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The University of Western Ontario

ANTHROPOLOGY

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Modelling Belief in Minoan Art

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The Aegean Bronze Age is famous for its striking artefacts, such as the gold death masks of Mycenae, the faience snake goddesses of Knossos, or the wall paintings from Thera. However, while such riches elicit awe among museum-goers, archaeologists have been largely turning their attention instead to more mundane artefacts: cooking pots, storage jars, and middens. Although this archaeological focus does make perfect sense in many ways, it studiously omits some of the most important finds for our understanding of Aegean Bronze Age societies. I will argue that this can in part be attributed to a nervousness about discussing seemingly outmoded categories such as 'art' and 'religion'; and that with fresh theoretical eyes we can rehabilitate these areas and generate new interpretations of 'artworks' and their role in Minoan and Mycenaean religion.

Professor Carl Knappett has published numerous articles and books on Aegean Bronze Age political economies and geopolitics, on Minoanisation in the Cyclades, Dodecanese and Asia Minor, on Minoan pottery, and on the Minoan harbour site of Palaikastro. He is also at the forefront of material culture and materiality studies and has published influential papers on regional interaction and social network analysis in archaeology.

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