

AEGEAN LECTURES

Friday 4 December 2015, 19:00

Swedish Institute at Athens (Mitseon 9, Acropolis Metro station)

Aegeus – Society for Aegean Prehistory and the Swedish Institute at Athens invite you to the lecture:

Horns under the Axe

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This paper is intended as a contribution to the discussion on the symbolic meaning of the double axe in Minoan Crete. I will start by discussing the various interpretations that have been put forward, but my main focus will be on the association between double axes and cattle, which can be seen in different types of representations. Very often only the head of the animal is depicted and there seems to be a specific emphasis on the horns. The

iconographical evidence would seem to suggest therefore that there was a particular association between the double axe and the horns of cattle. The use of various kinds of axes to shape the horns of cattle was widespread in eastern Africa, including Egypt, in prehistory and I argue that this practice may also have existed on Crete in the Bronze Age and be relevant to our understanding of the symbolic significance of the double axe.