

# The Cult of the Dead, Fetishism, and the Genesis of an Idea: Megalithic Monuments and the Tree and Pillar Cult of Arthur J. Evans



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*Mots clés:* Arthur Evans, monuments mégalithiques, culte des morts, culte de l'arbre et du pilier, religion minoenne  
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*Arthur Evans is most noted for his work in Crete, particularly the excavation of the Palace of Knossos, which he began in the year 1900. As a consequence, Arthur Evans' earlier archaeology is often overlooked. This paper focuses on a series of lectures, largely unpublished, on the development of megalithic monuments and the religious cult they embodied, delivered by Evans in 1885. Evans' ideas of cult were embedded in contemporary late nineteenth century anthropological concepts set within an evolutionary context. This paper shows that these underlying ideas were also evident in Evans' later writings on the Aegean: notably, the famous article on the Tree and Pillar Cult that formed the basis of his concept of Minoan religion. By contextualizing Evans' early work, we gain a fuller understanding of why he prioritized certain information in constructing his concept of a Minoan civilization.*

## INTRODUCTION

Sir Arthur John Evans is understandably famous for his excavations at Knossos commencing in 1900 and for his articulation of prehistoric Cretan (Minoan) civilization in his monumental publication *The Palace of Minos at Knossos*, published in four volumes between 1921 and 1936 (Evans 1921–1936). Some historians of the field of Aegean archaeology have briefly explored Evans' scholarship prior to his investigations on Crete (e.g. MacGillivray 2000; McEnroe 1995; McNeal 1974), but, for many, particularly Aegean prehistorians, Evans' publications on Minoan writing and religion form the starting point for the history of the field. Even John L. Myres, Evans' collaborator on journeys to Africa and Crete prior to Knossos, downplayed

Evans' research on British and European prehistory. In Myres' obituary of Evans in 1941, he only briefly mentioned Evans' early British and European archaeological work: his interest in Romano-British coins and the unpublished 1895 Rhind Lectures, *On the Origin of Celtic Art* (Evans 1895c). He felt that Evans' studies in European archaeology 'found full and appropriate expression in the Rhind Lectures' (Myres 1941:944), thus absolving him from any further discussion of Evans' early work. It is quite clear from Myres' tribute that Evans' activities on Crete, from his first visit in 1894, eclipsed any preceding research.

In this article I draw on a series of unpublished lectures delivered in 1885 by Evans on British and European megalithic monuments. My goal is twofold: first, to summarize Evans' thoughts on human develop-

ment, particularly the development of religion, as expressed in the lectures prior to his research on Crete. The views in the lectures were heavily influenced by the evolutionary theories of John Lubbock, the leading theorist on ancient society in the late nineteenth century (Kuper 1988:78–79, 2005:83), and by his own father, John Evans, as well as many of his father's contemporaries. Second, I trace concepts within Evans' views developed in the megalith lectures that profoundly affected his later thought on Minoan religion, exemplified in an influential article 'Mycenaean tree and pillar cult' published in 1901, as he was processing the results of his first season's excavations at Knossos (Evans 1901).

#### 'THE CLASS OF MONUMENTS WHICH ARE KNOWN AS "MEGALITHIC"'<sup>1</sup>

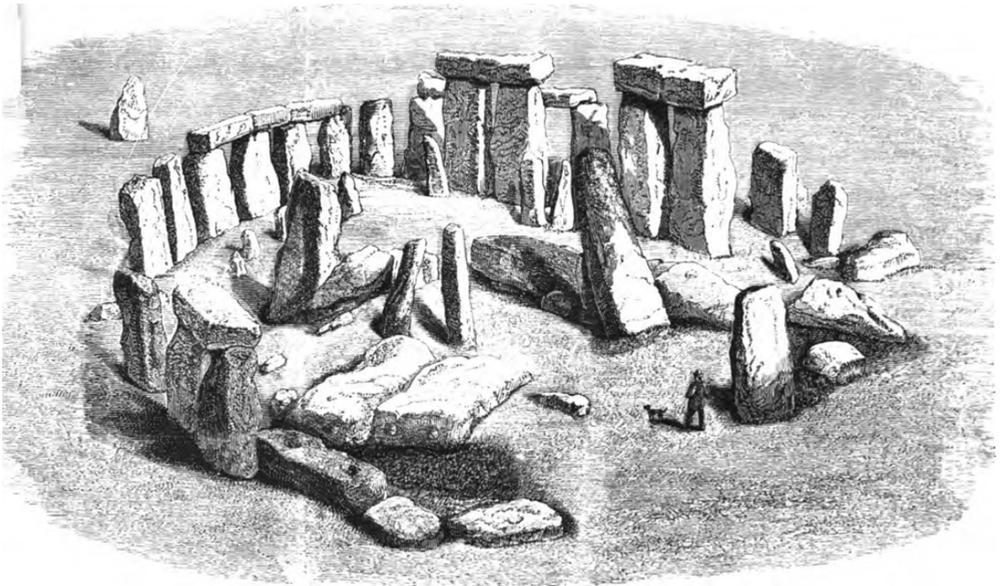
Between 21 February and 19 March 1885 Arthur Evans gave a series of five lectures on megalithic monuments (henceforth megalith lectures) in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford University, shortly after his appointment as Keeper.<sup>2</sup> The hand-written texts for these five lectures are preserved in the Arthur Evans Archive at the Ashmolean Museum. Later that same year, a highly condensed version of these lectures was published (Evans 1885b). Evans indicates in both versions the purpose of his analysis: to lay the ground for a more comprehensive study of the monuments (Evans 1885a i:6, 1885b:3–4) and to offer 'a working theory to account for the genesis of certain forms' and their relationship to the development of religious thought (Evans 1885a i:5–6).

In the following sections, I selectively summarize the lectures, roughly following their sequence to show how Evans built his argument. The first section introduces Evans' theoretical approach, including a discussion of prevailing theories on the megaliths. The remaining sections revolve

around the theme of progressive evolutionary stages of religious development, from the absence of religion to the beginnings of the cult of the dead and finally to ancestor worship. The 'Reindeer Period' or Palaeolithic, as Evans (1885a ii:1) indicated it is technically called, is the topic of the second half of lecture one and the first half of lecture two. The absence of higher cultural attributes such as burial rites and artistic expression characterized this period. The origin of the cult of the dead is the topic for most of lectures two and three. Evans' working theory on the symbolic form of the megalithic monuments in relation to the cult of the dead is also discussed in lecture three. Lecture four is incomplete, but begins with a discussion of terminology, the 'mythology of megaliths', and the current (nineteenth century) ethnographic uses of megalithic stone and wood monuments, offering further evidence for the relationship between symbolic megalith forms and religion. The great stone circles, particularly those of Stonehenge and Avebury, are the principal topic for lecture five, elevating the cult of the dead to the cult of ancestors and perhaps to a worship of a more abstract deity.

#### Theoretical approach

Evans' primary concern in the megalith lectures was to set out his theory on the relationship between the architectural development of megalithic structures, death, and religion. In this, he applied Lubbock's concepts, but perhaps because Lubbock's ideas had become widely accepted among scientific prehistorians, acknowledgement was implicit. Only once is Lubbock specifically mentioned in the megalith lectures, in relation to the etymology of the term 'stone circle' (Evans 1885a iv:3). Lubbock again is indirectly referred to in the caption of the illustration of Stonehenge that Evans



STONEHENGE.

FROM SIR JOHN LUBBOCK'S "ORIGIN OF CIVILISATION."  
By kind permission of Author and Publisher.

*Figure 1. Frontispiece, Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society (Evans 1885b).*

used in his published megalith paper, stating 'with kind permission of the author and publisher' (Fig. 1).<sup>3</sup> However, Evans cited numerous other scholars throughout, including Edward Burnett Tylor, Oxford University's first professor in anthropology. Evans, like Lubbock (Bartel 1982:35; Kuper 1988:78–79), based his analysis of the anthropology of death and burial in primitive cultures on Tylor (1866, 1871 ii:1–39). In his archaeological synthesis of primitive ideas, Evans made extensive use of evidence from archaeological assemblages, language, myth, and belief – all of which, according to Tylor, formed a single cultural entity (Kuper 1988:81, 2005:83).

Evans cited his father on the scientific approach in the study of the antiquity of man and the necessity of using archaeological deposits to assess changes in the past (Evans 1885a i:11). In his discussion of contemporary ideas on the megaliths, Evans called into question the 'mis-called

"learned" explanations' and the 'rash and visionary speculations' (Evans 1885a i:2) that surrounded the study of the monuments, exemplified by James Fergusson (1860; 1872) who completely ignored archaeological evidence: 'a writer who goes out of the way to sneer at the Danish Antiquities without having himself as much as a glimmering of critical judgement as to the character of archaeological evidence could not fail to go hopelessly astray' (Evans 1885a i:4–5, 1885b:3). Evans, like Lubbock (1865:51–54), thought Fergusson's arguments to be flawed, particularly regarding his conclusions on the late date of the monuments.

It is obvious from his survey of the literature that Evans felt the subject had not been dealt with effectively and that his contribution would address, to some extent, the need for a systematic and scientific study. It should be noted that subsequently Evans, applying this scientific method,

continued to modify specific views originally expressed in the megalith lectures as new archaeological evidence became available. His concern with studies ‘distorted by fundamentally erroneous theories’ (Evans 1885a i:4) was also evident at the time he was beginning his excavations at Knossos in his participation in the British Association for the Advancement of Science committee on British stone circles, formed to bring a degree of professionalism and academic control to the study of the great megalithic monuments (British Association 1900).

Stages of religious evolution, which Evans saw in the cult of the dead, reflected progressive stages of civilization. Evans (1885a i:7) stated early in lecture one that ‘the Culture of Mankind has advanced in a kind of geometrical progression *Vires acquirit eundo*’ or ‘it gathers strength as it goes’, a quote from Virgil (*Aeneid* 4, 175). Evans clearly stated this same position the year before in his published inaugural lecture of 1884: ‘the great doctrine of Evolution’ is a ‘central truth’ of archaeology (Evans 1884:28). Evolution was the fundamental theoretical basis on which he built his explanation of culture change from the Palaeolithic to the Bronze Age (Evans 1885a i:7). This vision was set within a tradition of unilinear cultural evolution: progressive stages of development from primitive to more complex, described by Bruce Trigger (1989:145–147) as ‘Lubbock’s legacy’. It has been noted that throughout his career Evans never relinquished this progressive cultural evolutionary outlook (Hamilakis 2002b:5–7; MacGillivray 2000:69–70; McEnroe 1995:3–5; McNeal 1974).

The scholarly tradition to which Evans belonged, inherited from scholars like Lubbock and Tylor, made use of ethnography – from a western colonial viewpoint – to describe primitive traits seen in contemporary (nineteenth century) native cultures such as the Eskimo to explain those of prehistoric man (Fabian 1983:11–12;

Gosden 1999:26). Evans certainly used ethnographic ‘evidence’ throughout the lectures for parallels of artefact types, treatment of the dead, and stone ‘baetyl’ worship. At this time, much ethnographic evidence was selected from a stock of observations made by missionaries, explorers, and military and Colonial Office personnel in areas of the British Empire. Evans’ own travel experiences provided him with further data on the customs of peoples from Lapland and the Balkans. The basic assumption in nineteenth century anthropology was that ancient primitive society was originally an ‘organic whole’ with shared characteristics that could be investigated in surviving primitive societies (Kuper 1988:6, 2005:4–5). Evans skipped quite blithely between tribes in the Arctic, India, and the Russian steppes, and less frequently among the natives of Polynesia, Australia, and the Americas. There is no denying that by modern standards there are racist overtones to these types of comparisons, but to Evans and his contemporaries these were valid ‘*ideologemes*’ or ideological constructs (Fotiadis 2006:6) in the context of the grand evolutionary scheme.

In common with most scholars of the time trained in the Classical tradition, Evans made liberal use of poetry. He quoted Classical texts eruditely in the original Latin or Greek. Myths and folklore were also used to support his theories dealing with the construction of tombs, the worship of stone and wooden idols, and the treatment of the bodies of the dead. Evans’ explanation of the value of folklore in scientific study followed the view that mythology and folklore contained survivals of primitive modes of life (Tylor 1871 i:247–376; Frazer 1890 i:vii, 1918 i:vii; Kuper 2005:4):

Folklore has its own explanations [on the origins of the megaliths]; and has a natural recourse to the sinews of Giants, the enchantments of Merlin or the craft of the Wizard Smith. And these popular tales have a value of their own. Not so much from scientific accuracy of the

explanation given though some of these traditions are not devoid of a kernel of truth but rather from themselves preserving the fragments of heathen antiquity, as also it may be the monuments with which they are bound up (Evans 1885a i:1–2).

Indeed, his later article on the Rollright Stones for the Folklore Society is a detailed analysis of the myths attached to the monument, particularly in relation to the King-Stone and the Whispering Knights (Evans 1895a).

### **‘The Reindeer Period’**

In the second megalith lecture, Evans discussed the Palaeolithic in Europe: an era differentiated by ‘a wholly different climate, by a different fauna, and by a different configuration of the country’ (Evans 1885a ii:1). To a large extent, his conclusions rested on the faunal evidence compiled by a colleague and family friend, William Boyd Dawkins. Evans also adopted Boyd Dawkins’ concept that the Eskimos were directly descended from Palaeolithic man (Boyd Dawkins 1874:353–359, 1880:233–242). Boyd Dawkins’ main argument rested on the proviso that the Eskimo lived in similar environmental conditions to their ancestors and that, as a result, their cultural development had remained static. Importantly, this led Evans to look at a number of cultural practices of these Arctic peoples particularly in terms of the presence or absence of art and how they treated their dead.

Evans indicated that there was a scarcity of human bone in Quaternary deposits and, when human bones were found, they were generally scattered and disarticulated. Evans agreed with Boyd Dawkins’ explanation that the scattered bones were caused by the action of hyena scavengers (Boyd Dawkins 1880:230). Evans also indicated that Palaeolithic man made no funerary offerings. Explorers’ tales, mainly from Parry’s

second expedition to discover the North-west Passage (1821–1823), led Evans to deduce that Palaeolithic man ‘cared as little for their dead as the Eskimos who leave them covered up with a few slabs of snow to be eaten up by the dogs and foxes with the greatest indifference’ (Evans 1885a i:22). Lubbock, on the other hand, indicated that Parry offered the explanation that shallow burials, consequently scavenged by dogs and foxes, were a result of a ‘superstitious idea that the weight pressing on the corpse would give pain to the deceased’ (Lubbock 1865:509). It was this belief that Lubbock suggested gave rise to the idea of the vaulted tumuli (Lubbock 1865:410). Both Evans and Lubbock, however, concluded that such savages had no religion (Evans 1885a i:13; Lubbock 1870:189).

When new evidence in the form of a deposit of skeletons came to light in 1892 in the Balzi Rossi cave in northern Italy, Evans published an article arguing in favour of a Neolithic date, indicating that the position of the body, the placement of grave-goods (a flint knife and a necklace of bored bone pendants), and the deposit of ochre all show a ‘development in religious custom which has hitherto in no single well-authenticated instance been carried back to Palaeolithic times’ (Evans 1893:297). It was not until a few years later that he realized his error (Evans 1896a: 908). The early date of the cave burial was incontrovertibly confirmed after 1901 when burials of the late Palaeolithic were first documented in an archaeological context in the Grotte de Grimaldi, Italy (Evans 1908:18, n. 1), leading Evans subsequently to state that the Balzi Rossi cave ‘first supplied the concordant testimony of an elaborate cult of the dead on the part of Aurignacian [upper Palaeolithic] Man’ (Evans 1916:7).

Archetypal savages were also thought not to possess art and, as an example, Evans used the South American Fuegians, who were described by Darwin as ranking ‘among

the lowest barbarians' (Darwin 1871:52), as the prototype of ancient man. Evans maintained that primitive man was only capable of producing crude sketches on bits of bone, 'the lazy pastime of the savage man', rather than the production of images 'pregnant with religious meaning' (Evans 1885a i:13b). Although the megalith lectures were written after the discovery of the first known cave paintings at Altamira in Spain, Evans did not mention them; nor did he enter into the controversy that surrounded them at the time (García Guinea 2001:19–36). The cave paintings, sensitive in style and complex in execution, were not at first thought to be prehistoric as they, like the concept of burial, went against the current Darwinian ideas of cultural evolution, a general consensus not overturned until the early twentieth century with the discovery in France of similar cave paintings. Later, Evans modified his theories based on this new evidence of polychromatic cave art as having 'thrown quite a new light on the development of pictography among the late Palaeolithic peoples' (Evans 1908:11). He now saw the succession of images of this parietal art progressing from the pictorial to the stylized, linear – or abbreviated – forms. This was part of an evolution from simple, literal images, to more complex writing imbued with symbolic meaning, thus tying Palaeolithic art to Tylor's theories of gesture-language, picture writing, and their evolution to phonetic symbols that would lead ultimately to the alphabet (Tylor 1865:55–106).<sup>4</sup> This was a theory he would later apply to the origins of the Aegean script (Evans 1895b:1–2, 1903:51, 1908:10).

However, in the megalith lectures, Evans expressed the idea that early man was incapable of higher forms of thought. He believed this was particularly true of abstract ideas of the worship of the dead and the rudiments of religious beliefs. The concepts of the quest to understand the spirit of ancient man and the concept of

the noble antiquity of Western culture were assigned to the next stage in development, represented by the Neolithic period.

### **The cult of the dead**

It is during the Neolithic that Evans saw the beginnings of a respect for the dead, the beginnings of a 'cult of the departed', and the rudimentary foundations of religious practice. Culled from Lubbock (1879:150–151), Evans lists the characteristics of the Neolithic settlers of Europe: ground stone tools, domesticated animals, agriculture, and crafts such as pottery and weaving. But, most significantly, the Neolithic settlers now buried their dead. Evans wished to make it clear that Neolithic Man was not a direct descendant of the preceding 'Cave Man' of the Palaeolithic. He tacitly, although perhaps reluctantly, appeared to accept the concept of the so-called 'Aryan hypothesis', a theory based primarily on the work of Indo-European historical linguistics that saw waves of 'Aryan' people (speaking an Indo-European language) arrive in Europe from the east. However, he did not rule out the possibility of re-immigration by people originally descended from the earlier Palaeolithic population who had followed the retreating fauna to the North and East at the end of the Ice Age. Evans (1885a i:15) stated that after 'a great gulph of time'<sup>5</sup> physical changes would have taken place:

Old arts may have been changed for new and finally it is quite possible that a fragment of such a branch having advanced to the Neolithic or polished Stone Stage of Culture may have reimmigrated to some of its other seats in the West in a wholly new guise (Evans 1885a i:18).

Based on skull types found archaeologically in barrow contexts, Evans (1885a iii:18), Lubbock (1879:156), and other contemporary scholars, concluded that at least two races of people settled Western Europe during the Neolithic.

Evans struggled with the Aryan hypothesis. His opinions were tied up with anti-Ottoman sentiments and his desire to see a non-Eastern origin for the European races. Because of this, Evans later championed the theories of Giuseppe Sergi, an Italian anatomist and physical anthropologist. Sergi proposed a North African origin for the Mediterranean and Northern European races (Sergi 1901:42–44). He based his findings on ‘physical ethnology’, providing Evans with the scientific evidence he needed to dispute the Aryan hypothesis. Evans’ preference for Sergi’s alternative answer was quite clear in his presidential address to the Anthropology Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1896 (Evans 1896a:906–907).

Despite the ‘great gulph of time’ and the re-population of Europe, Evans argued that a conceptual link still existed with the Palaeolithic past to explain the method of burial. Men’s troglodytic nature prescribed burial in caves, an idea taken from the work of Sven Nilsson (1838–43:33–34, 1868:154–155). In other words, the receptacle of the dead had once been the abode of the living. It is here that we begin to see the argument for the genesis of the megaliths emerge. Archaeological evidence is used by Evans to show that cave burials belonged to this period and that there were, in a number of cases, monolithic stones or slabs used to define the burial place and to seal the area from other parts of the cave. In regions where there were no natural caves available, the construction of ‘artificial caves’ began – the first chambered tombs:

These underground dwellings are simply artificial caves and the custom of interment in them was as in the other case due to the belief of primitive man that the departed required the same domicile, the same utensils as the living (Evans 1885a iii:21).

New improved forms of abodes of the living appeared in the Neolithic, exemplified by the Swiss lake pile dwellings, that coexisted with more primitive pit-dwell-

ings that showed ‘the troglodytic habit of the Neolithic population’ (Evans 1885a ii:9). Lubbock had stressed how few human bones had been recovered from these settlements and speculated that ‘this absence of bones is in part attributable to the habit of burying or burning; the instinct of man has long been in most cases to bury his dead out of his sight’ (Lubbock 1865:281–282). Evans, improving on this idea, thought that the conservative nature of religion prescribed a specific type of burial treatment different and removed from new improved habitations: ‘the departed still required the dwelling of their remote forefathers who dwelt in colder Asiatic climes’ (Evans 1885a iii:26).

Ethnographic examples from Arctic areas provided models for these ancient dwelling forms: the underground or partially underground house, such as the Lapp *Kammi* and the Siberian *Yurt*. Lubbock, taking his cue from Nilsson (1838–43:16, 1868:125), had also made this connection stating that,

the dwellings used by Arctic Nations – the ‘winter-houses’ of the Esquimaux and Greenlanders, the ‘Yurts’ of the Siberians – correspond closely with these ‘Ganggraben’ or ‘Passage graves’ (Lubbock 1865:88).

The examples were from the Arctic or Sub arctic zones, ‘from Lapland to North Eastern Asia and even beyond Behring’s straits among the Esquimaux tribes in the North West Coast of America’ (Evans 1885a iii:23). Certainly, Evans’ personal observations among the tribes of Lapland (the Saami) whom he visited in 1873 (Bradley 2000:3–5; J. Evans 1943:173–175) gave weight and validity to his comparisons. These are the Boreal areas cited by Boyd Dawkins and repeated by Evans as the homeland of the direct descendants of Palaeolithic man. Ethnographic data also provided examples of instances where these habitations of the living on occasion were reassigned as the houses of the dead.

Evans examined burial practice by looking at the skeletal remains in long

barrow interments: ‘the bones are carefully placed together, the skeleton is very generally broken up in a way which shows that the bones must in some way have been disturbed after the loss of the flesh and ligatures’ (Evans 1885a ii:28). He stated that there were two main theories to account for this phenomenon: cannibalism and the ‘ossuary theory’. According to Evans, John Thurnam (1865:15)<sup>6</sup> proposed that ‘the disjointed condition of the bones in so many of the interments was an evidence of cannibalism’ (Evans 1885a ii:29). The classical authors Pliny, Diodoros, Strabo and Herodotos are quoted to support this argument. St. Jerome was also cited to demonstrate that cannibalism was ‘according to primitive ideas something more than a gastronomic enjoyment’ (ibid.) and was an incorporation of physical and mental qualities of the deceased.

The ossuary theory referred to secondary deposition after decomposition, with burial occurring when ‘the ghost had finally departed from its tenement of clay’ (Evans 1885a ii:30). Cremation, Evans observed, became more common in the Bronze Age, though ‘at a very early period a practice of cremation began to make its appearance and the practice coexists with that of the burial of the skeleton in unconsumed skeleton or body during a large part of the Neolithic Age of Britain’ (Evans 1885a ii:32). However, he pointed out that ‘the bones are imperfectly burnt’ and ‘they are not contained in urns’ during this long barrow period (Evans 1885a ii:34). Cremation grew out of the need to decompose the body, combined with the cult of fire ‘so widely prevalent amongst the primitive Aryans as among existing savage races’ (Evans 1885a ii:32). Consumption by fire, Evans said, prevented such things as ‘vampirism’ prevalent in Eastern European countries, where Evans observed ‘epidemics of vampire belief have resulted in temporary lapses into cremation in modern times’ (Evans 1885a ii:33).

## Symbolic forms

The relationship between the world of the living and the world of the dead is the heart of Evans’ argument. Dead men’s abodes contain doorways between the two worlds and the burial practices firmly place the dead on one side of that divide, sealed by a doorstone, to contain their corrupting influence. Much of lectures two and three are dedicated to detailed descriptions of variations of the chambered barrow form in the British Isles and across Continental Europe. In spite of these variations, Evans saw common features that were symbolically significant. The common elements of doorstone and doorway were evidence of a link with cave interments. In both cave burials and long barrows, the large monolithic slab defined and blocked the entranceway to the area of the dead. The large rough stones around the barrow tomb, the ‘peristalith’, held the earth in place and also served to define the extent of the tomb, much like the walls of a cave. These elements were to become enhanced and more significant as the burial form developed.

The doorway was seen as the origin of a simplified class of stone monuments, and ethnographic evidence provided Evans with the idea that there may have been parallel examples in wood. The trilith, described imaginatively by Evans as the ‘triumphal arches of the dead’ (Evans 1885a iii:7), was symbolic of the doorway to the barrow. The rough stone triliths of Tripoli, with their so-called altar stone in front, were described by Evans as open doorways to the sepulchral vault with the altar in front as the symbolic door-stone. Later, in 1897, he travelled to Tripoli to inspect a number of these triliths together with John Myres. It must have been a disappointment when Myres thoroughly debunked the widespread notion of the Tripoli triliths by identifying them as the remains of Roman oil presses (Myres 1899–1901). However, in 1885, Evans,

extrapolating from the trilith’s symbolic function, suggested that the ‘diliths’ or two stone structures – one erect and the other leaning on it – such as those found outside chambered tombs of the Talyots on the Balearic Islands, were closed doors. The simpler form of the menhir or the single monolithic stone, Evans postulated, represented the doorstone itself.

Evans also regarded doorway forms in front of Roman tombs in Syria as ‘triumphal arches of the dead’ (Evans 1885a iii:7). Although they are architecturally more elaborate – with Doric columns and architraves – they had the same symbolic meaning as he originally postulated for the rude structures of Tripoli. Evans also cited ancient Phrygian sepulchral customs, described by fellow Oxford scholar, William Mitchell Ramsay, as examples of a further modification (Ramsay 1884:251–254). Here, in Asia Minor, the doorway became a tombstone, which in turn was used as an altar. Many of these altar stones were inscribed with the name of the deceased as well as the Greek word *θύρα* or ‘door’. In a number of similar ways, Evans cited the more developed rock tombs (of Egypt, Greece and the Middle East) as illustrations of a process of religious evolution parallel to that of the class of megalithic monuments in Western Europe.

Yet, as Evans pointed out, these abodes of the dead can be divorced from actual burials and became a focus for spiritual belief in their own right, where ‘every natural or artificial object is possessed of its *anima*’ (Evans 1885a iv:29–30). The stone sepulchral cists of the Southeast Asian *Bhutas*, stones representing sepulchral spirits (i.e. malignant ghosts), and the *lingam* stones of India, were used by Evans as ethnographic examples to explain this primitive belief in spiritually imbued stones and the religious practice attached to them. He also quoted from Milton’s *Comus* (470–473) in support this concept:

Those thick and gloomy shadows damp  
Oft seen in charnel-vaults and sepulchres  
Lingering and sitting by a new made grave  
As loth to leave its body that it loved  
(Evans 1885a ii:33).

The animistic theory developed by Tylor (1871 i:377–453) sought to explain the minimum religious state of the most primitive of savages (i.e. ‘natural religion’). Animism accepted the idea of souls existing in a ‘future state’ beyond existence of the body. Tylor ‘found that the worldwide occurrence and uniformity in death display and ritual was related to the phenomenon of dreams as a source in afterlife belief’ (Bartel 1982:34; Tylor 1866:73). Lubbock associated dreams with death, which was related to sleep. Dreams, in turn, character-

Stage	Characteristics
<i>Atheism</i>	The absence of any ideas of Deity
<i>Fetishism</i>	Worship of inanimate objects; a stage in which man has the power over the deity (akin to witchcraft).
<i>Nature-worship</i> or <i>Totemism</i>	The worship of natural objects, both animate (e.g. plants and animals) and inanimate (e.g. trees and stones). A belief in deities of a higher nature, but still part of nature.
<i>Shamanism</i>	Belief in superior deities who are more powerful and of a different nature than man, living in abodes only accessible by shamans.
<i>Idolatry</i> or <i>Anthropomorphism</i>	Gods are represented by images or idols. They are more powerful than man, but are part of nature (i.e. not creators) and amenable to persuasion.

**Table 1.** Lubbock’s (1870:119) evolutionary stages of religious thought.

ized ‘the lower forms of religion’ (Lubbock 1870:126). Lubbock (1870:119) produced a scheme of the developmental stages of religious thought, borrowing from Tylor, a synopsis of which can be seen in Table 1. Thus, animism formed the basis of a progressive development to higher theological systems, enabling Evans to envision a ‘higher class of spiritual attribute that demands worship’ (Evans 1885a iv:29–30).

Evans saw specific stones or other ‘fetishes’ as imbued with sepulchral spirits (Evans 1885a iv:30). This religious process was explained in the actual burial practice:

In the flesh consuming quality of the sepulchral stones is to be found as I venture to believe, the natural bridge of transition to the worship of the deceased spirit under the form of the stone or stones (Evans 1885a iv:31).

In other words, it was the process of decomposition, either natural as alluded to by the original meaning of *sarcophagus* as ‘flesh-eater’, or by cremation – fire consuming flesh – that provided the catalyst. Wooden cists, pillars around the mounds, and branches under the body also served the same ‘sarcophagal’ function as the stones (Evans 1885a iv:36–37). Through this process the actual stone became the representation of the ancestral spirit, a stage Tylor (1871 ii:132) described as fetishism. Using Biblical references to Jacob’s stone and Joshua’s pillar, Evans emphasized that this process was a transition to a higher religious stage, with the embodiment of deity in stone.

### The great stone circles

The ‘grand hypaethral [open-air] piles’ or stone circles (Evans 1885a i:3) were the culmination in the evolutionary process discussed by Evans in the megalith lectures. Evans refined his argument regarding the stone circles in a lecture delivered in the

Ashmolean Museum in 1888, three years after the megalith lectures, and published the following year (Evans 1889). In the megalith lectures, Evans came to the conclusion that the stone circles dated to the Bronze Age (Evans 1885a v:17), using the date of objects excavated by the noted antiquarian Thomas Bateman from the barrows near the circle at Arbor Low in Derbyshire (Bateman 1848:31–32, 57, 64–66, 74). Similarly, he later indicated that Stonehenge dated to the round barrow period – the British Bronze Age – using evidence from material discovered in the associated round barrows (Evans 1889:320–322). Because of this incorrect dating of Stonehenge, Thomas Eric Peet, in his comprehensive survey of megalithic monuments, succinctly, and dismissively, stated: ‘He [Evans] believes that the great circles are religious monuments which in form developed out of the round barrows’ (Peet 1912:20).

The Bronze Age, which was characterized by burial in round barrows, had ‘improved modes of housing the living’ exemplified by the Bronze Age village remains near Merrivale Bridge, Dartmoor (Evans 1885a v:12). Earlier Neolithic dwellings of round pit-huts and circular village enclosures, he explained, were the inspiration for the round barrow, applying the same logic that maintained that the Neolithic long barrow was derived from a memory of earlier habitation forms. Nearly forty years later, Evans applied this same reasoning to the vaulted tombs of south central Crete (Evans 1924: xi–xiii), arguing them to be similar to round barrows and to represent primitive troglodytic dwellings from Libya.

Stone circles had three components: the circle itself, the avenue off it, and a cist or dolmen contained in it (Evans 1889:313–314). These were amplifications of burial forms. The enhancement of the ‘peristalith’ led progressively to a free-standing circle around or on top of the round barrow, which in turn led to the free-standing stone circles

culminating in the grand monuments of Stonehenge and Avebury. Similarly, the entranceway and underground gallery gave rise to the avenue. The dolmen represented the burial itself. Triliths – a late feature to the stone circle (Evans 1889:317) – were symbolic of the gateway and were compared to examples at Tripoli, and in Syria, Central Asia, and India.

The great stone circles were ‘landmarks of a higher stage of spiritualistic cult which goes beyond the actual resting place of the body’, although still associated with funerary cult (Evans 1885a v:8–9). Sacrificial evidence came from animal bone, horn and charcoal found in excavated contexts within the circles and from numerous small ‘incense’ cups found in the surrounding barrows (Evans 1885a v:19, 1889:318). Because of their size, and the fact that they were associated with numerous tombs, the circles were considered to be the work of a whole community, unlike the family burial places of the chambered barrows. Thus, they became places erected to honour the departed ancestors of the whole tribe. It is interesting to note that over a century later, a re-analysis of Stonehenge, phrased in modern archaeological and anthropological terms, looked at this same ‘metaphorical association between ancestors and stones’ using ethnographic evidence from Madagascar (Parker Pearson and Ramilisonina 1998:323).

Evans indicated that the stone circles were probably constructed in a gradual fashion, basing his conclusions on a metrological survey by Flinders Petrie (1880). In both the megalith lectures and the Stonehenge article, Evans made use of the ethnographic parallel of the Khasi of North East India who erected stone circles and dolmens, adding to the structures whenever the need arose to propitiate the spirit of the departed ancestors (Evans 1885a v:7–8, 1889:318). However, in the Stonehenge article he added that perhaps the ‘Greater Gods’

were beginning to replace the spirits of the dead, argued by the absence of a dolmen (i.e. tomb), the metrological orientation of the avenue to the sun, and the presence of symbolic triliths (Evans 1889:326). In the Stonehenge article, Evans (1889:327–328) proposed an associated cult of the Celtic Zeus and postulated that the holy object in the centre of the circle was a tree, based on the notion that the aniconic [symbolic] image of the Celtic Zeus was a tall oak. He went on to support these ideas with Greek and Roman iconography that depicts a tree or branch in conjunction with arches or pillars. By the end of the megalith lectures, Evans had gone from an absence of religion in the Palaeolithic to the beginnings of a cult of the dead in the Neolithic that led ultimately to a higher form of sepulchral based religion in the Bronze Age, perhaps associated with deity.

### THE TREE AND PILLAR CULT

The association between ancestors and stones developed in the megalith lectures lies at the heart of Evans’ famous concept of the tree and pillar cult (hereafter TPC). A working theory of sepulchral origin for the ancient cult of stones and pillars was precisely laid out in the megalith lectures from cave burials and barrow construction to the stone circles. The religious development was linked to the treatment of the dead, particularly the act of decomposition. With the TPC, Evans continued the evolutionary trajectory of sepulchral cult, starting where the megalith lectures and the Stonehenge article left off, identifying a higher stage of religious development in the TPC as he had done for the stone circles. In the TPC article, Evans (1901:99) started with an already established notion of a highly developed Mycenaean cult of the dead, based on the plethora of tombs and pit-graves with lavish grave-goods

attested, without going into any detail on mortuary practice.

The concept of the TPC first made its appearance in 1896 in a lecture given to the British Association for the Advancement of Science (Evans 1896b).<sup>7</sup> Only an abstract of this 1896 lecture was printed in the British Association's annual report, but Evans covered the topic again in a lengthy article published in 1901 in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* incorporating new material from his first year's excavations at Knossos on Crete (Evans 1901). The TPC has had its greatest impact on the study of Minoan religion:

Anyone who wishes to study the Minoan-Mycenaean religion cannot neglect the basic work done by Evans on this subject in his 'Tree and Pillar Cult' ... and the frequent and extensive researches upon its special problems to be found scattered in his Palace of Minos (Persson 1942:6).

Yet, many scholars of Minoan religion, who are generally classically trained, seem unaware of the genesis of the idea in Evans' study of megalithic monuments, simply citing the famous 1901 article as the starting point (e.g. Marinatos 1993:8; Peatfield 2000:138).

The 1901 TPC article is a series of thirty individual yet interconnecting notes. It is not surprising that in this article Evans used evidence from archaeology, ethnography, folklore, and literature as he had in his study of the megaliths, often using the same sources and the same descriptive terminology. He also emphasized the scientific approach by warning against the perils of the 'unscientific habit of looking for the origin of the associated phenomena through the vista of later highly specialized cults, instead of from the standpoint of primitive ideas' (Evans 1901:105). Utilizing primitive ideas, as he had done in the megalith lectures, was the approach advocated by Tylor (1871 i:6–7). Evans acknowledged that Tylor's work provided the theoretical foundation on which he based his analysis of the TPC (Begg 2004:10; Evans 1901:105 n. 5).

In 1883, one year before he took up his post at Oxford, Evans witnessed a ceremony, a survival of pre-Islamic stone-worship, in a Turkish village in Macedonia that provided him with the ethnographic evidence for the link between the cult of sacred pillars and sepulchral religion (Begg 2004:10 n.74; Evans 1901:200–204). In the megalith lectures, he made passing reference to this occasion: 'In the wilds of Macedonia I have myself assisted at the worship of a Bethel or Menhir, the sepulchral connexion with which was still preserved by ceremonies performed about a tomb' (Evans 1885a iv:37–38). However, in the TPC article, he discussed the event in greater detail. According to local legend, the sacred pillar was thought to have fallen from heaven or in other accounts been brought to its present position by a holy man. The pillar, slick and black from repeated anointing with oil, was set in an enclosed shrine and was the final stop on a route that first passed by a sacred spring, and then the grave of an Islamic Saint where a tree, decked with rags tied there by supplicants, overhung the headstone. The sacred pillar in the shrine was thought to be the 'material abode of the [Saint's] departed Spirit' (Evans 1901:203).

Evans also stressed the great antiquity of cave sanctuaries on Crete and alluded to the natural stone pillars of the stalactites (Evans 1901:99–100), recalling his emphasis in the megalith lectures on man's troglodytic nature (Evans 1885a ii:11). Bradley (2000:18) attributes Evans' interest in natural places on Crete (i.e. the 'sacred geography' of mountain tops, caves, and rock-shelters) to his investigations of Saami sacred places in Finland two decades earlier.<sup>8</sup> On Crete, Evans collected a number of votive objects from the Dictaeon cave sanctuary near the village of Psychro, which he later excavated in 1896 (Brown 2001:356–357, 438 Catalogue nos. 223–230, 444 Catalogue nos. 263–264,

460 Catalogue no. 325). One object he purchased prior to his excavations was a fragment of a libation table that was said to have been found near the ‘upper hall’ of the Dictaeon cave<sup>9</sup>, providing Evans with further evidence of a sepulchral cult (Evans 1901:113–114). According to Evans, the dolmen was the prototype for the libation table, calling to mind the discussion in the megalith lectures of the Breton term ‘dolmen’ meaning ‘stone table’ (Evans 1885a iv:4). Libation tables had cup-like depressions that Evans (1901:115) likened to the rings and circular depressions found on British megaliths, an idea that Greenwell (1865:99 n.7) had put forth earlier, suggesting that the depressions were religious symbols associated with burial and sacred rites. Ethnographic evidence from Evans’ personal observations in Lapland presented in both the megalith lectures and the TPC article (1885a iv:38, 1901:114 n. 2), indicated depressions in stone held votive offerings.

Small shrines or ‘baetylic cells’ such as the Indian dolmens – Southeast Asian *Bhuta* stones in the megalith lectures (Evans 1885a iii:10) – were used as an analogy for the Mycenaean type of shrine and as another rationale for sepulchral origins (Evans 1901:123). Also, the ‘triliths of a primitive cult’ such as Stonehenge were examples of the ‘sanctity of the portal or doorway’ (Evans 1901:181 n.1), recalling Evans’ triumphal arches of the dead in the megalith lectures (Evans 1885a iii:7). The Stonehenge article offered Greco-Roman iconography as evidence for the pairing of trees with arches (Evans 1889:328). Evans used the same iconography in the TPC as comparisons to scenes found on Aegean seals, representing images of the cult of trees and pillars (Evans 1901:128).

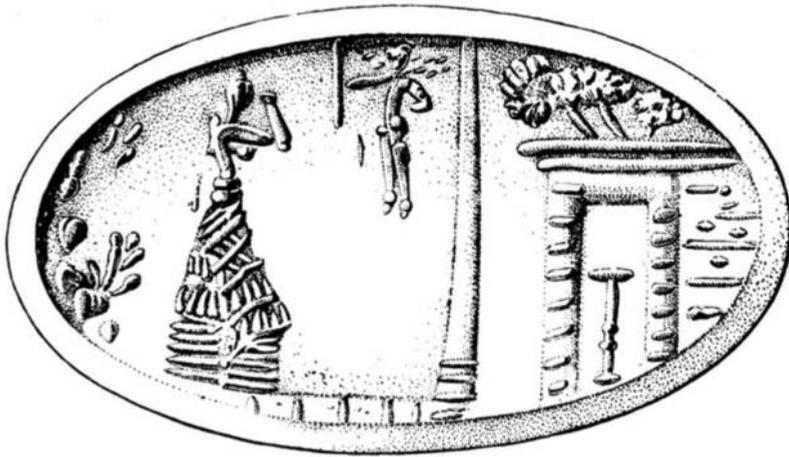
Evans also singled out Maltese and Balearic megalithic monuments, mentioned briefly in the megalith lectures (Evans 1885a iii:10), for a more detailed compar-

ison in the TPC (Evans 1901:196–200), presumably because of their Mediterranean context. In relation to the monuments on Malta, T. E. Peet remarked on Evans’ TPC:

...in Malta we have a cult similar to that seen in the Mycenaean world. This latter was an aneiconic worship developed out of the cult of the dead; in it the deity or hero was represented by a baetyl, i.e. a tree or pillar sometimes standing free, sometimes placed in a ‘dolmen-like’ cell or shrine, in which latter case the pillar often served to support the roof of the shrine (Peet 1912:105).

Peet added that, given newer evidence from excavation, it was unlikely that the dead were actually buried at or near the pillar and went on to say that Albert Mayr (1901), in his publication on the prehistoric remains of Malta, accepted Evans’ ideas. Evans reviewed Mayr’s book in 1902, praising it by saying: ‘to myself the results of Dr Mayr’s investigations have a special interest from the great agreement that they present with the conclusions put forth in a summary form in my monograph on *Tree and Pillar Cult*’ (Evans 1902:42).

It has been demonstrated above, particularly in relation to Palaeolithic burial and art, that Evans was able to adapt to new data by incorporating them into his existing theoretical framework. In the TPC, Evans made heavy use of new representational data, particularly on Minoan and Mycenaean signet rings and seal stones.<sup>10</sup> Interpretation of the imagery and art historical analyses enabled Evans to extend his ideas in explanation of cult practice and to deduce a higher level of religious development. One of the key objects Evans stressed in the 1896 British Association abstract and the 1901 paper was the gold signet ring from Knossos he acquired from a Candia (Heraklion) antiquities dealer on his first visit to Crete in 1894 (Brown 2001:400–401, fig. 4; Hughes-Brock and Boardman 2009: Catalogue no. 281; MacGillivray 2000:151). The ring (Fig.



**Figure 2.** Drawing of an impression of the gold signet ring, Knossos (Evans 1901: 170 fig. 48). Ashmolean Museum Arthur Evans Collection Accession No. 1938.1127.

2) shows a cult scene with a nude male deity armed with a spear at the moment of his descent into the obelisk or pillar in front of a female votary. This descent process is akin to Evans' description in the megalith lectures of pillars performing a 'sarcophagal function' (Evans 1885a iv:30). The scene also shows a hypaethral sanctuary to the side beyond the obelisk, which contains a ritual doorway, a second shorter pillar, and several sacred trees behind the temenos walls. Evans speculated, using iconographic parallels from Cyprus, that the second shorter pillar was the aniconic pillar of a female deity or consort of the armed male deity.

Evans supported his interpretations of the imagery with folklore and literary data, as he had done in the megalith lectures. The pairing of trees and sacred stones was compared to the Druidical worship in the West and the coexistence of tree divinities with menhirs. Attestation of the spiritual attribute of stones as the earthly house of a divinity was documented by Biblical reference to Joshua's pillar or Bethel stone as he had done in the megalith lectures (Evans 1885a iv:35, 1901:132). The superstitious belief that spirits of the departed returned

as birds explained the appearance of sacred birds like the doves depicted in a gold plaque from Shaft Grave IV at Mycenae<sup>11</sup> (Fig. 3). Supernatural power assigned to stones, often meteoric, was illustrated by his father's reference to 'thunderstones' and 'bolts from heaven' (J. Evans 1872:51) used to describe stone axes in earlier ages (Evans 1901:118 n. 5). Again, evidence for the manifestation of divine life imbued in stone came from his 1895 Rollright Stones publication as it had in the megalith lectures (Evans 1885a v:22, 1901:106 n.1).

On his first visit to Crete in 1894, Evans thought he had identified an 'hypaethral sanctuary' at Goulas (Brown 2001:343–345).<sup>12</sup> The shrine was a small open-air structure (8.1 by 4.5 m exterior dimensions) with low walls in which he suggested a ritual doorway and the presence of a few sacred trees and pillars (Evans 1895–6:177–178). In the TPC, Evans (1901:100) compared the Goulas shrine's ritual doorway – or trilith – to that of the tombstone altars from William Mitchell Ramsay's observations in Phrygia, similar to his observations in the megalith lectures (Evans 1885a iii:8). Coincidentally, a fragment of a steatite vessel he found in 1894



**Figure 3.** Gold shrine with doves (Schliemann 1878:267 fig. no. 423, reproduced in Evans 1901:191 fig. 65). National Museum of Athens (Karo 1930–3: 74 Catalogue no. 244).



**Figure 4.** Drawing of a fragment of a steatite vase, Knossos (Evans 1901: 103 fig. 2). Ashmolean Museum Arthur Evans Collection Accession No. 1247.

on Gypsades hill (Brown 2001:404–405, fig. 21; Koehl 2006:180 Catalogue no. 765; Warren 1969:85, P 477), opposite where he would later uncover the Palace of Knossos, he interpreted as depicting an open-air sanctuary – a temenos, behind an altar crowned with horns of consecration, with its sacred trees and pillar (Fig. 4).

Evans (1901:124) documented the coexistence of ‘realistic imagery side by side with material objects of primitive cult’ that marked the transition to a more advanced stage of religious development – anthropomorphism. It should be noted that anthropomorphism was Lubbock’s last stage of primitive religious development (see Table 1), a stage closely connected to the worship of ancestors (Lubbock 1870:232). Evans explained the dual representation of deity on the Knossos ring (see Fig. 2) by proposing that the deity’s human form appeared side-by-side with his pillar form (Evans 1901:124). In addition, Evans claimed that occasional images on seal stones substituted anthropomorphic figures of deities for sacred pillars in heraldic scenes (Fig. 5; Hughes-Brock and Boardman 2009: Catalogue no. 365[*left*], Catalogue no. 312[*right*]). The occurrence of a few anthropomorphic figurines that showed Egyptianizing elements and bore a close relationship to figures of the Semitic Lightning God represented the beginnings of representations of a Cretan divinity – specifically a primitive form of the Cretan Zeus – in human form. Evans (1901:106–112) went into great detail on his reasoning for the cult of a Cretan Zeus whose aniconic image was the double axe (Begg 2004:10). This identification of a Cretan Zeus obviously resembles Evans’ earlier suggestion that the worship at Stonehenge revolved around a Celtic Zeus (Evans 1889:327–328).

In the 1901 article on the TPC, it is clear that Evans is attempting to portray himself as a pre-eminent *scientific* scholar of ‘Mycenaean’ prehistory. In 1885 Evans sought to



**Figure 5.** Drawing of impressions of lentoid seals from Crete (Evans 1901:160 fig. 40 [left], 163 fig. 43 [right]). Ashmolean Museum Arthur Evans Collection Accession No. 1938.1067 (left) and No. 138.1054 (right).

understand the stages of religious development that led to the ‘grand hypaethral piles’ (Evans 1885b:2). In 1901 his motive was similar: to interpret the dual cult of tree and pillar and its sepulchral origins that marked an early stage of religious development in the Bronze Age civilization of Greece (Evans 1901:105). At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, the wealth of new prehistoric material on the mainland of Greece and Crete, much of which Evans uncovered himself, enabled him to apply the same evolutionary methodology he had used with his analysis of the sepulchral cult of the megaliths in a new milieu. In 1905, adapting to new evidence from the excavation of the ‘House of the Fetish Shrine’ at Knossos (Evans 1905:2–16), he was able to rework his ideas of the TPC to incorporate a link to the mother goddess that was to become significant in his Minoan religious scheme (Goodison and Morris 1998:113; MacGillivray 2000:235–236; Morris 2006:70; Peatfield 2000:138). The TPC Evans constructed and continued to adapt represented a complex and advanced stage of religious development – a transition state from aniconic to anthropomorphic. It was a view befitting the prehistoric civilisa-

tion of Crete that Evans envisioned as the ‘first emancipation of the European genius’ and ‘champion of the European spirit’ (Evans 1896a:922).

## CONCLUSIONS

Rooted in the new (nineteenth century) science of prehistory, Arthur Evans translated this scientific approach into interpreting the material remains of the Minoans. Yet, an historiography of the pre-Minoan archaeology of Evans has not been systematically tackled. Although not writing an historiography, Bradley (2000:3–20) has explored some of Evans’ prehistory from an extra-Aegean viewpoint, using archival material from the Pitt Rivers Museum. He concentrated on Evans’ very early exploration of Lapland and his later interest in Cretan caves and peak sanctuaries. Bradley also mentioned the TPC, although the 1901 article is dismissed as primarily iconographical, owing ‘little to the discipline of field archaeology’ (Bradley 2000:97). Whitley (2009:283) has recently stated that an intelligent biography of Evans has still to be done. In existing biographies, Evans

is portrayed as a man of his time, with a focus on his Victorian/Edwardian ideals and in some cases his racism or other idiosyncratic characteristics (e.g. MacGillivray 2000; McEnroe 1995). Fotiadis (2006) has argued that many of these approaches tend to use modern standards as a measure, ignoring the worldview in which scholars like Evans operated. There is, however, a growing body of work exploring new approaches to understanding contributions by Evans and others to the modern construct of the archaeology of the Aegean Bronze Age (e.g. Darcque et al. 2006; Gere 2009; Hamilakis 2002a; Hamilakis and Momigliano 2006).

This article offers another approach to Evans, drawing on his British and European archaeology influenced by theories postulated by the newly emergent (nineteenth century) field of anthropology. The 1885 megalith lectures situate his theoretical foundations within an evolutionary model and trace the concept of religious thought in primitive society from the Palaeolithic to the Bronze Age. The working theory he proposes in these lectures links the growth of religious thought to the treatment of the dead and the construction of tombs and stone monuments. Using the same methodology, Evans later applied these ideas of religious development to a body of material – archaeological and iconographic – from the Aegean Bronze Age in his famous 1901 article on the TPC. When seen in this context, Evans' theory and methodology in interpreting his Minoans can be understood as a development of British prehistoric archaeology, rather than a new branch of Classical archaeology that associated archaeological discoveries with the Homeric epics. As others have demonstrated, Evans was a man of his time. His conception of the Minoan civilization was highly influential in the establishment and development of Aegean Bronze Age archaeology. By studying the context in which Evans' thought developed in the 1880s, however, we

gain a better understanding of the basis for many of his interpretations. Contrary to the views of some, Evans was not simply a late-Victorian visionary, but rather was applying the theory and methodology of nineteenth century British prehistory to interpreting his newly discovered Minoans.

## NOTES

1. Evans 1885a:1.
2. The lectures were announced in the *Oxford University Gazette* (17 February 1885) in the section dealing with General University Notices, indicating that they would be given on five successive Saturday afternoons at 4.30 p.m. The Ashmolean Museum at that time was on Broad Street, prior to its move to the new building on Beaumont Street.
3. The illustration of Stonehenge first appeared as a frontispiece in Lubbock's (1875) third edition of *Origin of Civilisation*.
4. Tylor's theory of gesture language, picture writing, and script was widely known and was even used in a popular story for children, 'How the alphabet was made' by Rudyard Kipling (1902) to explain how various 'natural' phenomena came about.
5. Archaic or idiosyncratic spellings of words, such as 'gulph', are retained in quotations.
6. Thurnam refers to imperfect burning on bones and their scattered condition as a result of human sacrifices by fire and 'anthropophagism' (the eating of human flesh).
7. The term Mycenaean used by Evans at this time includes both Crete and mainland Greece, cultures that would later be called Minoan and Mycenaean respectively.
8. Bradley (2000:3–4) begins his discussion of Evans with his excavations of a cave on the island of Ukonsaari in Finland, one of a number of Saami sacrificial sites.
9. Fellow Oxford scholar D. G. Hogarth (1899–1900) later excavated the 'upper hall' of the Dictaeon Cave, employing dynamite to facilitate access.
10. Evans (1901:204) indicated that it had been his original intention to discuss these theories in a work devoted to gems and signets, but his recent discoveries on Crete induced him to produce the article on the TPC in a separate form.

11. Five gold plaques of doves on tripartite shrines were found at Mycenae, two in Shaft Grave III and three in Shaft Grave IV. Evans, who reproduces the image from Schliemann (1878:267 fig. 423), incorrectly attributes the find spot of the one he illustrates to Shaft Grave III. In Schliemann's publication, the item illustrated clearly comes from Shaft Grave IV.
12. Although later excavations at Goulas (Lato) would disprove an early date for the site, Evans at that time believed it to be prehistoric (Brown 2001:344; Myers et al. 1992:154–159).

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## RÉSUMÉ

### **Culte des morts, fétichisme et la genèse d'une idée: monuments mégalithiques, Arthur J. Evans, et le culte de l'arbre et du pilier**

C'est pour son travail en Crète, et notamment les fouilles du palais de Cnossos qu'il entame en 1900, qu'Arthur Evans est célèbre. Ses travaux archéologiques antérieurs sont souvent laissés dans l'oubli. Cet article se penche sur une série de conférences, pour la plus part inédites, qu'a livrées Evans en 1855 sur le développement des monuments mégalithiques et du culte qu'ils représentent. L'approche de Evans au culte mégalithique découlaient du contexte évolutionniste anthropologique de la fin du XIXe siècle. Nous montrons ici que ces concepts sous-jacents sont aussi perceptibles dans les écrits plus tardifs de Evans sur le monde égéen, et en particulier dans son travail sur le culte de l'arbre et du pilier qui est à la base de sa conception de la religion

minoenne. En contextualisant ses premiers travaux, nous pouvons mieux comprendre comment Evans privilégia certaines sources pour élaborer sa conception de la civilisation minoenne. *Translation by Nathan Schlanger.*

## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

### **Totenkult, Fetischismus und die Genese einer Idee: Megalithbauten und der Baum-und-Säulen kult des Arthur J. Evans**

Arthur Evans ist durch seine Tätigkeit auf Kreta, besonders die Ausgrabungen des Palastes von Knossos bekannt, die im Jahr 1900 begonnen wurden. Aus diesem Grund sind Arthur Evans frühere Beiträge zur Archäologie häufig übersehen worden. Dieser Beitrag beschäftigt sich mit einer überwiegend unveröffentlichten Vorlesungsreihe, die Evans im Jahr 1885 hielt, die sich mit der Entwicklung der Megalithbauten und dem religiösen Kult, den diese verkörperten auseinandersetzte. Evans kultische Vorstellungen waren in kontemporären anthropologischen Konzepten eines evolutionären Kontexts des späten 19. Jahrhunderts verankert. Die vorliegende Arbeit zeichnet auf, dass diese grundlegenden Ideen auch in Evans späteren Schriften über die Ägäis eine Rolle spielten, besonders in dem berühmten Aufsatz über den Baum-und-Säulen kult, der als Grundlage für sein Konzept der minoischen Religion diente. Durch die Kontextualisierung von Evans Frühwerk gelangen wir zu einem besseren Verständnis, wieso er gewisse Informationen in den Vordergrund stellte, um sein Konzept der minoischen Religion zu entwickeln. *Translation by Tina Jakob.*