it was widely believed that the only reasons humans existed was to serve and provide for the gods. Only the best animal offerings, the best and meatiest of a

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flock, were to be accepted for sacrifice, often being separated from the group far in advance of the sacrifice and essentially plumped up by temple cult leaders. The elite citizenry are known to have been deeply connected to the temple and were heavily involved in cult activities, especially those involving animal and non-animal sacrifice. Goats, wild or domestic, but most likely domestic goats based on Mesopotamia’s involvement with extensive domestication, as well as textual references to animal sacrifice, although not as commonly found in sacrificial rituals as the lamb, seem to have retained some relevancy within the upheld religious beliefs and practices of the time. The scholarship does not seem to hold a consistent perception about the level in which the goat appears in religious imagery and ritual. While most concede that goats were involved in sacrifice, not all appear to agree on the extent or relationship of goat sacrifice with the elite.

While goats are recorded in Sumerian texts from Uruk as being involved in cultic activities such as sacrifice, M. Kozuh suggests that goats “had a minor role in sacrifices, were sold or used as payment for salary outside of the system of sacrificial butchery, as were SAL.MÁH ewes.”

The two predominant uses or associations of the goat (wild or domestic) in Mesopotamian cult appear as the substitutional sacrifice and as related to the gods Ištar/Ishtar/Inanna and Dumuzi

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Mesopotamian sacrificial depictions never show the actual act and event of sacrifice, just like the Minoans and Mycenaeans, and they tend to represent the scenes in a narrational compositional format. Goat substitutional sacrifice is often associated with the goat as a “man-substitute,” a type of sacrifice where a goat is ritually sacrificed in place of a human sacrifice. The “man-substitute” sacrifice would be done to prevent illness or to prophesy primarily evil things or disastrous events surrounding a particular individual. The practice of using an animal substitute in place of a human is reminiscent of the zoomorphic votive offerings that were dedicated in place of a real animal at Minoan and Mycenaean peak and cave sanctuaries.

The narrational compositions often resemble processional scenes and tend to depict a group of worshippers and deities (Figure 69 and 70a-b). These scenes are often found on cylinder seals and in wall reliefs or on vessels. Artifacts that depict a sacrificial goat and include some form of attribution to a particular individual are likely “man-substitute” scenes; goats tend to be associated as an individual offering in the context of substitution. While much of the sacrificial iconography can be understood as being derived from agriculture, the purpose of sacrifice and its representation was always rooted in serving the gods.

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161 Black and Green, Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia, 31-33.
163 If interested in looking at other Mesopotamian seals, refer to publications such as E. Douglas van Buren’s The Cylinder Seals of the Pontifical Biblical Institute (1940) and Hamido Hammade’s (revised by Louise Hitchcock) Cylinder Seals from the Collections of the Aleppo Museum, Syrian Arab Republic: Seals of Unknown Provenance (1987). Both publications present Mesopotamian seals that lack a known find-spot, but the iconography has been assessed and identified as Mesopotamian. The publications provide informative descriptions of each seal and are great resources that provide a range in stylistic chronology.
Ištar/Ishtar/Inanna and Dumuzi often appear with heraldic goats and the Tree of Life, but these tend to be related to cultic sites when associated with sacrifice, and do not necessarily denote goat sacrifice or sacrificial offering.\(^{165}\) The Warka (Uruk) Vase (Figure 70a-b) could be read like a job description of providing for the gods. Ištar/Ishtar/Inanna and Dumuzi are in the top register performing the ritual of sacred marriage, and the two lower registers depict nature with horned and non-horned animals in a procession (bottom) and men with baskets that are likely filled with offerings.\(^{166}\) The animals with horizontal horns may be rams or, more likely, the markhor based on the twisted appearance of the horns; the markhor horns are often depicted somewhat horizontally based on the horns of the flare-horned markhor (Table 5). The small horned animal in the top register above what are probably some kind of offerings is likely a domestic goat based on the slight twisting appearance that is associated with domesticated goat horns and due to the animal’s mythological relationship with Dumuzi as belonging to his flock. This vase was not only a cult offering found within a temple associated with the home of Ištar/Ishtar/Inanna, but itself was a ritual vessel related to sacrificial activities.\(^{167}\)

On a different note, three-dimensional gold goat figurines have been found at sites like Ur, but they are not likely associated with sacrifice because they were found as elite funerary goods in the Royal Tombs (Figures 71a-c and 72a-b). The presence of such artifacts, though, does suggest some form of minor precedent of producing goat iconography in an elite context. Items such as the diadem of Queen Shubad that consists of various flora and fauna, including two small reclined


ibexes or generic wild goats (Figure 71a-c), and the pair of the so-called “Ram in the Thicket” (Figure 72a-b) indicate that Mesopotamia had extensive gold-working capabilities already by the Early Bronze Age.168 The ability to craft gold does not suggest the Gold Agrimi was a Mesopotamian artifact, but it does leave open the possibility that the Minoan/Mycenaean craftsmen had learned goldwork from the Mesopotamians. A parallel can be drawn between the tear-drop or leaf-shape of the Gold Agrimi and the horns of the wild goats on the diadem (Figure 71a-c), but the remaining composition holds no relevant stylistic connection. Ultimately, the goldwork style and techniques of EBA Mesopotamia, like Egypt, are unique to Mesopotamia, and so if the Gold Agrimi did in fact originate in Mesopotamia there would be clear indicators within its stylistic and material composition that tie it back to Mesopotamia; no such indicators exist.

Levels of Non-Aegean Influence on the Gold Agrimi

Based on the discussion provided, the Gold Agrimi could not have originated entirely in any of these non-Aegean regions. The overall absence of a contemporary zoomorphic tradition in the archaeological record in the Balkans during the Bronze Age suggests a lack of emphasis or perceived value in animal representations. The few examples provided are much earlier and do not suggest a preponderance or predilection for wild or domestic goat iconography in the Balkan region. While trade remains a plausible explanation if the gold originated in the Balkans, there continues to be no support in claiming that the figurine’s morphology came from there. Egypt/Nubia also cannot be the source for the figurine, as the scientific and visual data removes the Gold Agrimi from likely any form of influence by the Egyptians/Nubians. The additional lack

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168 The so-called “Ram in the Thicket” duo is not the actual taxonomy associated with the works—they have been recognized as goats by the majority of scholars. The figures, though, should even more specifically be identified as markhor, based on the length of the coat and the corkscrew-like horns. The twisting horns cannot make the figure identified as a domestic goat because of the coat length.; Zettler and Horne, eds., Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur, 61-63 (cat. no. 8), 92-94 (cat. no. 30).
of goat religiosity in the Egypto-Nubian region suggests an absence of perceived divine association in goat iconography.

In contrast to the previous two regions, Anatolia/Levant could have been somewhat influential in the casting of the Gold Agrimi and in the general morphology, but there is no strong evidence that could suggest that the figurine was created without any Minoan input. Lastly, Mesopotamia has no indication of influence beyond the possible desire to associate gold goat iconography with divinity and death.

Religion is very culturally specific, so the idea that the Minoans would have outsourced a cult icon is rather far-fetched. The Minoans could have looked to already existing stylistic or technological traditions outside of the Aegean, but that does not make the Gold Agrimi a non-Aegean artifact. Instead, it suggests that the Minoans were highly aware of non-local techniques and were able to draw upon them for inspiration.
CONCLUSION

The original formal identification of the Gold *Agrimi* as the “Golden Ibex” and thought to be either a foreign-influenced or non-Aegean object that had a connection of some sort to the Aegean; some have suggested that a wealthy Minoan could have commissioned a foreign goldsmith to craft it, or that it was made outside the Aegean and somehow made its way to Thera. These theories about the origin of the “Golden Ibex” tend to suggest that it came from somewhere in the Near East or Mesopotamia. The research put forward in this thesis has contradicted the original formal identification as an ibex and presses the emphasis on consideration of the *agrimi* and its prominence within Minoan culture. Based on the analysis and results presented, the gold animal figurine presented as the focus of this research should be identified as an *agrimi*, be associated with cult and sacrifice, and likely dates to the late Early-early Middle Minoan periods (ca. 2500-1900 BCE). The archaeological context of the Gold *Agrimi* suggests that it held a highly symbolic role as a cult object, perhaps as a substitutional sacrificial offering, a religious icon associated with a god or goddess, or even as a type of apotropaic device. Whatever its particular role was, the Gold *Agrimi* can ultimately be recognized as a cult object that was involved in a ritual that was meant to protect Akrotiri from the mounting natural threats. Based on the artifact’s categorization as an *agrimi* in a cult setting, the figurine can be interpreted as a local product. Religious iconography tends to be local and regionally identifiable, and although the figurine is stylized and depicts a generic [wild] goat form, it would have been easily identifiable to the Minoans/Mycenaeans as the local *agrimi*. The high level of religiosity associated with the
symbolism and iconography of the figurine and its find-spot suggests nothing other than an insular origin for the zoomorphic cult object; thus, it can be securely identified as the Gold Agrimi.

While the likelihood of the artifact originating outside of the Aegean is remote, some recognition of possible metallurgic and cultural influence on the Minoans from the Levant can and should be attested. While the origins of Minoan gold casting and shaping is not entirely clear, the style and use of wild goat imagery may be linked to early exchange with the Levant. If the Gold Agrimi does date to the late Early Minoan-early Middle Minoan periods (ca. 2500-1900 BCE), then it remains possible that the agrimi’s iconographic development was entirely insular within the Aegean. As noted in Chapter 1, evidence of Egyptian and Levantine interactions with the Minoans initially appears in Early Bronze Age III-Middle Bronze Age I (ca. 2200-1850 BCE), which suggests this was probably when the Minoans were first introduced to gold casting and shaping techniques. If the Gold Agrimi was produced during this period, based on the high cost of gold and gold-cast production, it would suggest an already existing cultural value associated with the agrimi prior to or just as the introduction of gold casting to the Aegean occurred. This assertion is made based on the belief that it simply makes the most sense that the manufacturing of a cast-gold object, such as the Gold Agrimi, so early on in the Minoan gold-crafting production had to have an established purpose and symbolism, as is the case with most Early Bronze Age-Middle Bronze Age gold artifacts. In addition to the value of gold signifying an established purpose, figurines, especially those found in cult settings, always have an attributed role and identity. Thus, the Gold Agrimi had to have a pre-existing iconographic or, at least, conceptually symbolic weight of the agrimi in the Minoan world prior to the creation of this figurine.

The current scholarship on the Gold Agrimi has thus far only focused on identifying it as a non-Aegean artifact, and even more as being non-Minoan/Mycenaean in its origin. A major
argument against associating the Gold Agrimi with the Aegean is based on the figurine’s unique nature; its combined visual and material composition is somewhat rare in the Aegean. The artifact remains unparalleled in its combination of material and design within the Aegean, which makes archaeologists suspect that it must have come from abroad. This theory, however, is flawed because of rarity of this particular combination of material(s) and design should not immediately conjure a foreign origin. In fact, its rarity should be recognized as further testament to the Gold Agrimi’s value and the overall importance of agrimi iconography in Minoan society. Additionally, the common practice of melting down gold objects could account for the lack of other similar figurines, and the only reason the Gold Agrimi exists today is because of the volcanic ash and tephra that covered and preserved Akrotiri. The volcanic eruption may very well be the only reason that the Gold Agrimi remained in situ and undisturbed for thousands of years. Further, archaeologists estimate that only about one-fifth of Bronze Age Akrotiri has been uncovered, leaving the possibility of more figurines similar to the Gold Agrimi in the remaining unexcavated city. Beyond the remaining four-fifths of the city, the majority of the island was destroyed when the caldera collapsed, causing much of Thera to be consumed by the sea. Ultimately, the nature of the Gold Agrimi reflects the value of the agrimi in early Minoan society, and further suggests that there was already an extremely powerful connection between the Minoans and the agrimi during the Early Minoan period.

Currently there are no publications which consider the Gold Agrimi as a sign that the Minoans were learning about technology through trade and exchange with non-Aegean groups and then applying the acquired knowledge to their own products. If the Gold Agrimi is reinterpreted as a Minoan artifact, then it challenges what was previously thought about Early Minoan trade and metallurgic technologies. Thus, by refocusing the current scholarship to identify the Gold Agrimi
as a local Minoan product, some of the long-unanswered questions can finally be resolved; such as, if the gold figurine is not a local Aegean product, why would the Therans have used a non-local icon in a local religious setting, and, furthermore, was appropriation of non-Aegean icons common in Minoan cult activity? By recognizing the Minoan relationship of the figurine, this question is easily reconciled.

This thesis ultimately challenges the way that scholars use broad generalizing terminology when classifying zoomorphic art, as opposed to regionally specific identifications, which affects how scholarship perceives and understands an image and even causes information to become muddied or lost. Confusion and misinformation in the archaeological, art historical, and zoological records occur as a result of broad terminology. The lack of specific terminology leads to scholars seeking out their own or assuming foreign origins on the basis of erroneous identifications, furthering the confusion and information loss. In the case of the *agrimi*, its frequent misidentification through non-regionally specific terminology like goat or ibex causes the *agrimi* to be wiped from scholarship and academia’s collective memory.

Unfortunately, the *agrimi* has become the victim of overly generalizing terminology, such as goat or ibex, that do not account for its regional isolation within the Aegean. Broad terminology like “goat” lack distinction among domestic, wild, and feral types, which could provide critical insight into the symbolism and iconography of the animal. Other terms like “ibex” show an evident misunderstanding of wild goat identification and classification, as not every wild goat is an ibex. This phenomenon occurs all throughout the study of zoomorphic art, often making it difficult to make major cultural connections between an animal and its iconography because identification influences reception and interpretation. Thus, broad generalizing terminology hinders scholarship,
whereas regional specificity allows for deeper cultural insights within preset geographical boundaries.

While much of the scholarship on the *agrini* in Minoan/Mycenaean art is overwhelmingly the same information repeated over and over again (e.g., the significance of the horns, the *agrini*’s societal influence), there remains the belief that the majority, if not all, zoomorphic cult iconography must be related to the bull because of the extensive presence of bull imagery. Obviously, the bull was predominant in Minoan/Mycenaean society, but that does not mean all cult symbols were bulls, which is attested by the fact that the *agrini* are the second most depicted animal in Minoan/Mycenaean art. Bull imagery and symbolism is found in every region discussed in this thesis, including the Balkans, which suggests there was a broader value associated with it on a larger scheme. The minimal representations of the wild goat among the non-Aegean regions and the extensive prevalence of *agrini* iconography in the Aegean suggests that the wild goat held a heightened symbolism in the Aegean that was not matched by any of the surrounding cultures or groups. Ultimately, the heightened presence of wild, and even domestic, goat iconography in the Aegean, in contrast with the low percentages in the non-Aegean regions, should prove to scholars that the Gold *Agrimi* and general *agrini* imagery most plausibly originated in the Aegean.

The initial and primary aim of this thesis had been to form a greater and more specific understanding of wild goat iconography in the Minoan/Mycenaean world and to apply that information to the gold figurine’s identification as an ibex. This required understanding taxonomic identifications and forming an understanding of a selection of the different types of wild goats in Aegean and non-Aegean regions. This forced the questions of how necessary specificity is in zoomorphic art, how much regionality plays in the level of specificity attributed to the taxonomic
identifications of zoomorphic art, and at what point specificity matters when it comes to general and stylized animal art.

First, as previously mentioned, specificity does matter, but regional relevance of the iconography must be acknowledged as well for its role in proper taxonomic identification. If there is no regional relationship between the taxonomic identification of a zoomorphic object and the animal species, such as the case with originally labeling the gold figurine as an ibex while being found in the Aegean, then the identification is problematic and other species or sub-species need to be considered. Once the regional relevance is established, further iconographic analysis can be done to explain the reasons behind the imagery. After recognition of the regional relevance, determining the level of specificity is necessary, as in the case of this thesis, the agrimi group as a whole is considered, but not a specific gender or age group. For the purposes of this thesis, this level of specificity is fitting as it identifies the precise sub-species of wild goat relevant to the Aegean and indicates the weight of general agrimi imagery without becoming overly semantic regarding gender or age.169

What must be remembered is that, despite having the aim of becoming more specific with the animal identifications, zoomorphic art is often intended to be read as generalized renderings of an entire species.170 The level of accuracy of these broad labels need to be better representative of the animals being depicted, including heightened emphasis on regional and animal accuracy.

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169 Ancient art tends to apply an iconographic code that distinguishes between attributes like gender or age based on context and specific visual triggers, such as female agrimia are typically identified in Minoan/Mycenaean art based on whether they are with a juvenile or if they are mounted by a male (Figures 21, 47-52), whereas males are often recognized by depictions of aggressive behavior and mating scenes (Figures 47-49, 63-65). Only when depictions are not generalized do certain physical characteristics allow some suggestion of gender or age, like the size of the horns and overall scale of the animal (Figures 17, 26, 59, 61), and occasionally a phallus is visible (Figures 49, 55a-b, 60).

170 For the sake of clarity, not every zoomorphic depiction is meant to be read as generic and many have very notable visual cues that indicate symbolically or representationally specific information, such as gender or sexual dimorphism.
Specificity of taxonomic identity is necessary and can be high informative, even when it comes to stylized zoomorphic art, like the Gold Agrimi, because it allows for further in-depth study into the significance of that particular animal. No matter how broad the provided identification might be, it acts as a form of specification by defining the persona of an artifact and further aids in understanding the selection process of a species depicted in stylized zoomorphic form. Additionally, the terminology used in identifications is instrumental in directing where and how a scholar focuses his or her research. Generalizations often lead to improper categorization of zoomorphic art and confusion among researchers. Labeling the Gold Agrimi as an ibex is not a more general taxonomic identification but resulted in the inaccurate association of the artifact with regions that do not place any emphasis on wild goat iconography. Thus, specificity, especially with emphasis on regional accuracy, is clearly necessary for suitable and precise identifications in ancient zoomorphic art.

This thesis points out the terminological and identification problems currently plaguing the study of zoomorphic art. In the future, there needs to be greater awareness of the terminology scholars use when discussing ancient zoomorphic art, and this can be achieved through greater communication among archaeologists, art historians, zoologists, biologists, geographers, and so on. With increased terminological awareness, proper understanding of animal identification and the recognition of regional relevance can aid in better documentation of zoomorphic artifacts. For example, terms like “ibex” are frequently misunderstood as being a synonym of “wild goat,” when in fact ibexes are a species of wild goat that have their own sub-species; while the name “wild goat” can be used in place of “ibex,” “ibex” cannot replace every use of “wild goat.” This kind of misunderstanding of identifying taxonomic terminology is likely the root of the original label for the figurine as the “Golden Ibex.” Even the agrimi is nicknamed the Cretan Ibex, which is
completely inaccurate and only reflects the lack of taxonomic awareness and misunderstanding of what differentiates wild goat species and subspecies. Ultimately, there simply needs to be greater awareness and understanding of the zoological terminology, and this thesis used the Gold Agrimi’s misidentification as an ibex as a case study for this particular problem.

Unfortunately, the problem of terminology and identification extends beyond the confusion surrounding the agrimi, ibex, and wild goats, but includes essentially any animal depiction. Whether stylized or not, misidentification and misuse of terminology is commonly noted in animal art. Throughout the research process for this thesis, a number of agrimi depictions were misrepresented as, in addition to the ibex and generic goat labels, rams, deer, and occasionally even as bulls; this trend of misidentification is also apparent with other animals. One example in which the misidentification of what are likely agrimi reached a new height with the grossly inaccurate classification of being bird-headed bulls.171 Other terminological problems stemmed from a lack of a standardized system of terms and phrases to associate with zoomorphic art. An entire classification of agrimi imagery had to be avoided due to a lack of standard terminology for that type, making it nearly impossible to find resources on the type. This is in reference to the renderings of the so-called “fantastic beasts” or “minotaurs” which are depictions of fictional creatures that have body parts of real animals.172 Overall, this thesis has identified a problem concerning animal art identification, particularly when stylized and zoomorphic, that needs some serious reconsideration and focus by scholars in the field.

172 “Fantastic beasts” and “minotaurs” often are a combination of human and animal parts or are the combination of various animals into a single creature; “minotaur” is used to describe these animal amalgamations beyond bulls. There is no standard identification of these depictions, the provided labels are just two out of many found during the research process. Other labels include agrimiman and are often just the combination of the names for the conjoined animals/humans. “Fantastic beast” seems to be increasing in popularity as a category.
The *agrimi* and other wild goat imagery remained relevant and culturally prominent in the centuries following the Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations. As mentioned, the *agrimi* is currently the national animal of Greece and continues to be hunted on Crete because of the perpetuated view of the *agrimi* as a culturally and societally revered animal; the agrimi is a physical embodiment of and connection to Greek antiquity. The wild goat, especially the *agrimi*, continues to be a powerful and revered animal symbol in the Greek world even now, thousands of years after the end of the Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations.
Map 3 Site plan of Akrotiri, Thera (Santorini). Benches Square (47, 47a) (the find-spot of the Gold Agrimi) is identified with a red rectangular outline. Source: Antigoni Mavromati, “Landscape and wood-fuel in Akrotiri (Thera, Greece) during the Bronze Age,” *Quaternary International* 48 (November 2017).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Crete (BCE)</th>
<th>Cyclades (BCE)</th>
<th>Mainland (BCE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Relative Chronology)</td>
<td>(Approx. Absolute Chronology)</td>
<td>(Relative Chronology)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Bronze 1</td>
<td>Early Minoan I 3100-3000</td>
<td>Early Pre-palatial period 3100-3000</td>
<td>Early Helladic I 3100+ -3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EM IB 2900-2650</td>
<td>EM IA 2650-2500/2400</td>
<td>EH II 2650-2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EM II 2450/2400-2200</td>
<td>EM II 2500-2250</td>
<td>Late EH II/ Lefkandi I 2500-2200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Bronze 3</td>
<td>EM III 2200-2100/2050</td>
<td>Late Pre-palatial period 2400-2200</td>
<td>EH III 2250-2100/2050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Bronze 1</td>
<td>Middle Minoan IA 2100/2050-1925/1900</td>
<td>Protopalatial (Old Palace Period) 2200-</td>
<td>Middle Helladic 2100/2050-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MM IB 1925/1900-1875/1850</td>
<td>MM II 1875/1850-1750/1700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Bronze 3</td>
<td>MMIII (A-B) 1750/1700-1700/1675</td>
<td>Neopalatial (New Palace Period) 1700/1675-1625/1600</td>
<td>Late Helladic I 1700/1675-1635/1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Bronze 1</td>
<td>Late Minoan IA 1700/1675-1625/1600</td>
<td>Monopalatial Period (Knossos only) 1625/1600-</td>
<td>LH II A 1635/1600-1480/1470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LM IB 1625/1600-1470/1460</td>
<td>LM II 1470/1460-1420/1410</td>
<td>LH IIIB 1480/1470-1420/1410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Bronze 3</td>
<td>LM IIIA1 1420/1410-1390/1370</td>
<td>Final Palatial Period 1420/1400-</td>
<td>LH IIIA1 1420/1410-1390/1370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LM IIIA2 1390/1370-1330/1315</td>
<td></td>
<td>LH IIIA2 1390/1370-1330/1315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LM IIIB 1330/1315-1200/1190</td>
<td></td>
<td>LH IIIB 1330/1315-1200/1190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LM IIIC 1200/1190-1075/1050</td>
<td></td>
<td>LH IIIC 1200/1190-1075/1050</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Combined Relative and Absolute Chronology table, based on the chronological tables in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bronze Age Aegean*, ed. Eric H. Cline (2010).
Table 2: Spectra analysis showing the compositional differences and descriptions of the various positions. Source: T. Pantazis et al., "X-Ray Fluorescence Analysis of a Gold Ibex and Other Artifacts from Akrotiri." (2002).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>X-Ray Tube Voltage</th>
<th>Gold % (Au)</th>
<th>Silver % (Ag)</th>
<th>Copper % (Cu)</th>
<th>Iron % (Fe)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>Main body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>Stain/weld under the neck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>Near weld of rear left leg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>Weld at the tail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>84.7</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>Right horn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>Bottom red spot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ave.</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>83.6</td>
<td>14.88</td>
<td>0.55 no weld 2.53 weld</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>Average of the 6 runs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Summary comparison of Ag and Cu content of other examined sites. Source: T. Pantazis et al., "X-Ray Fluorescence Analysis of a Gold Ibex and Other Artifacts from Akrotiri." (2002).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Ag (%)</th>
<th>Cu (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Varna</td>
<td>Neolithic</td>
<td>Hartman, 1978</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>11.0 ± 2.6</td>
<td>0.50 ± 0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confiscated Hoard</td>
<td>Neolithic</td>
<td>Manatis et al., 2000</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6.61 ± 2.66</td>
<td>0.36 ± 0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mycenae</td>
<td>Mycenae</td>
<td>Hartman, 1982</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>16.0 ± 7.5</td>
<td>0.51 ± 0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibex</td>
<td>Ibex</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictorial Logogram/</td>
<td>Known Meaning</td>
<td>Samples of Textual Appearance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllabic Text</td>
<td></td>
<td>Text Identification</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Chronology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Identification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26 male agrimia and an unknown amount of female agrimia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>KN C(2) 7064 (writer 112)</td>
<td>From Knossos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sacrificial offerings?</td>
<td>• Reference in Thesis: 23-24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Transliteration:** a-ki-ri-ja (akirija)

(adj.) “wild creatures,” used to describe goats [when found with CORN]

**Horn, Agrimia horn**

Identified by scholars: CORN, *151—CORN

**KN Mc 4454** (writer 132)

From Knossos, find-spot: L.

29+1 [male] agrimi carcass, 16 female agrimonial goats, *142 M 13, 26 agrimi horns

• Personal name (possible donor?): da-wa-no
• Place-name: u-qa-mo
• *150: [male] agrimi carcass/skin/sinews
• *142: (has various possible meanings, it depends on who you read; could be honeycomb, sinews, goat hair, or other)
• M unit: weight
• Reference to Mc series in thesis: 19, 24
• Refer to:

**Female goat, nanny-goat (domestic)**

Identified by scholars: CAP

**KN Mc 5118** (writer 132)

From Knossos

15 female goats; 20 agrimia horns

• Unclear if horns are female or male; likely related to composite bow production and tribute offerings
• Reference to Mc series in thesis: 19, 24
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male goat, billy-goat (domestic)</th>
<th>KN C(2) 914</th>
<th>50 rams, 50 male goats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identified by scholars: CAPm *22</td>
<td>Writer 112</td>
<td>From Knossos, find-spot: I3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Personal name: pa-ra-ti-jo
- Place-name: a-ka-wi-ja-de
  - Possibly allative case (meaning, the place-name refers to a general region as opposed to a specific place); this is supported by the inclusion of pa-ro (= Homeric παρό, “from”)
- Refer to:
  - DAMOS Database: https://www2.hf.uio.no/damos/#845

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gold</th>
<th>PY Tn 316 (writer 44)</th>
<th>gold vessels offered to female and male divinities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identified by scholars: AUR</td>
<td>From Pylos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Cultic context, translated by L.R. Palmer as a type of offering or ritual
- Female divinities: Potnia, Posidaeia, Dove Goddess, Imphimedeia, Diwia, Hera; Male divinities: Poseidon, Hermes Areias, Zeus; Royal house/kin: Clan Ancestor/House Lord; one female also receives a bull with foliage
- There may be a connection to the New Year festival and fertility ceremonies
- Reference in Thesis: 19

Table 4 Linear B Logogram and Syllabic tablets that refer to *agrimi*, male and female goats, gold, and the adjective denoting a wild animal. All tablet images other than PY Tn 316 are from the *Corpus of Mycenaean Inscriptions from Knossos* (1997).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Example of artistic depiction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cretan Agrimi (Capra aegagrus cretica or Capra hircus cretica*)</td>
<td>Detail of an agrimi in a wall painting from the West House at Akrotiri; the scene as a whole depicts an agrimi being herded with domestic goats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Back-turned arching horns (direction never varies, but occasionally the horn appears in waves or notched); arch severity varies
- Short tail, but occasionally is depicted long depending on context
- Often bearded but not always
- Appears in all forms of artistic/craft formats and in a number of context types
- *Most scholars agree that the name is C. aegagrus cretica, but some are trying to push for C. hircus cretica for the taxonomic identification* |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domestic Goat (Capra hircus)</th>
<th>Scene from the Miniature Frieze on the north wall of Room 5 in the West House, Akrotiri, Thera</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Smaller horns, often portrayed in domestic or farming scenes
- Horns are often depicted straight or very short in Minoan art |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domestic Sheep/Ram (Ovis aries)</th>
<th>Scene from the Miniature Frieze on the north wall of Room 5 in the West House, Akrotiri, Thera</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Thick horns wrap over and under the ears of rams |
| Deer | Roe Deer (*Capreolus capreolus*)
(http://animalsbirds.com/animals-roe-deer-pictures/animals-roe-deer-pics-gallery/)
- Spiked horns |
| Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*)
- Branching horns |
| Fallow Deer (*Dama dama*)
- Spiked, palmate horns/antlers |
| Aurochs (*Bos primigenius*)
Copy of a painting by Charles Hamilton Smith, ca. 16th century
(http://animal.memozee.com/ArchOLD-6/1188058432.jpg)
- Prior to extinction (1627), was found in Europe (including the Mediterranean), North Africa, and Asia
- Extinct; considered as the wild ancestor of the domesticated European and Zabu cattle
- Bulls are the #1 most commonly depicted animal in the Minoan and Mycenaean art
- Aurochs appear in art as early as the Pleistocene (Lascaux Cave paintings)
| CMS II, 4 no.12 (from Knossos, Crete, SM II-SM IIIA1?)
Silver plate deer-shaped rhyton. Mycenae, LBA (16th century BCE)
Running fallow deer. From the flotilla scene in the West House, Akrotiri
Minoan gold ring with leaping bull and leaper |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Found</strong>: Africa (Nubia and Egypt)</td>
<td><strong>The only species of ibex found in the Eastern Mediterranean</strong> (Palmer, 1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markhor (<em>Capra falconeri</em>)</td>
<td>Head of a markhor, copper, shell, red stone. Mesopotamia, Early Dynastic III (2550-2250 BCE).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Native to modern day Pakistan and surrounding regions</strong></td>
<td><strong>3 main types of markhor</strong>: (1) flare-horned (Astor and Kashmir), (2) Straight-horned (Suleiman and Kabul), and Bukhara</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A subspecies of wild sheep</strong></td>
<td><strong>Thought to be one of two ancestors for all domestic sheep</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Comparison</td>
<td>Image 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wild Bezoar Goat (Capra aegagrus)</td>
<td><img src="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bezoar_ibex#/media/File:Bezoarziege.jpg" alt="Wild Bezoar Goat" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Difficult to distinguish in some ways from other wild goats depending on context

Table 5 Animal comparisons and their depiction in culturally contemporaneous and regionally appropriate art. Refer to the Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS) (https://www.itis.gov/advanced_search.html) for more information.
FIGURES

Figure 1 Gold Agrimi from Akrotiri, Thera (mod. Santorini). Gold figurine made using the lost wax process. Dates to the Bronze Age, sometime before ca.1620 BCE; likely dates to late Early Minoan (EM II/III?)-early Middle Minoan (MM IA/B). Currently located at the Museum of Prehistoric Thera.

Figure 2a-b, (a)Find-spot of the Gold Agrimi in Benches Square, Akrotiri; (b) Detail of larnax containing the Gold Agrimi in Benches Square. Akrotiri, Thera. Image Source: *ΑΛΣ* 3 (2005), 45.

Figure 3a-b, Gold Agrimi in situ inside of clay larnax. Impression of the wooden box is visible. (3a is wider shot, 3b is zoomed in for better detail of wooden box impression). Source: Image (a) is from *ΑΛΣ* 3 (2005), 44; image (b) is from *ΑΛΣ* 1 (2003), 56.
Figure 4a-b Deposit of horns found next to the Gold Agrimi in Benches Square. (a) Horn deposit in situ; (b) Cores of goat horns from deposit, not specified in source if domestic or wild. Images source: ΑΑΣ 6, (2008) 33.

Figure 5 Drawing of horn (possibly sheep horn) with red painted parallel bands from horn pile in Benches Square. Image source: ΑΑΣ 6 (2008), 67.

Figure 6 Gold Agrimi pendant (necklace or earing piece?), part of the Aegina Treasure collection, from Crete, Late Minoan IA-Late Minoan IB ca.1700-1550 BCE. Currently located at the British Museum, London; no. 1876.0513.1. Image is owned by the British Museum, London.

Figure 7 Gilt terracotta statuette of a goat (agrimi or domestic?), from Dendra in the Peloponnese (Mycenaean), Late Helladic III (= Late Minoan III) 14th century BCE. Currently located at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; no. 39.11.1. Image is owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
Figure 8a-b, (a) Hagia Triada sarcophagus with detail of bull and *agrimia* animal sacrifice; (b) close-up detail of *agrimia* under the table. From Hagia Triada, Crete. Mycenaean. Late Minoan IIIA1 ca.1400 BCE. Currently located at the Herakleion Archaeological Museum, Crete.

Figure 9 Cylinder/roller seal with *agrimia* on a platform (altar or sacrificial table) being flanked by a sacred tree and human figure. From Grave 2, Batsourorachi corridor at Mycenae. Late Helladic III, ca.14th century BCE. Currently located at the National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Greece. CMS VS1B no.80.

Figure 10 Terracotta votive of an *agrimi* with a missing left horn and black slipped. (L) 5.08cm. Petsofas, Crete. Minoan. Middle Minoan I-Middle Minoan II ca.2000-1700 BCE. Currently located at the British Museum, London; no. 1907,0119.34. Image belongs to the British Museum, London.

Figure 12 Bronze agrimi figurine, from the peak sanctuary of Patso Cave, Crete. Late Minoan III ca.1420/1410-1075/1050 BCE. Currently located at the Herakleion Archaeological Museum, Crete; no. 236.

Figure 13 Clay agrimi. From Porti, Mesara. Minoan. Pre-palatial period (= Early Minoan IIA) ca. 2500-2000 BCE.

Figure 14 Drawing of two pairs of bronze votive goat horns that may have been originally attached to clay figurines, from Platanos A. Early Minoan III-Middle Minoan I ca.2200-1875/1850 BCE. Image from Aegean Metalwork of the Early and Middle Bronze Age, by Keith Branigan (1974), 52, 196, Plate 24.

Figure 15 Head of a priest, an agrimi in motion, and a bucranium on a three-sided prism seal. From Greece. Late Minoan I, ca. 1700/1675-1470/1460 BCE. Currently located in a private collection in England. CMS VIII no.110.
Figure 16 Gold shield ring showing an agrimi with a tree growing from its back in a sacred space. From Grave 84 (rock chamber tomb) at the Necropolis Kalkani at Mycenae. Late Bronze Age II, 16th century BCE. Currently located at the National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Greece. CMS I no.119.

Figure 17 Cylinder/roller seal of heraldic (?) agrimi looking to the right with body facing left and being flanked by people and sacred tree. From Grave 517 of the Necropolis at Mycenae. Contextual date: ca.14-13th century BCE. Currently located at the National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Greece. CMS IS 006.

Figure 18 Agate seal with an agrimi standing with column and a plant (?); agrimi is possibly tethered to column. From Grave 36 (shaft grave) of the Necropolis Sapher Papora, Knossos, Crete. Late Bronze Age II- Late Bronze Age IIIA1. Currently located at the Herakleion Archaeological Museum, Crete; HMS 685. CMS II, 3 no.40.

Figure 19 Ivory Game Box with hunting scenes and animal groupings. Made from elephant ivory. From tomb 58 at Enkomi, Cyprus. Ca. 1250-1050 BCE (Late Cypriot IIC-Late Cypriot III). Currently located at the British Museum, London; no. 1897.0401.996. Image is owned by the British Museum, London.
Figure 20 Larnax with hunt scene. From tomb 11 at Armenoi, Crete. Postpalatial period (= Late Minoan IIIA2- Late Minoan IIIB), ca.1370-1190 BCE. Currently located at the Archaeological Museum of Rethymno, Crete.

Figure 21 Hunting scene with a dog and an archer using a composite bow to hunt an agrimi. Ivory half. Found near Knossos. Image from “The Significance of the Goat in Minoan Culture,” by Edmund Bloedow (2003), 7.

Figure 22 Hunter stabbing an agrimi. Mirrambellou, Crete. Late Bronze Age IIIA1. Currently located at the Ashmolean Museum. CMS VI no.344.

Figure 23 Steatite seal (bead) with hunter carrying two agrimia suspended from a pole over his shoulder. From Malia, Crete. Middle Minoan II. Currently located at the Ashmolean Museum. CMS VI 025a.
Figure 24a-c Larnax with numerous hunting scenes; probably from a single hunt (narrative?). From Episkopi, Crete. Minoan. Ca. 13th century BCE. Currently located at the Ierapetra Archaeological Museum, Crete.

Figure 25 Agate seal stone with an agrimi in nature (rocky ground-line) with a spear piercing it from behind and a star in the background. From Crete. 1850-1600 BCE (Middle Minoan II/Middle Minoan III). Currently located at the British Museum, London; no. 1909,0409.7. Image of seal is owned by the British Museum, London; drawing of seal is from CMS. CMS VII no.42.

Figure 26 Seal stone and impression of an agrimi running with a spear hovering over its back, and a triple ground-line below agrimi. From Crete. 1600-1400 BCE (Late Minoan I/ Late Minoan II). Currently located at the British Museum, London; no. 1874,0305.6. Images owned by the British Museum, London. CMS VII no.153.

Figure 27 Seal stone and impression of an agrimi running with a spear hovering over its back. From Crete. 1600-1400 BCE (Late Minoan I/ Late Minoan II). Currently located at the British Museum, London; no. 1905,0713.3 Images owned by the British Museum, London. CMS VII no.139.
Figure 28 Seal with an *agrini* surrounded by predatory animals: bird, squid/octopus, and a demon. From Greece; exact find-spot unknown. Late Bronze Age II-Late Bronze Age IIIA1 (ca. 1450-1200 BCE). Currently located at the British Museum, London; no. 1934,0120.3. CMS VII no.177.

Figure 29 Seal stone with an *agrini* being attacked by a dog. From Grave VII (rock chamber grave) from the Asprochoma corridor of the necropolis at Mycenae. Late Bronze Age II-Late Bronze Age IIIA1. Currently located at the Nafplio Archaeological Museum, Greece. CMS VS1B no.74.

Figure 30 Hexagonal pyxis with repeated scenes of an *agrini* and a dear being hunted by a lion. Made of wood with applied gold plaques. From Tomb V in Grave Circle A at Mycenae, 16th century BCE. Currently located at the National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Greece; nos. 808-811.
Figure 31a-d Gold handle of a bronze sword. Chased on the handle are lions pursuing agrimia; Drawing of handle is included. From grave 36 in the Zapher Papoura cemetery at Knossos. Late Minoan II. Images are from *Crete and Mycenae*, text by Spyridon Marinatos, photographs by Max Hirmer. p.149 ff., pl.112, 113(above).
Figure 32 Drawing of a seal impression showing *Agrimi* Lady and *agrimi*. From Chania. Late Minoan I. Current location not known. CMS VS1A no.175.

Figure 33 Metal (bronze?) seal showing *Agrimi* Lady feeding (?) an *agrimi*. From Crete (Hagia Triada?) Late Minoan. Currently located at the Herakleion Archaeological Museum, Crete. CMS II, 6 no.30.

Figure 34 *Agrimi* Lady touching the nose of an *agrimi* or feeding an *agrimi*. Found in Tomb 133 (rock chamber tomb) in the necropolis at Armeni, Crete. Contextual date: Late Minoan IIIA2-Late Minoan IIIB; Stylistic date: Late Minoan IIIA1-Late Minoan IIIA2. Currently located at the Archaeological Museum of Rethymno, Crete. CMS VS1B no.261.

Figure 35 *Agrimi* Lord being pulled in chariot by *agrimia*. From Crete, exact find-spot in not clearly known. Late Bronze Age II-Late Bronze Age IIIA1. Currently located at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. CMS VI no.285.
Figure 36 Cylinder seal with the Master of Animals being flanked by lions, and an agrimi being attacked by the left lion; to the left of the group is an agrimi being attacked by a griffin and two dogs/lions. From Golgoi, Cyprus (?). Late Bronze Age IIIA, ca. 14th century BCE. Currently located at the British Museum, London; 1945,1013.133. CM VII no.173.

Figure 37 Drawing of seal showing Master of Animals standing between/on the sacral horns (Horns of Consecration) and being flanked by a winged goat and a demon with offering (?). From Kydonia, Crete. Stylistic dating: Late Helladic II-Late Helladic IIIA1(?). Currently located at the Benaki Museum, Athens, Greece. CMS V no.201.

Figure 38 Agrimi Master. Found at Vrondissi, Crete. Late Bronze Age IIIA1. Currently located at the Herakleion Archaeological Museum, Crete. CMS IV no. D038.

Figure 39 Agrimi Mistress with agrimi and second female figure. From Vafio, Lakonia, Tholos grave. Late Helladic IIA (stylistic date: Late Bronze Age II). Currently located at the National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Greece. CMS I no.220.
Figure 40 Agrimi Mistress holding an agrimi by the horns. Found at Ilia/Elis, Greece. Late Minoan I. Currently located at the Staatliche Museen, Berlin, Germany. CMS XI no.27.

Figure 41 Agrimi Mistress being flanked. Find-spot unknown. Late Minoan II-Late Minoan IIIA1(?). Current location is unknown. CMS II, 8 no.255.

Figure 42 Three panel/scene fresco showing (left) an attendant or worshiper, (middle) a goddess), and (right) a natural and rocky environment with agrimia and other wild animals. Room 14 at Hagia Triada. (Color and black and white versions) Reconstruction by M. Cameron, 1987.
Figure 43 Gold ring showing the epiphany of a deity near his mountaintop shrine and a male votary greets him; an agrimi is present. From Tholos tomb IV at Pylos, Messinia. Contextual date: Middle Helladic II-Late Helladic I, Late Helladic IIIA(?); Stylistic date: Late Bronze Age IIIA1(?). Currently located at the National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Greece. CMS I no.292.

Figure 44 The Burgon Ring; gold seal-ring and seal impression with mating agrimia. From Crete, 1700-1450 BCE. Currently located at the British Museum, London; 1842.0728.127. Images owned by the British Museum, London. CMS VII 068.

Figure 45 Copulating agrimia. Made from hippopotamus. From the North Tholos in Platies Opses, Siva, Pirjiotissis, Crete. Early Minoan I-Middle Minoan I. CMS II, 1 no.369.

Figure 46 Double-sided seal with a human couple copulating and agrimia mating under a tree (tree of life?). Minoan, ca. early 2nd millennium BCE (Middle Minoan). Image from “The Significance of the Goat in Minoan Culture,” by Edmund Bloedow (2003), 34.
Figure 47 Faience plaque depicting *agrimi* being suckled by juvenile. From Knossos. Middle Minoan III-Late Minoan IA.

Figure 48 *Agrimi* being suckled by her juvenile. Unknown find-spot. Late Minoan I. Current location is unknown. CMS VS1A no.155.

Figure 49 Female *agrimi* and juvenile. From Greece, exact find-spot is unknown. Middle Minoan III-Late Minoan I. Currently located at the Herakleion Archaeological Museum, Crete; HMS 1528. CMS II, 3 no.399.

Figure 50 Pyriform rhyta with affixed *agrimi* head (appliqué) and decorated with Autumn crocuses. From Palaikastro. Late Bronze Age I.
Figure 51a-b Zakros rhyton, depicting heraldic, reclining, and prancing agrimia in natural setting around a peak sanctuary. Stone rhyton from the palace at Zakros. Late Bronze Age, ca. 1550-1500 BCE. Currently located at the Herakleion Archaeological Museum, Crete; AE 2764.

Figure 52a-b Two kymbi (kymbia) painted in the bichrome style, decorated with agrimia and dolphins. From Akrotiri, Thera. Currently located at the Museum of Prehistoric Thera.

Figure 53 Decorated pithos showing a detail of a bull and an agrimi in a natural setting. From the West House at Akrotiri, Santorini (Thera). Image is from ΑΛΣ 6.

Figure 54 Agrimi in nature. Six-sided seal cube made from hippopotamus. From Tholos A at Hagia Triada, Crete. Contextual date: Early Minoan I-Early Minoan II, Middle Minoan I-Middle Minoan II; Stylistic date: Early Minoan III-Middle Minoan IA. Currently located at the Herakleion Archaeological Museum, Crete. CMS II, 1 no.64b.
Figure 55 Agrimi. From the Stavros corridor of Tholos B at Känurjiu (Platanos), Crete. Contextual date: Early Minoan III-Middle Minoan II; Stylistic date: Middle Minoan II. Currently located at the Herakleion Archaeological Museum, Crete. CMS II, 1 no.284b.

Figure 56 Green turquoise bead-seal of a reclined agrimi with double ground-line. Minoan Greece, exact find-spot unknown. ca.1750-1410 BCE (Middle Minoan III-Late Minoan I). Currently located at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; 40.88. CMS XIII no.19.

Figure 57 Seal depicting a group of four overlapping and standing agrimia bucks with upturned horn tips; at least one penis is visible indicating a male group. From Crete. Late Minoan I-Late Minoan II. Currently located at the British Museum, London. CMS VII no.89.

Figure 58 Ivory plaque with a depiction of an agrimi, from Burial Building 3, Archanes, Crete. Mycenaen. Late Minoan IIIA.
Figure 59 Seal showing an *agrimi* in a natural environment (details of tree and earth/ground-line). Greece, exact find-spot is unknown. Minoan. Middle Minoan III-Late Minoan I. Currently located at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. CMS VI no.178.

Figure 60 Seal impression of metal (bronze?) seal with two running or fighting *agrimia* bucks. From Hagia Triada. Late Minoan I. Current location is not known. CMS II, 6 no.70.

Figure 61 Seal with a pair of rearing/fighting *agrimi* bucks with upturned horns. Greece, exact find-spot unknown. Late Minoan I-II. Currently located at the British Museum, London. CMS VII no.128.

Figure 62 Seal with a pair of fighting *agrimi* bucks with elongated (cow-like) tails with bifurcated tufts at the tips. From Grave 61 (rock chamber grave) in the Kammergräber Unterstadt at Mycenae. Late Minoan I (stylistically dates Late Bronze Age II-Late Bronze Age IIIA1). Currently located at the National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Greece. CMS I no.99.
Figure 63a-b Gold applications (likely bovines). From grave at the necropolis in Varna, Balkans, ca. 4600-4200 BCE ((late) Chalcolithic period). Image (a) is of the gold bovine applications; image (b) is the display of all the gold found in the grave.

Figure 64 Domestic goat (billy-goat) relief. From the Pyramid Temple of Amenemhat I, Lisht North (Memphite Region), Egypt. ca.2551-2528 BCE, Dynasty 4 (reign of Khufu), Old Kingdom. Currently located at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; no. 22.1.20. Image is owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Figure 65 Ivory group including numerous vultures, Taweret (the ancient Egyptian protective goddess associated with childbirth and fertility), and several groups of heraldic ibexes with the Tree of Life. Ivory inlay that would have been attached to a wooden structure, like a funerary bed. From tomb K 439 at Kerma, Nubia. Ca. 1700-1550 BCE. Currently located at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; 20.1373. Image is owned by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
Figure 66 Reproduction of a silver decorated wine jug with goat handle. Reign of Ramesses II (1279-1213 BCE), Dynasty 19, New Kingdom. From the Temple of Bastet in Tell Basta, Eastern Delta, Egypt. Reproduction is located at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Original is at the Egyptian Museum. Image is owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Figure 67 Incised alabaster slab with an abstract female figure (the goddess Ninhursanga) and animals (wild goats). From Mari, Syria, Early Bronze Age (ca. early 3rd millennium BCE). Located at the Museum of Deir ez-Zor, Syria; no. 19088. Image originated in Art of the First Cities, image 106, 163.

Figure 68 Gilded bronze bull. From the temple of Baalat-Gebal, Byblos, Lebanon (Levant). 4cm (ht). Middle Bronze Age (ca. 2000-1600 BCE). Currently located at the Louvre Museum, Paris; AO 14680. Image is owned by the Louvre Museum, Paris.
Figure 69 Hematite cylinder seal of a deity (Shamash, the sun god) (center right) accepting an offering (goat) from worshipper in cap and long robe (center left). Mesopotamia, ca. 1850-1595 BCE (Old Babylonian) (Middle Bronze Age II-Late Bronze Age I). Currently located at The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore; no. 42.713. Image is owned by The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.

Figure 70a-b Warka Vase (relief-carved alabaster vessel), from E-anna temple in Uruk. Late Uruk period (ca. 3300-3000 BCE). Located at the Iraq Museum; no. IM 19606. Image (a) is from Art of the First Cities, Fig.9, p.24; Image (b) is from Gutenberg Project online e-book: Prehistoric Men, by Robert J. Braidwood, illustration by Susan T. Richert (https://www.gutenberg.org/files/52664/52664-h/52664-h.htm).
Figure 71a-c Two ibex/wild goat pendants from the diadem of Queen Shubad. Gold foil over bitumen. From Ur, Iraq (Mesopotamia), First Dynasty of Ur (ca.2600 BCE, Early Bronze Age 2). Currently located at the Penn Museum, Philadelphia; B16684.1, B16684.2. Images are owned by Penn Museum, Philadelphia.

Figure 72a-b "Ram in the Thicket" (pair of wild goats or markhor with gold trees). Made with gold, ivory, wood, silver, white shell, red limestone, and lapis lazuli. From Royal Cemetery at Ur. ca.2600 BCE (Early Dynastic III = Early Minoan IIA). Image (a) is currently located at the British Museum, London; 122200. Image (b) is currently located at Penn Museum, Philadelphia; 30-12-702. Both images are owned by their respective institutions.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Manning, Sturt W., Felix Höflmayer, Nadine Moeller, Michael W. Dee, Christopher Bronk Ramsey, Dominik Fleitmann, Thomas Higham, Walter Kutschera, and Eva Maria Wild.


**LIST OF MUSEUM COLLECTIONS AND DATABASES**

Archaeological Museum of Rethymno, Crete

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

Benaki Museum, Athens


Corpus of Minoan and Mycenaean Seals (CMS) Online Database (http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/drupal/?q=en%2Fnode%2F196)

DÅMOS (Database of Mycenaean at Olso) (https://www2.hf.uio.no/damos/)
Dead Languages of the Mediterranean: Minoan Linear A & Mycenaean Linear B
(http://minoan.deadt erranean.com/linear-b-transliterations/)

Herakleion Archaeological Museum, Crete
Ierapetra Archaeological Museum, Crete
Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS) (https://www.itis.gov/advanced_search.html)


Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (http://www.mfa.org/collections/search)

Museum of Prehistoric Thera, Santorini

Nafplio Archaeological Museum, Greece

National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Greece

Penn Museum, Philadelphia (University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology) (https://www.penn.museum/collections/)

Staatliche Museen, Berlin, Germany

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (http://art.thewalters.org/browse/)

Varna Museum of Archaeology, Bulgaria