Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections

The Pseudo-Minoan Nestor Ring and Its Egyptian Iconography

Nanno Marinatos with Briana Jackson
University of Illinois, Chicago

Abstract

The so-called Nestor Ring was found in 1924 and was accepted as authentic by Sir Arthur Evans whereas many other scholars condemned it as a forgery. In recent years, scholars have claimed its authenticity anew. This article examines the background of the find circumstances and judges them suspicious. It also adds the criterion of semantic coherence in the debate and argues that the coherence depends on Egyptian prototypes and that the use of the butterfly motif argues against the artifact's authenticity.

"We have ... the first glimpse into the Elysian fields of Minoan and Mycenaean religion it throws a singular light on the eschatology of the pre-classical age in Greece."

This is what Sir Arthur Evans wrote in 1925 about a gold ring which he bought in the Peloponnese in 1924/1925 (Fig. 1).[1] He gave it the playful name Ring of Nestor because it was found (as he thought) in the kingdom of the legendary Homeric king. When he sensed that the end of his life was near in 1939, he donated it to the Ashmolean museum.[2]

Evans considered the ring as very important documentation about Minoan afterlife beliefs and published it immediately. Doubts about its authenticity, however, were expressed by scholars already at that time and such doubts still persist in the minds of many scholars.[3] On the other hand, there has been a noticeable shift in favor of the ring's genuineness by some of the most knowledgeable experts in the field, such as the late John Sakellarakis and the foremost expert in the field, Ingo Pini. Both have based their arguments on iconographical, stylistic and technical features.[4]

The issue will be reconsidered here but the criteria for assessing the genuineness of the ring will be semantics and syntax instead of style. We shall also explore the historical circumstances of the period, in particular the relationship between the suspected forger of the ring, Emile Gilliéron, and its foremost interpreter, Sir Arthur Evans.

The ring was first presented to the National Museum in Athens around 1924 and was rejected as a forgery by a committee which consisted entirely of Greek scholars, the only foreigner being the director of the German Archaeological Institute in Athens, Georg Karo.[5] It was pronounced a fake and returned to its owner. Subsequently, however, an unknown person, a "friend" of Sir Arthur Evans, tipped him that a gold ring of great interest had been viewed in the Peloponnese.[6] Evans was inspired to travel there and, upon seeing the piece, became convinced that it was genuinely Minoan. He wrote then to his cousin Fanny Phelps that he had seen a magic ring, depicting "a map of the Elysian fields of my old people."[7] His old people were, of course, the Minoans.

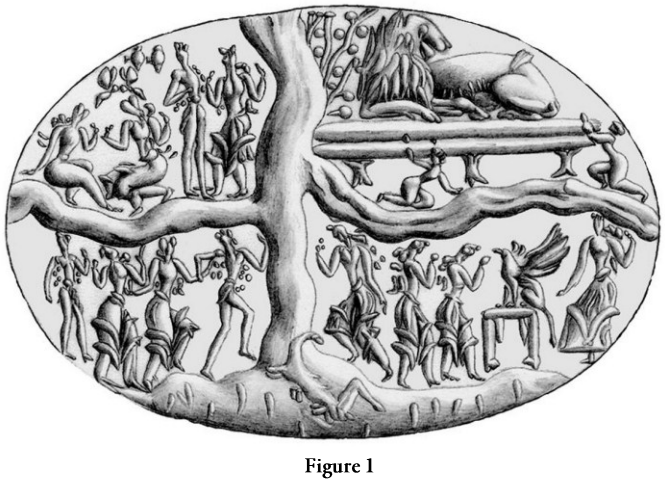

Figure 1

Evans had been told a story about the ring's origins: it had been allegedly found by a peasant in a Mycenaean tomb at

Kakovatos in the Peloponnese, shortly before the tomb was excavated by the German archaeologist Wilhelm Dörpfeld in 1907. The alleged circumstances place the occurrence 20 years before the time Evans visited the region and strip them of a verifiable find context. Evans assumed that this report was correct, however, because his informer was a trustworthy man and he writes:

"On the death of the peasant who had the good luck to find it, the ring passed into the possession of the son, who in course of time ceded it to the owner of a neighbouring vineyard. On information reaching me of its existence from a *trustworthy source*, I made a special journey into that somewhat inaccessible part of Greece and was finally able to secure it."[8]

In this account written in 1925, we note some points which raise suspicion. The original finder of the ring was dead and the ring was inherited by his son who had passed it on to a neighbor. This complicated chain of transmission has the advantage of bridging the gap between the time just before Dörpfeld excavated the tomb, and 1924/25 when the ring came to Evans's possession. The involvement of several persons prevented any serious investigation of the original find circumstances. In his *Palace of Minos* III, published a decade later, Evans simplifies his narrative about the circumstances of the ring's discovery and writes that it was found:

"...in a large beehive tomb at Nestor's Pylos by a peasant in quest of building material, somewhat previous to its investigation of its remains there by the German explorers in 1907. The discovery, however, was kept dark, and on the death of the original finder the ring passed into the possession of the owner of a neighboring vineyard. *Thanks to the kindness of a friend*, I saw an imperfect impression of the signet ring at Athens which gave me, however, sufficient idea of the importance that it might possess. I at once therefore, undertook a journey to the West coast of the Morea, resulting in the acquisition of this remarkable object."[9]

In this second account, the son of the peasant has been omitted. In both accounts, however, there is steady mention of "a trustworthy source" or "a friend" whom Evans seems to know well but whose name he does not want to reveal. Why? Presumably because the friend had asked him not to disclose his name. This same friend had the foresight to make an imprint and show it to Evans. Who could this person be but Evans' close collaborator Emile Gilliéron fils (Fig. 2.) Who could have carried the necessary materials to make imprints?

Figure 2

Why did Evans so readily accept the ring when his colleagues in the archaeological committee in Athens had rejected it? The reason is that he trusted his restorer, Gilliéron. Moreover, he understood instantly what the ring represented and this gave him confidence that it was truly Minoan. In order to understand what he saw, we must begin with Evans' interpretation.

He noted first of all a sinuous design in the center of the composition which he mistook as the *four rivers of paradise* (Gen. 2:10).[10] They divided the field into sections, each representing a topographical feature, as well as a moment in time. In other words, Evans thought that each scene represented a stage in a journey of a young couple to the underworld (Fig. 1). On the upper left scene, the young man meets his wife, having been separated from her by death, as Evans assumed. Now they meet again in the presence of a goddess and her maid who are shown conversing. Above the goddesses, Evans detected two butterflies and chrysalises and he interpreted them as souls (the reasons for this interpretation will be discussed later). On the right panel, a huge lion receives worship by two minute females. Evans assumed that it was guarding the gates of the underworld because he himself had written in 1901 that Minoan representations of antithetical lions are inspired by Egyptian lions guarding the gates of the Egyptian netherworld.[11] Once the lion was thus interpreted, the rest of the motifs in the scene fell into place and what emerged was a clear narrative about the journey to the beyond. The couple, followed by another figure (always according to Evans), is led to the *court of judgment* where a griffin is the *judge* and is received by the *goddess*.[12]

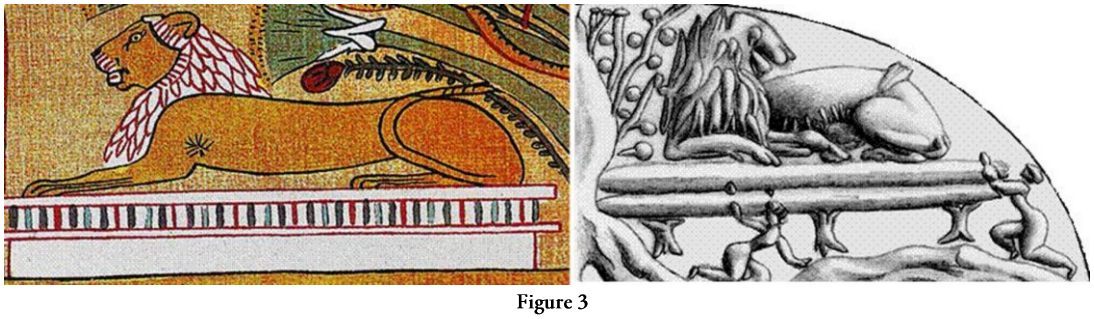

Figure 3

Figure 4

The narrative is based on the standard Egyptian journey to the beyond: the protagonists are a young couple, the guardian is a lion (Fig. 3) whereas the final scene involves a trial by a seated judge and a deity. In Fig. 4 the structural similarity between the Egyptian papyrus of Ani and the Nestor ring is made clear.

To be sure, there are some differences as well. It may be argued that they were made deliberately by the forger (if indeed the artifact is not genuine), in order to make the ring look more authentic. Whereas in the Egyptian funerary papyrus of Ani the leader of the souls is jackal-headed Anubis, on the Nestor ring the leaders are female griffin-ladies. Anubis has thus been multiplied into three and he has been feminized and "Minoanized". As well, in the Egyptian papyrus of Ani, the seated judge is Osiris whereas on the Nestor ring, he is an enthroned griffin.[13] On the Papyrus of Ani, Osiris is accompanied by his wife Isis and her sister Nepthys, whereas on the Nestor ring the griffin-judge is accompanied by *the* great goddess in a dancing posture.

Evans, who was well versed in Egyptian iconography, understood the syntax perfectly well and read the narrative instantly with intuitive understanding. Note, however, that without the Egyptian paradigm, the scene makes no sense at all!

But there was one point which Evans did not grasp and had to correct himself later. The design in the center of the ring did not represent the four rivers of paradise or Egyptian rivers, as he thought at first (Fig. 5) but an old oak tree, gnarled and barren, guarded by a dog or monster or "dragon", as he realized (or was told) later (Fig. 6). And when he recognized this, he corrected himself and drew the analogy with the Scandinavian Tree of the World, ygddrasil.[14] But how did Evans come to the idea of yggdrasil? We shall return to this point later and show that Gilliéron probably suggested it.

For the moment, we must note that the interpretation of the Nestor ring as an underworld scene is consistent with ideas which Evans had formulated over a period of 25 years when he repeatedly stressed the relationship between Crete and the Nile valley (and correctly so). In his view, the Minoan goddess, like her sisters, Hathor and Isis, resided in both realms of the cosmos,

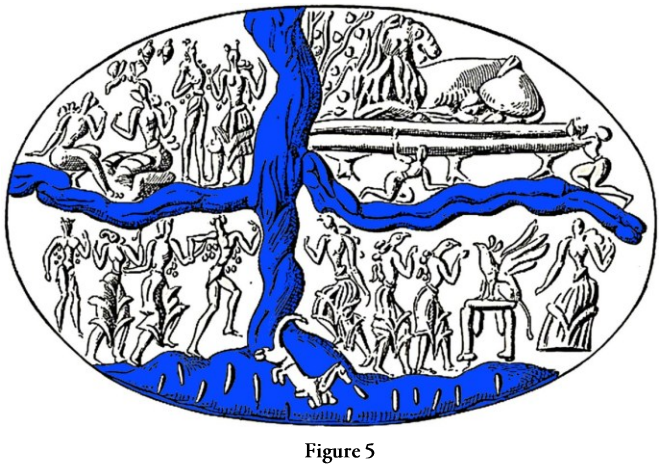

Figure 5

the upper world and the underworld. Thus, when he saw the ring he felt more than justified in his conclusions. And there was an added bonus: the two butterflies and chrysalises evidently represented the soul in Minoan art, an unexpected extra justification of his work since he was reflecting about the meaning of butterflies around 1924 when the ring came to his hands. Thus, only the tree of the world, ygddrasil was unforeseen and Evans admitted this much, noting that it came from "a very distant quarter".[15]

He missed one more detail in his first publication: the barren tree had *a leafy branch* attached to its trunk. This bough is an important clue to the mystery of the entire representation (above, Fig. 6).

Figure 6

Before we address the form of the tree-branch in detail, we must consider three events which occurred in the early 1920s. The first one is the publication of the first volume of the *Palace of Minos* (1921). In this remarkable synthesis of Minoan civilization and religion, Evans stressed the indebtedness of Crete to Egypt.[16]

The second event is Howard Carter's discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun in Egypt, in 1923. The London Times reports:

"With a loyal dedication to his 'generous friend' Lord Carnarvon, Mr. Howard Carter contributes to these columns to-day the first of three articles on the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings, in which he and Lord Carnarvon won their laurels. The romance of King Tutankhamen's burial-place is no nine days' wonder. It is confidently believed that a revelation still more intimate remains to be made..."[17]

On Dec. 11, 1923, while the tomb of Tutankhamun was under excavation, Sir Arthur Evans gave a lecture at the Egypt Exploration Society stressing the close connections between Crete and Egypt.[18] Egypt was very much in Evans' mind during these years.

The third event we must consider is the publication of the abridged version of Sir James Frazer's opus magnum, *The Golden Bough* (1922). This work had been of enormous length, twelve volumes in total, but now a concise and readable version was made available to educated readers. The study of religion was wedded to the science of anthropology in a style which any layman could enjoy. Fraser exposed patterns of belief which were constant in many cultures and during different periods of history: each year nature died but regenerated anew in the spring.[19] One of the topics in the *Golden Bough* was the worship of the oak, a tree barren in the winter from the branches of which grew a green bough. This bough was the parasitic mistletoe, according to Frazer, and was considered a sign of

regeneration by many peoples. In Virgil's *Aeneid* the golden bough even led the hero Aeneas to the underworld.[20] Frazer's ideas caught popular imagination instantly, as may be shown by an article in the *Times*, December 1920.[21] On November 21, 1921, Sir James was awarded an honorary doctorate from the Sorbonne together with Rudyard Kipling. The same year he was knighted at the age of 71.

Frazer's description of the golden bough and its identification with the mistletoe was as follows:

"It only remains to ask. Why was the mistletoe called the Golden Bough ... perhaps the name may be derived from the rich golden yellow which a bough of mistletoe assumes when it has been cut and kept for some months; the bright tint is not confined to the leaves but spreads to the stalks as well, so that the whole branch appears to be indeed a golden bough."[22]

These intellectual events lie behind the inspiration of the iconography of the Nestor ring. Their designer was an ingenious man who was able to combine his superb mastery of Minoan style with Egyptology and the anthropological data in Frazer's work. As well, the artist knew well that Sir Arthur Evans had linked Minoan religion with the theology of Egypt. The forger thus created a masterpiece of erudition, a "key to all mythologies", and proved also that he could be a creator of art.[23]

Let us return to the idea that the forger was Evans' restorer Gilliéron. With this hypothesis in mind, we examine the visual sources which were available to him in the 1920s. Consider the scene on the papyrus of Ani which was accessible in Sir Wallis Budge's edition and translation by 1913.[24] The "gentle judge" of the Nestor ring [25] was inspired by the two griffins flanking the throne at Knossos. The lion of the Nestor ring was based on the Egyptian god Maher, attested on the papyrus of Ani.[26] Ingo Pini makes another perceptive comparison when he analyzes the Aegean *comparanda* of the Nestor ring and shows very convincingly that a backward looking lion, similar in style to the one on the Nestor ring, is attested on a sealing from Gournia.[27] He uses this as evidence that the Nestor ring is genuine but the opposite may be argued, namely that Gilliéron knew the sealing since it was published already in 1908 and Gilliéron was in the Herakleion museum a lot. Consequently he may well have used the Gournia sealing as his template whereas his semantic model was Egyptian, not Minoan.

It has been noticed above that the goddess next to the seated griffin on the Nestor ring, is dancing. The forger copied her from the dancing figure in the center of the Vapheio ring, as is obvious when the two are compared (Fig. 7). Evans (but not others) had interpreted this figure as a goddess already in 1901, and he constructed his Nestor goddess on the model of the Vapheio figure, serving Evans his own ideas. [28]

Finally, the visual source for the tree, ygddrasil, in the center may have been copied from illustrations current in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.The combination of Egyptian mythology with Nordic lore and anthropology was an absolutely ingenious creation but at the same time a malicious joke at the expense of Sir Arthur Evans. How outrageous to make Osiris a respectable griffin and add a monster as guard of the roots of the Nordic tree![29] How clever to add the *golden bough* as growing from the branches of the barren oak (Fig. 6)! It is tempting to see the forger admiring his own creativity!

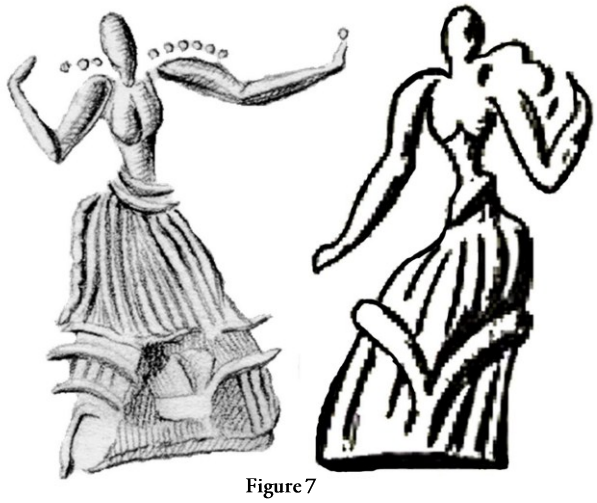

Figure 7

We now turn to the suspect who has already been identified as Evans' collaborator, Emile Gilliéron. His involvement in the affairs of the ring will now be shown to have been most intense, right from the beginning. We have seen that he must have been the man who led Evans to the Peloponnesus to find the gem. After he bought the object, Evans asked Gilliéron to execute a drawing and a color painting of the object (Fig. 6). We can be certain of the dates because the painting was ready in 1925 for publication in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*. The two men must have discussed all the features of the ring together and Gilliéron had a chance to instruct Evans as to the true meaning of some of the motifs. It will be remembered that when Evans wrote to his cousin Fanny Phelps he read the scene as topography of paradise (see above Fig. 5) but, by 1925, he knew that the design represented an oak tree and had also noticed the leafy branch which he interpreted as ivy (Fig. 6) and wrote:

"If, as highly probable, we may identify the plant that shoots out from the trunk of the 'Tree of the World' to give shadow to the couchant lion as sacral ivy..."[30]

Although Evans insists that the plant is sacred ivy, Gilliéron managed to add a gold tinge to its leaves. And Evans eventually became convinced that it was a *bough* because he writes five years later: "The religious character of the scene is further enhanced by the *bough*."[31] He even expresses gratitude to Gilliéron for his insights:

"I had at hand not only a competent artist but one whose admirable studies in Minoan art had thoroughly imbued him

with its spirit."[32]

Next, Evans asked Gilliéron to execute an exciting frontispiece for the third volume of *Palace of Minos*. Gilliéron designed the Queen's quarters with two conversing ladies in the foreground. These women are almost identical to two ladies on the Nestor ring (Fig. 8).[33] How much of a coincidence is this similarity? It may be argued, of course, that Gilliéron used the ring as a model for the frontispiece. On the other hand, it may be argued that the two ladies are his distinct template, his artistic stamp.

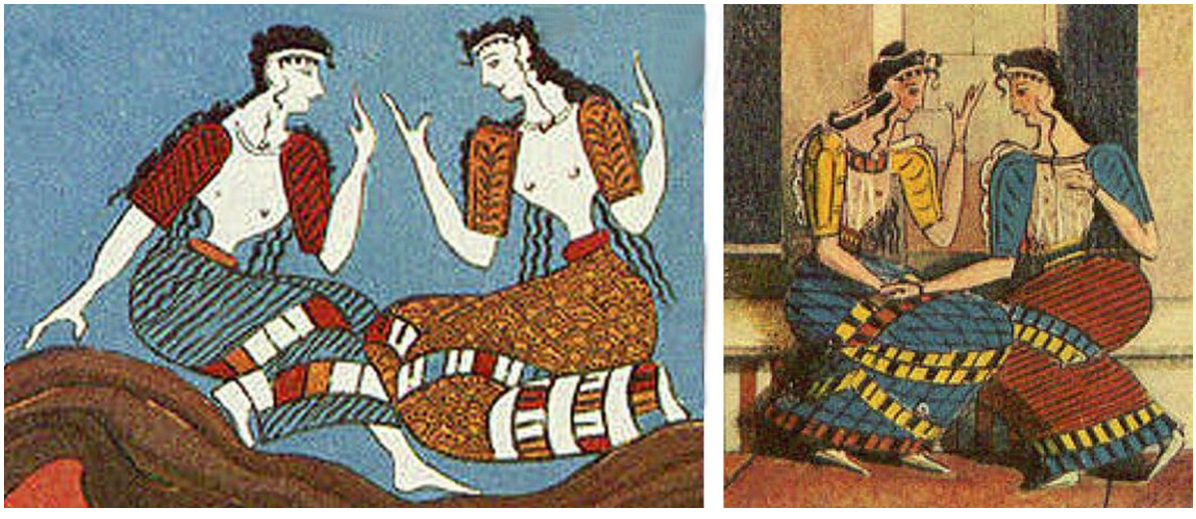

Figure 8

These are the circumstances under which the publication and interpretation of the Nestor ring came about. The painting was so seductive, that it fooled even Nilsson who wrote:

"...the similarity between the design on the ring and the Minoan wall-paintings of the Miniature style is so great that when we look at the translation of the design... we feel immediately that this is the true source!" [34]

The satisfaction of the forger must have been immense. Finally, his creative genius had been released and he had proved to be as good as his father outwitting even the great Evans. But it was important to share this achievement with the world. This psychological interpretation of the motivation of the forger is supported by the research conducted by Robin Hägg in the 1980s.[35] By accident, Hägg met a Swedish lady by the name of Siv Belfrage, who was a collaborator of Axel W. Persson in the 1930s. Persson told this lady that the forger was Gilliéron fils and insisted that *the latter had confided* this to Persson. Hägg eagerly pursued this information, and began interviewing people who were Persson's students or colleagues. First he approached the Egyptologist T. Säve-Söderbergh in Uppsala and the latter confirmed the story, saying that he too had heard it. He next interviewed Doro Levi, once the director of the Italian School in Athens, who was still alive in the early 1980s. Levi said that he was certain the Gilliérons were the forgers, adding that they had made the ivory statue known as the Boston Goddess as well. None of this can be verified, of course, but it is important to put these testimonies on record for what they are worth.

Is there a way for us to catch the forger approximately 70 years after his death when everybody who could add some information has passed away? Did he make an error which is detectable with the advantage of hindsight?

The error is the *assumption that butterflies and chrysalises are symbols of the soul*. If we show that they did not have this meaning in Minoan times, we shall have caught the forger by exposing first his inadequate mastery of Minoan semantics and, second, his dependency on Evans' views in 1924, which Gilliéron *alone knew as they were still unpublished*. This line of investigation will be pursued further on. For the time being, let us review the evidence that butterflies are souls.

The basis of Evans' entire interpretation of the Nestor ring is the assumption that the butterfly is of the other world and, for this reason he spent many pages on their significance in 1925. Note that he occasionally refers to Frazer's evidence of the Burmese belief that butterflies are souls.[36] The idea that chrysalis and butterfly are metaphors for immortality and regeneration is Victorian, however. Frazer utilizes it;[37] Erwin Rhode wrote an entire book devoted to *Psyche* (1890-1894).[38] Already Heinrich Schliemann had introduced the idea when he found, in the Shaft Graves at Mycenae, a pair of golden scales the pans of which were embossed with two images of a butterfly. Influenced by the Homeric concept of *psychostasia* (weighing of souls, *Iliad* 22.210), Schliemann suggested that the insects represented the souls of the dead weighed in judgment. This, however, makes no sense at all in the case of the Mycenaean scales: why should a soul be weighed against itself? Schliemann had made this assumption without thinking it through, misled by the fact that in Greek (but *not* in Minoan), the word for soul is *psyche*. Psyche indeed

designates *both butterfly and soul* but this is true only for the Greek language.[39] The Schliemann assumption is therefore not well founded and was questioned by Karo already in the 1930s. The German scholar cautioned his colleagues that the ring of Nestor was not reliable evidence because it was a forgery.[40]

The fact is that butterflies are *never* explicitly associated with the dead in Minoan or Aegean art, although Evans was very right that they had religious associations. A few examples will suffice to demonstrate that *they cannot be interpreted as souls*.

The first example is a ring imprint from Hagia Triada (Fig. 9).[41] A female leans against a boulder and looks backwards; she sees a pair of huge butterflies accompanied by a sacral knot.

Figure 9

What exactly does this mean? It is not easy for the modern viewer to decide, but we may be certain that a symbolic code is operative. Most likely, the subject of the representation is a vision which the woman has when she turns her head seeing the two butterflies as oversized and accompanied by a religious symbol, the sacral garment or "sacral knot." Are the butterflies evocative of the double axe with which they are sometimes associated, as had been noted already by Evans who understood correctly its supernatural symbolism? (his only mistake was to equate butterfly with soul of the dead.)[42]

The next example comes from the representation of the admiral's ship from the miniature fresco of the West House at Thera . Here we see an antithetical pair of butterflies placed atop the mast of the vessel, whereas two more decorate the prow of the same ship (Fig. 10).[43] The insects are emblems of the admiral's authority and note that his vessel carries warriors. It is therefore impossible to make the claim that these emblems represent the souls of the dead! On the other hand, they can be easily interpreted as emblems of the goddess whose servant and champion is the admiral.

Finally, and this is surely a fatal blow to the theory, *butterflies do not occur on sarcophagi*, the one place where we should actually expect to find them if they actually represented the dead.

In conclusion, the pivot around which the entire interpretation of the Nestor ring revolves, the connecting link of all its episodes, is the *butterfly*. As Evans put it: "The idea of resurgence is itself graphically conveyed by two chrysalises and corresponding butterflies above the Goddess's shoulders."[44]

Now that we have questioned the validity of the theory that the insect in question represents the soul and have shown that this assumption was dependent on Evans' ideas, we have exposed the *semantic error* committed by the ring's creator. Our forger mastered style but he made a mistake in idiom, being misled by perceptions current in his times.

It is time now to turn to circumstantial evidence which will throw even more light on the relationship between Evans and Gilliéron. In 1924-1923, prior to the time when the Nestor ring appeared, Evans was working on the publication of the second volume of the *Palace of Minos* (which eventually appeared in 1928). He asked Gilliéron to create a new version of the Prince of the Lilies because he was not completely satisfied with what his father, Gilliéron (père), had produced.[45] There is evidence

Figure 10

that the younger Gilliéron made several versions on paper, one of which is now in the Ashmolean (Fig. 11).[46] In all of them, the Priest King is represented as walking in a landscape of lilies with a butterfly hovering above the flowers. Where did the butterfly come from? The fragment had indeed been found together with the body of the Priest King in the early excavation days, but only in the late 1920s did Evans become curious about its significance and began thinking that the butterfly belonged to an Elysian landscape. At this time, he must have re-thought Schliemann's interpretation that the butterfly meant *psyche*-soul on the golden scales from Mycenae. He surely shared these ideas with Gilliéron; this can hardly be doubted because the two men must have redesigned the restoration sketches in consultation. Eventually, Evans published his views in *Palace of Minos* II (1928): "The Priest King of the painted relief moves in Elysian fields amidst mystic blooms and butterflies from another sphere."[47] These ideas, however, had *not* been published in 1924 when the ring of Nestor appeared and it is worth stressing that only Gilliéron could have known them since he had begun working on the Priest King.[48]

We next turn to the testimony of Evans's colleague Georg Karo, a German scholar who was often at Knossos visiting him. He was among the first ones to understand the deceit regarding the ring of Nestor and told his students at the University of Halle about it. One of these students was the Greek archaeologist Spyridon Marinatos and on 27 July, 1928, the latter writes to his superior Stephanos Xanthoudides, director of the Herakleion museum, that Karo would be forced to write something in public about the forgeries and that he could not forego the matter in silence.[49] But in the end, Karo decided to write Evans a personal letter and warned him that someone was picking up his ideas and, based on them, was constructing forgeries. Evans responded that *no forger could have known his views because they were as yet unpublished.*[50]

What ideas was Evans referring to? Surely he did not mean his general theory of Minoan religion and tree cult which had been published since 1901. No! He was certainly referring to his new interpretation of Elysion according to which the butterfly was *psyche*. And he would not believe that his close collaborator was engaged in deception against him. Thus the forger had his way.

In summary, the order of events is the following.

1923-24 Evans observes a butterfly on the Priest King and begins investigating its possible contextual associations, leaning towards the interpretation that it is a symbol of the soul.

1924 Gilliéron begins restoration of Priest King.

1924 The ring of Nestor appears.

1925 Gilliéron paints the water color version of ring of Nestor.

1925-1935 Gilliéron probably instructs Evans about the meaning of tree of the world and golden bough on the ring of Nestor. The idea of the golden bough is included in Palace of Minos III (1935) and Evans interprets the ring in light of Gilliéron's suggestions.

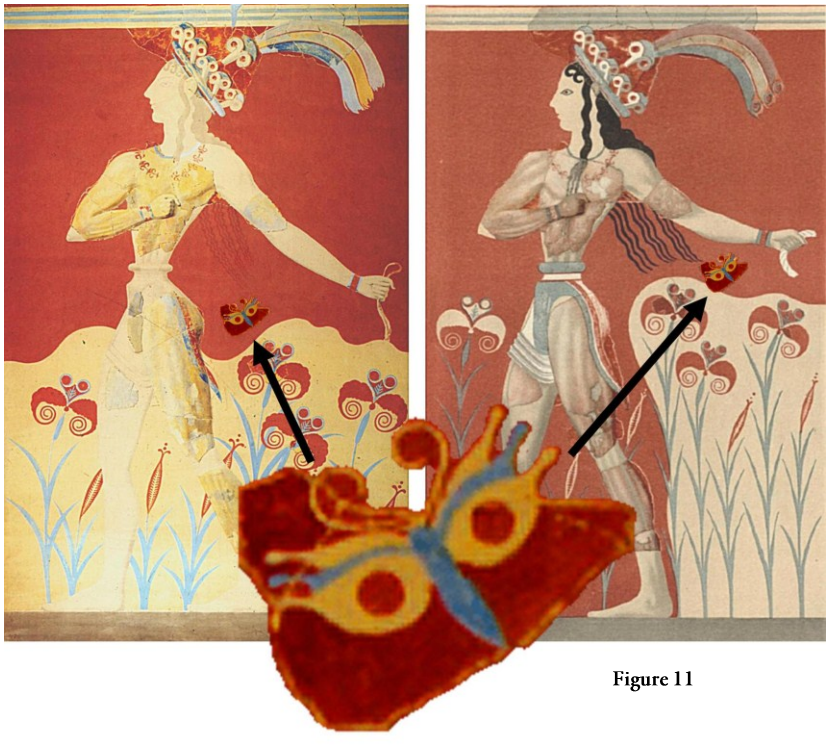

Figure 11

Karo is our crucial witness in this affair. Through discussions with his student, Spyridon Marinatos, who was ephor of Crete between 1929 and 1937, Karo surmised that Gilliéron's designs were utilized by a gold-smith in Herakleion to fabricate gold rings.[51] Karo explicitly accuses both Gilliérons in his memoirs *Greifen am Thron* of fraud and refers to the goldsmith's workshop in Herakleion. This testimony has been verified from letters in Marinatos' archives.[52] Karo fortunately shared this information with many scholars, including Martin P. Nilsson. The latter had readily accepted the Nestor ring in 1927 but corrected himself twenty years later and in so doing aptly summarized the evidence regarding the artifact:

"The man who made this ring knew not a little of things Minoan and Greek and had a lovely imagination which sometimes led him astray."[53]

Addendum

Sean Hemingway, Curator in the Department of Greek and Roman Art of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, has given me, after this article was sent to press, the following additional information.

Gilliéron fils was working at the Cairo Museum in the beginning of the winter of 1922-1923, making reproductions for the Metropolitan Museum, New York. He would thus have been immersing himself in Egyptian art and iconography precisely in the years before the Nestor ring emerged. There are indications in the museum archive that suggest that Gilliéron fils was interested in replicating ancient techniques - for the Egyptian reproductions and also for a copy of the Malia bee pendant which the Museum acquired in 1932.

For information on the Museum's exhibition "E. Gilliéron & Son's Reproductions of Art from the Greek Bronze Age" see the article by Seán Hemingway at:

http://www.metmuseum.org/now-at-the-met/features/2011/05/17/historic-images-of-the-greek-bronze-age.aspx

Notes

[1] Evans 1925, 46. For full bibliography see Boardman in Pini and Müller eds., *CMS* VI.2, 2009, 448-49.
[2] *Times*, Feb 02, 1939.
[3] Hägg 1987; Lapatin 2002, 158; Younger 1985; MacGillivray 2000, 288-89; Gere 2009, 32-35.
[4] Sakellarakis 1973, 303-18; Pini 1998, 1-13; see also Kyriakides 2000.
[5] Karo 1959, 111.
[6] Evans, *PM* III, 145. See also Lapatin 2002, 157.
[7] Evans 1943, 377.
[8] Evans 1925, 46. Italics ours.
[9] Evans *PM* III, 145; Lapatin 2002, 157.
[10] Evans 1925, 48-50. See also notes 13, 14.
[11] Evans 1901, 162. On the subject see Marinatos 2009.
[12] Evans *PM* III, 154-155.
[13] Evans 1925, 68-70; *PM* III, 154-155.
[14] Evans 1925, 50-51.
[15] Evans 1925, 51. In n. 18 he refers to the tales recorded by the Grimm, Deutsche *Mythologie* (1878).
[16] Evans *PM* I, 286-300.
[17] *Times*, May 31, 1923.
[18] *Times*, Dec. 12, 1923.
[19] See excellent discussion in Robert Fraser, *J. G. Frazer, The Golden Bough*, Oxford Classics New York 1994, xxi.
[20] Frazer 1922, 159- 161, 661, 665, 701-711.
[21] *Times*, 31 Dec. 1920.
[22] Frazer 1922, 704.
[23] Casaubon in Gorge Elliot's *Middlemarch*.
[24] Budge 1913.
[25] Evans 1925, 68; *PM* III, 155.
[26] Evans 1925, 65-68. The forger knew that Evans would like this lion since he had written that lions are guardians of the gates of the netherworld in "Tree and Pillar Cult". Evans 1901, 162; Marinatos 2009.
[27] Pini 1998, 6-7.
[28] Evans 1901, 177-178; PM I, 161; PM III, 140. Many scholars, including Nilsson 1950, 275-277, disagreed identifying her as a mortal. I belong to the latter school (Marinatos 2010, 95-97). For bibl. see *CMS* I, 126.
[29] Evans *PM* III 1930, 154-55.
[30] Evans 1925, 68, col pl. V; *PM* III, pl. Xa opposite p. 157.
[31] Evans *PM* III, 154. Italics ours.
[32] Evans, *PM* I, 157.
[33] This similarity was noticed by Sakellariou but is not accepted by Pini 1998, 7.
[34] Cited by Evans: *PM* III, 157.
[35] Hägg, personal communication; see also Hägg 1987; Pini 1998, 1.
[36] Evans 1925, 55, n. 28.
[37] Frazer 1927, 44.
[38] Erwin Rhode, Psyche: *The Cult of Souls and the Belief in Immortality among the Greeks*, trans. from the 8th edn. by W. B. Hillis (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1925; reprinted by Routledge, 2000).
[39] Schliemann 1878, 227-230.
[40] Karo 1930, 304.
[41] *CMS* II. 6.4; Marinatos 2010, 89, fig.7.2b.
[42] Evans *PM* II, 787-89.
[43] Marinatos 1974, fig. 5; pl. 104; Doumas 1992, pl. 71. For *comparanda* see Morgan 132-134.
[44] Evans, *PM* III, vi.
[45] Discussion in Sheratt 2000.
[46] Illustrated by Sheratt 2000, 18, Fig. 21. Evans announces in 1925, that the *correct* restoration of this will appear in PM II. Evans 1925, 27.
[47] Evans *PM* II, 778.
[48] Letter of Minister G. Spyridonos no. 34398, July 8, 1926.
[49] Marinatos to Xanthoudides June 27, 1928. Marinatos' Archives.
[50] Karo 1959, 111: "wie er mir einmal schrieb - niemand von jenen noch unveröffentlichten Ergebnissen erfahren habe."
[51] Karo 1959, 111: "auf Bestellung arbeitende Goldschmiede".
[52] Karo 1959, 41-42.
[53] Nilsson 1950, 49-50.

Bibliography

Boardman, J. 2009. In *Corpus der Minoischen und Mykenischen Siegel,* I. Pini and W. Müller, eds. VI.2. Mainz: Philip von Zabern, 449.

Budge, Wallis, E.A. 1895. The Book of the Dead: the Papyrus of Ani. London. Reprinted 1913.

Doumas, C. 1992. *The Wall Paintings of Thera.* London: The Thera Foundation- Petros M. Nomikos.

Eliot, G. 2008. *Middlemarch*. Oxford World Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Evans, A. J. 1901. "The Mycenaean Tree and Pillar Cult and its Mediterranean Relations." *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 21: 99-204.

Evans, A. J. 1925. "The 'Ring of Nestor': A Glimpse into the Minoan After-World." *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 45: 43-75.

Evans, J. 1943. *Time and Chance: The Story of Arthur Evans and His Forebears*. London: Longmans, Green.

Faulkner, R. O. 1995. *The Egyptian Book of the Dead: The Book of Going Forth by Day, Being the Papyrus of Ani (Royal Scribe of the Divine Offerings)*. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.

Fraser, R., ed. 1994. *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion:* A New Abridgement from the Second and Third Editions. Oxford World Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Frazer, J. G. 1922. *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*. Abridged ed., reprinted 1949. London: MacMillan Press.

Frazer, J.G. 1927. *Man, God and Immortality: Thoughts on Human Progress*. New York: MacMillan. Reprinted by Vinne-Hallenbeck Company, New York.

Gere, C. 2009. *Knossos and the Prophets of Modernism*. Chicago: The University of Chicago.

Hägg, R. 1987. "Bemerkungen zum Nestorring." In *Kolloquium zur Agäischen Vorgeschichte. Mannheim, 20-22.2.1986*. Schriften des deutschen Archäologenverbandes IX. Mannheim: Geschäftsstelle des Deutschen Archäologen-Verbandes, 57.

Karo, G. 1930. *Die Schachtgräber von Mykenai*. Munich: Bruckmann.

Karo, G. 1959. Greifen am Thron: *Erinnerungen an Knossos*. Baden-Baden: B. Grimm, 1959.

Kyriakides, E. 2000. "Pithos or Baetyl? On the Interpretation of a Group of Minoan Rings." *Opuscula Atheniensia* 25-26: 117-8.

Kyriakidis, E. 2005. "Unidentified Floating Objects on Minoan Seals." *American Journal of Archaeology* 109: 137-154.

Lapatin, K. 2002. *Mysteries of the Snake Goddess: Art, Desire, and the Forging of History*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co.

MacGillivray, J. A. 2000. *Minotaur: Sir Arthur Evans and the Archaeology of the Minoan Myth*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Mallet, P. H, et. al. 1847. *Northern Antiquities*. London: George Woodfall and Son.

Marinatos, N. 2009. "The Indebtedness of Minoan Religion to Egyptian Solar Religion: Was Sir Arthur Evans right?" *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 1: 22-28.

Marinatos, N. 2010. *Minoan Kingship and the Solar Goddess: A Near Eastern Koine*. Urbana-Champaign: The University of Illinois Press.

Marinatos, S. 1974. *Excavations at Thera,* vol. VI. Athens: Archaeologiacl Society.

Morgan, L. 1989. *The Miniature Wall Paintings of Thera: A Study in Aegean Culture and Iconography*. Cambridge Classical Studies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nilsson, M. P. 1950. *Minoan-Mycenaean Religion, and Its Survival in Greek Religion*. Revised 2nd ed. Lund: Gleerup.

Pini, I. 1998. "The 'Ring of Nestor." *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 17: 1-13.

Sakellarakis, J. A. 1973. "Über die Echtheit des sogenannten Nestorringes." In *Proceedings of the Third Cretological Congress*, vol. A. Athens and Rethymno: Dimos Rethymnis, 303-18.

Sakellariou, A. 1994. "Το δακτυλίδι του Νέστορα: Είναι γνήσιο?" In *Λοίβη εις μνήμην Ανδρέα Γ*. Καλοκαιρινού. Iraklion: *Εταιρεία Κρητικών Σπουδών*, 93-106.

Schliemann, H. 1878. *Mykenae*. Reprinted by Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Sherratt S. 2000. *Arthur Evans, Knossos and the Priest-King*. Oxford: Ashmolean Museum.

Younger, J. G. 1985. "Seven Types of Ring Construction in the Greek Late Bronze Age." In *Aux origines de l'Hellenisme. La Crèce, Hommage à Henri van Effenterre*. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, Histoire Ancienne et Médiévale, 15: 83-90.

Abbreviations

CMS: *Corpus der Minoischen und Mykenischen Siegel*. 1964—. Berlin: Akademie der Wissenschaften; Mainz.: Philipp von Zabern.

Evans, PM I-IV: A.J. Evans. 1921-35. *The Palace of Minos at Knossos*. London: George MacMillan.