

PAINTING THE WINE-DARK SEA: TRAVELING AEGEAN FRESCO
ARTISTS IN THE MIDDLE AND LATE BRONZE AGE EASTERN
MEDITERRANEAN

A Thesis
presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
at the University of Missouri-Columbia

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
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MAY 2008

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

PAINTING THE WINE-DARK SEA: TRAVELING AEGEAN FRESCO ARTISTS IN
THE MIDDLE AND LATE BRONZE AGE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

presented by John Tristan Barnes, a candidate for the degree of master of arts, and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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I would like to thank my parents and friends, both here in Columbia and back home in Kentucky, without whose encouragement and concern I could never have gotten this far. I thank them all for listening time and again to my stories and for seeming genuinely interested in the material presented herein. If I have accomplished anything it is only because of them.

“It has been said that bright ideas are rather like young St. Bernards in that they get into everything, their size and energy are spectacular, and they tend to run off with their handlers.”

- Mary Helms 1993, xi

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Langdon for advising me throughout and for steering me toward numerous helpful sources and away from the pitfalls of Bronze Age study. I would also like to thank the other members of my committee, Doctors Slane and McGlew, for their assistance and inquiries over the last year and a half. I thank them all for not letting this topic run away with me like so many young St. Bernards.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Frescoes in the Bronze Age were elite commodities that adorned the walls and floors of palaces, villas and communal ceremonial spaces on Crete, the Aegean islands and the Mycenaean Greek mainland. These frescoes are distinguished by an emphasis on animal and floral motifs, but also display non-figural motifs such as imitation stone paneling and geometric designs. Human figures feature prominently and are distinguished by style of dress and characteristically Aegean activities such as bull-leaping. Such motifs are best known from palace sites on Crete and the Mycenaean mainland, but also occur in domestic settings on the island of Thera. Generally, frescoes display scenes of power and authority, just as contemporary decorations in Egypt and the Near East, although there is likely a religious significance to many of the motifs.¹ Aegean fresco painters formed part of an artistic culture that was widely renowned as far away as Egypt and the Near East.²

Frescoes recently found at the palace sites of Avaris in Egypt, and at Tel Kabri and Alalakh in the Levant, strongly resemble Aegean frescoes in subject, style and range of motifs. Smaller, more easily transportable goods were exchanged between these regions and the Aegean, but the existence of large immovable wall and floor paintings is a different matter altogether. For these goods to exist well beyond the direct Aegean

¹ Due to the present uncertainty over the boundaries between the religious and secular realms in the Bronze Age Aegean it is not always possible to determine the exact function or significance of the motifs.

² Documents from Mari and Ugarit along with tomb paintings from Egyptian Thebes, to be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, attest to the wide-ranging respect for Aegean craftsmanship in other media.

sphere of influence, a different process must have been in effect. Small elite goods in isolation, such as metal vessels and fine pottery, do not necessarily require a high degree of cultural contact to be transmitted from one region to another. However, since walls cannot be shipped overseas as cargo, the frescoes must have been created locally by artists versed in Aegean styles and techniques. This process could have taken the form of stories from foreign travelers or merchants, copybooks,³ or the movement of artists themselves. Based on the composition and construction of the frescoes, I propose that the last possibility is the most likely. The origin of these artists and the processes by which they traveled between regions will be the focus of this examination.

Previous Scholarship

Evidence for artistic transmission between the Aegean and the Near East and Egypt is not new. Orientalia, or objects of eastern manufacture, in the Aegean were known to Arthur Evans, and when Leonard Woolley discovered “Minoan-style” frescoes at Alalakh in the Hatay in the 1940s a connection with Crete was immediately apparent.⁴ What was not clear, however, was whether or not the artists had traveled themselves and if so what their region or regions of origin had been. Woolley himself stated in 1953 that “there can be no doubt but that Crete owes the best of its architecture, and its frescoes to the Asiatic mainland,” and that “we are bound to believe that trained experts, members of the Architect’s and Painter’s Guilds, were invited to travel overseas from Asia (possibly from Alalakh...) to build and decorate the palaces of the Cretan rulers.”⁵ While the idea that Aegean frescoes were painted by non-Aegean artists never took hold, the concept of

³ Attested in contemporary Egypt; see Wachsmann 1987, 12-7.

⁴ See Evans (1921, 419); see also Woolley (1955, 92-4, 228-32) for Alalakh.

⁵ Quoted in Niemeier 1991, 189-90.

eastern influence became widely adopted, especially in light of later finds of additional orientalia on Crete, the Aegean islands and the mainland.⁶ Wall paintings at Mari, Qatna and also Ebla contributed to the issue, but their distance from the coast made it difficult to trace the modes of artistic transference.

As with many aspects of the Bronze Age, the primary scholarly difficulty was a simple lack of evidence, which allowed incompatible conclusions to be drawn simultaneously from the same data. The announcement in the early 1990s of wall and floor paintings at Tel Kabri and Avaris changed the situation.⁷ With the addition of two more sites spanning the length of the eastern Mediterranean coastal trade routes, the issue of artistic transmission could be analyzed more completely. The debate over the origins of the artists at these palaces has become more than simply an academic question, as it plays into the larger scope of contemporary eastern Mediterranean sociopolitical interconnections.⁸ For artists to travel in either direction between the Aegean and the east, proper cultural settings had to allow for such a transfer. The full implications of these connections are beyond the scope of this examination although the subject will be taken up again in Chapter 5. On the other hand, if the artists did not travel themselves, then explanations must be found for certain Aegean peculiarities in the construction techniques of the paintings at the eastern palace sites. These are detailed in Chapter 2.

Scholars of note flocked to various camps and wrote in support of vastly different ideas. Eric Cline suggested that there could be evidence for Minoan or Aegean artists

⁶ See Fitton (2002, 64-5) for the idea of eastern influence at the end of the Old Palace period; see also Lambrou-Phillipson (1990, 51-5, 62-4, 68-9, 73-7, 85-6, 90, 96-7, 99-101) and Cline (1994, 24-59) for orientalia in the Aegean.

⁷ Excavations in Area D at Tel Kabri began in 1986 and fragments were discovered at Avaris in 1990; see Kempinski (2002, 55) and Bietak (2005, 83) respectively.

⁸ Negbi (1994) attempted to decipher the origins of the artists but failed to account for the larger question of why. This fault was attacked by Manning et al. (1994) and Sherratt (1994) although neither offered corrections or suggestions.

outside the Aegean.⁹ Vronwy Hankey urged caution since the traditions of Near Eastern wall painting between Mari and Tel Kabri and Alalakh are poorly understood.¹⁰ Whereas Hankey's hesitation may be overly cautious, she is not alone in her view. Susan Sherratt stated that "if Bietak had got to Dab'a,¹¹ or Kempinski and Niemeier to Kabri before Evans got to Knossos, I doubt if the question of a diaspora of Aegean fresco artists to the east would seriously have arisen."¹² The validity of this statement is questionable in light of evidence confirming the development of independent artistic traditions in both the Near East and the Aegean; however, the quote does illustrate the valid scholarly concern over Aegeocentric bias. Irene Winter asserted that there was no evidence for direct cultural contact between the Mesopotamian palaces and the Aegean, and that incidences of analogous motifs were instead the result of freely circulating ideas or trade goods.¹³ Others preferred to see the evidence as reflecting direct artistic contact between the regions indicating that the frescoes at Alalakh and Tel Kabri were painted by culturally Minoan artists.¹⁴ Still another theory concerns eastern artists, or at least Aegean artists living abroad for several generations long enough to become "nativized," or accustomed to native artistic traditions.¹⁵ In this theory, these nativized artists were sent to the Aegean to learn the artistic techniques of their homeland before being sent back to decorate the palaces of their eastern masters.

⁹ Negbi 1994, 87.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Hereafter the site of Tell el-Dab'a will be referred to by its ancient name, Avaris.

¹² Sherratt 1994, 238. Some examples in her argument such as the supposed rarity of red backgrounds in Aegean frescoes are incorrect. Her statement that the Levant had a long tradition of painting on lime plaster may hold weight, Nunn (1988, 10) states that lime plaster is known from the Mesolithic Natoufian culture. However, the refinement and manufacture techniques are different than what is found in the Aegean. The continuity of lime plaster painting should also not be assumed as per Hankey's concern regarding the little known period between Mari and Tel Kabri and Alalakh.

¹³ Winter 2000, 753-4. In spite of the date of publication, the article does not discuss Avaris or Tel Kabri in detail.

¹⁴ Niemeier 1991, 199; see also Sherratt 1994, 237-9.

¹⁵ Shaw 1995, 94, 110-1.

The issue became bogged down in the debate over the attribution of the frescoes at Avaris as either Hyksos or 18th Dynasty, and much effort was expended trying to link the Minoans and the Hyksos. Manfred Bietak's original working hypothesis was that the areas containing the frescoes were utilized during the end of the Hyksos period and the very beginning of the 18th Dynasty.¹⁶ Ultimately Cline weighed in on the issue, attempting to make sense of the recent flourish of activity and urging that future authors give Bietak and the other excavators of Avaris room to make sense of their own findings.¹⁷ In spite of this, Cline himself followed Shaw in suggesting that the painters were not culturally Minoan but "nativized" Egyptian-Minoans due to the supposed inferiority of the frescoes and certain un-Aegean motifs. This article drew a vehement response from Bietak who claimed that "Cline failed to make himself knowledgeable enough about the archaeology of the site of Tell el-Dab'a to give a serious opinion on the excavations and materials he has never seen."¹⁸ Citing a range of Aegean experts who had examined the fragments in person, Bietak rejected Shaw's claim, asserting that the frescoes were painted by culturally Minoan artists.¹⁹ The discovery of Theran pumice in Stratum C, in which the frescoes were discovered, ended the search for a Hyksos connection, as other sites in Egypt with similar pumice deposits are dated to the 18th Dynasty reign of Tuthmose III.²⁰ This dating places the frescoes and their artists in a very different political climate that will be discussed in Chapter 5.

¹⁶ Bietak 1992, 27; see also 1994, 44-5.

¹⁷ Cline 1998, 218.

¹⁸ Bietak 2000b, 187.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 195. Experts include N. Marinatos, L. Morgan, F. Blakolmer, E. Davis, S. Hiller, P. Warren and experienced restorers from Knossos and Thera like Y. Michaelidis and A. Gerondas.

²⁰ Bietak 2005, 90. It is important to note that pumice can be transported easily and stored for generations; although the concentration of dates around the reign of Tuthmose III makes the date more plausible, it is not certain. However, other evidence at Avaris, such as scarabs and ceramic evidence, confirms an early Tuthmoside date.

As to the artists themselves, little can be said due to the invisibility of the artist in the Middle and Late Bronze Age Aegean. Whereas the results of the artists' efforts have been studied for the better part of a century, it is difficult to make any firm statements about the artists as individuals or their organization due to a lack of evidence. Research has been conducted on painters and workshops during the Mycenaean period, particularly on the Late Helladic III mainland, but applications to earlier periods are questionable. Still, generalizations can be extrapolated to help understand the organization and practices of Aegean artists. Edmund Bloedow and Christos Boulotis link Minoan period artists strongly with Mycenaean examples to form a picture of hierarchical workshops ordered around a master with palatial connections.²¹ In the absence of another model, their descriptions of workshops will be used here.

Approach

In order to shed light on the issue of traveling artists, Chapter 2 examines the motifs represented on the wall and floor paintings decorating palaces in Egypt and the Near East. Three palace sites provide multiple examples of Aegean-like frescoes and will form the core of the examination, hereafter referred to as the major sites: Avaris, Tel Kabri and Alalakh. Three additional palaces will be considered due solely to their inclusion in previous scholarship on the subject, but because of their dubious connection will be called minor sites: Mari, Qatna and Ebla. The motifs included in Chapter 2, and detailed in Appendix I, represent non-local themes manufactured in non-local techniques and are portrayed in non-local styles; although stylistic concerns will not be considered in

²¹ See Bloedow (1997) and Boulotis (2000) respectively.

this study.²² Chapter 3 compares aspects of these paintings with motifs depicted in frescoes and on objects in other media from Knossos, Phaistos, Ayia Triadha, Palaikastro, Zakro, Thera, Mycenae, Tiryns, Pylos, Vapheio and Argos. In this approach I intend to show that all of the motifs found at the eastern palace sites are represented and likely originated in the Aegean and Mycenaean mainland.

Chapter 4 turns to the question of who painted the frescoes in the eastern palaces. I begin by considering trade routes in order to demonstrate that direct contacts existed between the relevant civilizations at the proper times to allow for artistic transference. Whereas some elite trade goods, such as Kamares pottery and stone vessels, are found in Egyptian and Near Eastern contexts, archaeologically detectable trade goods are rare from this time. Written records and mythological stories from the Near East and tomb paintings from Egyptian Thebes can supplement the archaeological record.

In Chapter 5, I examine cultural and political contexts in Egypt and the Near East in order to determine what methods would most easily facilitate the transference of artistic motifs and techniques within the social boundaries of the time. This is not an irrelevant consideration, as not all of the above mentioned theories regarding the transference of motifs or artists to the eastern palaces would have been possible given the contemporary political climate. Due to the nature of the figural scenes in at least the major palatial sites and the use of Aegean painting techniques, it is most likely that the artistic transmission involved the transfer of artists and was not based solely on the copying of traded goods. The Amarna Letters, Mari Documents and various Hittite

²² The style of the motifs appears to be Aegean, but a full stylistic analysis would add a lengthy element to this study that is not necessary in light of other evidence. I believe that a comparison of motifs is sufficient to illustrate the connection and at the same time allows me avoid the type of stylistic debate that has occupied discussions of Avaris. See Shaw (1995), Bietak (1996a), Cline (1998) and Bietak (2000b) for an illustration of this. A full stylistic study would be useful, but I leave that to another scholar.

treaties reveal a pattern of gift-exchange between rulers involving the exchange of specialized craftsmen. Royal gift-exchange is different from trade and is more personal and specific in terms of what is requested and given. I propose that royal gift-exchange most easily facilitates the travel of artists and that artists from the Aegean were requested by Egyptian and Near Eastern rulers according to this custom.

Before discussing what the frescoes in the eastern Mediterranean represent, it is helpful to first mention what they do not. The wall and floor paintings are not indicative of permanent settlement or colonization. To date no evidence of Minoan settlers or administration has been discovered at any of the eastern sites to be discussed here. Recent excavations at Miletus conducted by Wolf-Dietrich Niemeier have established the form of a Minoan colony in the Middle to Late Bronze Age.²³ At this site not only are domestic and commercial objects found, such as domestic pottery, loomweights and a typically Minoan cross-draught type kiln, but also seals, rings, Minoan standard weights and pottery inscribed with Linear A that together indicate some level of administration.²⁴ The only evidence for possible Aegean settlement in Egypt or the Near East comes from the Fayum in Egypt dating to sometime during or near the end of the 12th Dynasty where low-spindle whorls of a European-Aegean type and dyed wool have been discovered.²⁵ Such domestic indications have not been found at any of the major or minor palace sites and taken together with the lack of administrative markers as found at Miletus indicates that a settled population of Aegeans was never present during, before or after the construction of the paintings. The decorations of the major and minor palace sites are

²³ Niemeier 2005. Minoan frescoes have also been discovered at Miletus.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 3-7.

²⁵ Barber 1991, 350-1. Egyptian textiles of this period were made of linen, wool was used in the Aegean. However, the 12th Dynasty corresponds roughly to the beginning of the Middle Minoan period and dates centuries before the wall or floor paintings to be discussed here.

therefore to be explained by the artists themselves and the sociopolitical contexts surrounding their patronage, rather than by any concepts of population movement. As Niemeier stated, “Minoan fresco-paintings do not necessarily indicate actual Minoan settlement, as the examples from the Levant (Alalakh, Tel Kabri, Qatna) and Egypt (Tell el-Dab‘a/Avaris) demonstrate. These are not connected with permanent Minoan presence but are due to diplomatic exchange of artisans and specialist knowledge.”²⁶

Certain definitions will clarify the argument to be presented. Fresco only refers to a proper *al-fresco* or *buon fresco* technique where pigment is applied to a still wet surface; otherwise the term *secco* will be applied. As far as geography is concerned, most of the labels are traditional, such as Egypt, Mesopotamia and Anatolia. The Near East is here employed to include only the Levant and Syria and does not include Mesopotamia, Anatolia or Egypt. The terms Minoan and Aegean are used to designate different ideas and should not be confused. Minoan refers to the culture or political structures of the civilization, especially where tied to the palace as a construct; Aegean refers to either the geographical region as a whole or to aspects of the culture or art where origin cannot be specified or that cannot exclusively be called Minoan. The artists are labeled as Aegean since their origin cannot be determined and it remains unknown whether they were part of the Minoan political structures or simply part of the Minoan sphere of influence. No attempt will be made to distinguish between Minoan and Aegean artistic styles; as a result, in this discussion geographically Aegean artists will be described painting Minoan cultural motifs.

²⁶ Niemeier 2005, 8.

Chapter 2

The Eastern Mediterranean Sites

During the end of the Middle and beginning of the Late Bronze Ages, the eastern Mediterranean was undergoing dramatic political and social changes; see Figure 1. In the south, Egypt was transitioning from the rule of the foreign Hyksos 15th Dynasty to the native Theban 18th Dynasty. Led by the king Ahmose, the Egyptian reconquest of the Delta regained access to the sea and therefore allowed the 18th Dynasty to participate in trade and formal political relations with other states to the north and east. The Levantine coast was not unified by any one state but existed as a patchwork of independent city-states.²⁷ The Canaanite cities to the south retained strong ties with the Hyksos in Egypt and were likely therefore the focus of the continued Egyptian expansion during the Late Bronze Age.²⁸ To the north, first the Mitanni and then the Hittites from Anatolia asserted political control over the cities, but allowed commerce to continue with minimal interference.²⁹ Farther inland, Mesopotamia was marked by successive periods of conquest. Most relevant to this study, Hammurabi established dominion over most of the region from the Tigris and Euphrates deltas to Mari.³⁰

The six cities examined here all fall into this political climate: Avaris in Egypt; Tel Kabri in southern Palestine and Alalakh, Qatna and Ebla in Syria, all located in what is here termed the Near East; Mari in Mesopotamia. Politics were carried out in palaces,

²⁷ Cline 1994, 48.

²⁸ McGovern 2000, 70-4; see also McGovern and Harbottle 1997, 151-2.

²⁹ Cline 1994, 48.

³⁰ Frankfort 1996, 107.

which were symbols of the king's power and sovereignty emphasizing his ability to rule and often involving foreign elements as part of the decorative program.³¹ The significance and function of these foreign elements will be dealt with in Chapter 5. In all of the palaces considered here, wall paintings of some sort have been found in either political settings, religious settings or both. The overwhelming majority of these paintings are not frescoes and are entirely in keeping with local traditions; they may be figural or non-figural, monochromatic or decorated, and at least at Hyksos Avaris display text.³² Therefore, the presence of the frescoes detailed in this chapter should not be viewed as entirely alien elements intruding upon the native decorative programs of the palaces.

What distinguishes these frescoes, aside from the simple fact of being frescoes, are the motifs depicted. The following discussion does not consider all frescoes discovered at each site, but rather examines those that display foreign motifs or are depicted in foreign styles.³³ These motifs can be broken down into six general categories: Non-Figural Motifs, Floral Motifs, Animal Motifs, Bull Sports/Athletes/Acrobats, Other Human Figures and Stucco Reliefs. All of the major sites display fresco fragments that fall into more than one of the above categories. The minor sites do not possess such a range and for this reason are labeled as "minor." The significance and meaning of these motifs in a larger geographical context will be considered in the next chapter.

³¹ Winter 1993, 36-38; Zaccagnini 1983, 245-7.

³² Bietak 2000b, 187. This fragment is painted mud plaster.

³³ Again, style will not itself be analyzed in this study.

The Major Sites

Avaris (modern Tell el-Dab'a / 'Ezbet Helmi – Fig. 2)

Excavations by Manfred Bietak of modern Tell el-Dab'a, situated on the east bank of the extinct Pelusiac branch of the Nile, have long established the site as the ancient city of Avaris, capital of the Hyksos 15th Dynasty in the eastern Nile Delta. In 1990, fresco fragments were uncovered among remains of a palatial platform and fortification wall, and since that time the find spots have expanded.³⁴ During the period to which the frescoes date the site consisted of a palace complex composed of three buildings.³⁵ Palace F is the northernmost of the three and was constructed along the older Hyksos period wall cutting into it at one point. The largest of the three, Palace G, lies to the southeast separated from Palace F by an open garden or large courtyard around 100m in length. Immediately to the south of Palace G, close by but apparently not connected, lies Palace J, the smallest of the three buildings.

In spite of the disrupted stratigraphy that caused much confusion in the early stages of analysis of the site, the entire complex appears to have been established at roughly the same time and displays two distinct phases of construction.³⁶ The first is now dated to the early Tuthmoside Period from roughly the reign of Tuthmose I or II to Hatshepsut or Tuthmose III; the second phase continues from Tuthmose III to the reign of

³⁴ Bietak 2005, 83.

³⁵ Bietak (2005) outlines the arrangement and layout of the palatial complex indicated in excavation reports as H/I-III and known as 'Ezbet Helmi. See also Cline 1998, 200.

³⁶ Bietak 2005, 83, 87-8.

Amenhotep II.³⁷ The fresco fragments belong entirely to the first phase of construction and most come from Palace F.

The plan of Palace F, formerly referred to as the Citadel, is situated on top of a large platform and may be the oldest section of the complex judging from Hyksos period remains and accounts of the Hyksos citadel given on the Stele of Kamose from Thebes. It was related as early as 1994 to the south palace at Deir el-Ballas by Peter Lacovara.³⁸ Since this palace was established by Seqenenre, the father of Ahmose, this connection seems valid although the plan of the south palace is too disturbed to make any firm statements. Military remains at Avaris, including Nubian arrowheads signifying the presence of mercenary troops, indicate that the citadel was used for a time after the fall of the city to Ahmose as a base of operations for further campaigns in southern Palestine. Once the need for a military base had subsided the palace seems to have assumed the role of a residence for a queen or member of the royal family.³⁹ The fresco fragments were recovered from within the palace near the main entrance and in dumps below the entrance and to the north at the base of an entrance ramp along the inside of the fortification wall.⁴⁰ A full catalogue of motifs is not possible at this time due to the lack of a comprehensive publication; however, a forthcoming volume by Bietak, Marinatos and Palyvou should help to solve this problem.⁴¹

³⁷ Bietak dates the first phase to 1500-1450 BCE and the second to 1479-1400 BCE using the Egyptian Low Chronology; all dates given by Bietak follow this chronology.

³⁸ Bietak 1994, 44; 1996b, 6-8, fig. 4.

³⁹ Bietak 2005, 89.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 83-7, fig. 3.5

⁴¹ Bietak (2005) refers to a forthcoming volume entitled *The Wall Paintings of Avaris I: Taureador Scenes in Avaris and Knossos*. From the title it can be assumed that this will be the first in a long awaited comprehensive series on the paintings.

*Non-Figural Motifs*⁴²

The non-figural motifs recovered from the dump at the base of the entrance ramp consist of ornamental wall friezes, maze patterns, architectural features and landscape features. The maze patterns appear in two places, on a floor fresco (cat. no. AV01) and as the background for a bull-leaping scene (cat. nos. AV02, AV03) originally adorning the wall leading up the main entrance ramp. Whereas both contexts display the maze motif, differences in the coloring and perhaps also the form prohibit further comparison. Architectural features are found as a background element on a figural scene depicting a man standing in front of a window with a red frame (cat. no. AV04). The fragment is too badly damaged to make out much detail but the construction of the building appears to be of ashlar masonry. This identification is supported by the presence of scattered remains depicting imitation ashlar masonry with exposed wooden end beams in red (cat. no. AV05) similar to fragments found at Palace G. Since these fragments were found in the northern dump the original context and function remain unknown, although it is possible that either the northern exterior façade or the interior walls were painted to resemble ashlar and beam-end construction.

The most obvious landscape feature consists of a so-called “hilly horizon” (cat. no. AV06, see also AV23) made of bands of wavy black, white and red lines. Also depicted are “ovoid patches” (cat. no. AV07), often of white and red, indicating rocks and a rocky shore in a riverine scene (cat. no. AV08), which judging by the geographical location may be safe to call a “nilotic” landscape. Otherwise the background is a flat yellow, brown or red color.

⁴² Bietak 2005, 88; see also Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 51, 55-60; Bietak et al. 2000, 81.

*Floral Motifs*⁴³

Floral motifs appear along the riverine and hunting scenes as various types of aquatic and semi aquatic flowers and plants including palms, reeds and “*waz*” lilies (cat. no. AV09). A small palm or olive tree with blue fronds and a brown trunk appears in the scenes with the acrobats and those with the bull wrestlers (cat. nos. AV10, AV11). A frieze of half-rosettes, either flowers or palm fronds, is displayed in blue, white and red along the bottom of the bull-leaping scene (cat. no. AV12). The half-rosette frieze is depicted on a maze background and bordered on the top and bottom by blue bands, possibly architectural features.

*Animal Motifs*⁴⁴

Animal motifs appear both with and without human figures. Bulls appear in the bull-leaping scenes and will be discussed below. Hunters appear with spotted dogs pursuing ungulates (cat. nos. AV13, AV14), perhaps antelope or wild goats, shown white with blue horns or antlers in a flying gallop pose over a rocky blue ground with shrubs, possibly the riverine landscape. The feet of what may be a hunting dog appear on a fragment depicting a riverine landscape (see cat. no. AV08). Yellow lions and spotted leopards (cat. no. AV15) are also depicted in the same activity in a similar setting. The most striking example of animal motifs comes in the form of winged griffins, one of which can be considered to be life size. The smaller of the two (cat. no. AV16) is preserved only as fragments depicting the head and part of a wing. This animal could have been hunting in the riverine landscape similar to the dogs, lions and leopards and

⁴³ Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 57; see also Bietak 2005, 89; 2000, 36.

⁴⁴ Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 51, 60; see also Bietak 2005, 89; 2000, 36.

may reflect the view that these were not entirely mythical creatures but that they existed in nature. The larger griffin (cat. no. AV17) is preserved only by fragments depicting large black and blue spirals that resemble the smaller example's wings with a background of aquatic plants. Due to its size this animal could have accompanied an important person as a royal symbol as do similar griffins on a monumental scale throughout the eastern Mediterranean.

*Bull Sports / Athletes / Acrobats*⁴⁵

The dump at the base of the entrance ramp contained fragments of a bull-leaping scene with at least four bulls and toreadors. It is likely that this scene originally adorned either the ramp itself or the wall above it leading to the main entrance. Due to the fragmentary nature of the scenes it is entirely possible that as the fragments are fully analyzed more figures and bulls will appear. The athletes are shown vaulting over the backs of the bulls (cat. nos. AV02, AV18) and in one case underneath the bull's torso (cat. no. AV19) indicating that the leaper has fallen off. The athletes wear short white kilts that curve up and over the thigh and wear black shoes and white leggings tied with blue bands (cat. nos. AV18, AV20). Their red skin color follows Egyptian convention indicating masculinity; however, one vaulting leaper (cat. no. AV02) displays yellow skin and wears a blue band on his wrist that John Younger has identified as a seal stone. Due to the preservation of the fragment this interpretation should be taken with caution, as it could just as easily be a simple armband like the one shown on his upper arm. The yellow leaper also displays a blue scalp beneath long curly hair.

⁴⁵ Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 51-5; see also Bietak 2000a, 36; 2005, 88-9; Bietak et al. 2000, 80.

To the left of the bull-leaping scene is a depiction of what has been called bull wrestling or grappling (cat. no. AV11). Two figures in similar dress to the toreadors are shown taunting a bellowing bull that has collapsed onto its knees. One short haired figure stands behind the bull's neck holding onto the horns while the other longhaired figure leans forward in an aggressive pose in front of the bull. Behind the taunting figure sits the previously mentioned palm tree on top of horizontal bands of color that may represent painted architecture (see cat. no. AV01). Other fragmentary acrobats (cat. no. AV10) can be identified by their poses. The similarity of the dress and style of portrayal indicates that these figures may belong to the toreador scene, although the manner of this relationship remains unclear.

The bulls themselves are depicted in the "flying gallop" pose (cat. nos. AV18, AV21, AV22) and display blue horns (cat. no. AV02) and either blue (cat. no. AV23) or brown (cat. no. AV02) spots. Two of the bulls (cat. nos. AV21, AV02) are set against the maze background along the blue base at the bottom of the scene while the other two (cat. nos. AV23, AV07, AV24) are set half above the wavy horizon line. Those fully within the maze and one of the bulls along the horizon are running to the left while the fourth bull (cat. no. AV22) runs to the right; the fragments bear out this reconstruction although the significance of the lone reversed bull remains unclear. One bull (cat. no. AV02), shown with a toreador leaping over its neck, turns its head to face out at the viewer. A fore-facing bull head is not unknown in Egyptian art, but usually appears as a bucranium. I return to a fuller interpretation of this fragment in Chapter 3.

*Other Human Figures*⁴⁶

Aside from the hunters previously mentioned under *Animal Motifs* (see cat. nos. AV13, AV14) and acrobats, humans appear at both small scale and fully life size. Two small figures just over miniature scale appear on fragments from the dump deposits. The first stands beneath an open window, mentioned earlier, with an architectural background (see cat. no. AV04). The standing man wears a long white robe that contrasts sharply with the short kilts worn by the acrobats and toreadors. His large oversize eyes and short hair also distinguish him. The second figure (cat. no. AV25) is preserved only from the waist to the chin but can be identified as a male by his red skin color. He appears to be running against a light colored vacant background and the white garment around his waist could either be a kilt or another robe. If the reconstruction as a full robe is correct, then it is unusual for a runner and may have religious connotations. Life-size figures are represented by the face of a shorthaired man with a beard (cat. no. AV26) and other fragments that possibly display women; however, the latter set of fragments is poorly preserved and ambiguous. The bearded man is unusual for the region and could represent a priest although without his clothing this attribution is uncertain.

*Stucco Reliefs*⁴⁷

The stucco reliefs are perhaps the most alien element at Avaris but are also some of the few fragments for which an original location can be reasonably determined. Most likely the northern entrance to the palace was originally decorated with painted reliefs of a half life-size bull (cat. no. AV27) and a full size human figure wearing boots (cat. no.

⁴⁶ Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 55-7; see also Bietak 2005, 88-89; 2000a, 36.

⁴⁷ Bietak 2005, 88-9; 1994, 45; see also Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 54-5.

AV28). Even though the combination of a bull and a booted figure suggests another bull-leaping scene, these two fragments are different in scale and cannot belong to the same scene. Their original function remains unclear.

Palace G is the largest of the three palaces at Avaris and therefore can be viewed as the main residence and administrative center at the site.⁴⁸ Older Hyksos mud plaster fragments containing decorative motifs and Egyptian writing attest to an older occupation of the area. Since Palace F does not appear to have had any residential areas and Palace J is even smaller, it is possible that Palace G served as a residence for the entire center. It consists of a large complex of rooms paralleling Palace F with a vestibule and portico opening off a courtyard to the north. As at Palace F, the main entrance is reached by a large ramp at the north. Unfortunately, disruption of this area from modern roads and buildings has left the courtyard, portico and vestibule poorly preserved and destroyed any frescoes that may have adorned this area of the entrance. While some fragments have been found *in situ* at the northern entrance from the enclosure wall, most occur in fallen and buried deposits in H/II, again preventing solid identification of decorative schemes.⁴⁹ Far fewer plaster fragments were recovered from this area than from Palace F.

*Non-Figural Motifs*⁵⁰

Plaster fragments with a flat blue color were found *in situ* at the northern entrance to the courtyard around a doorway with a portico. However, aside from proving the area was originally painted, without any surrounding context the fragments are otherwise

⁴⁸ Bietak 2005, 89.

⁴⁹ Cline 1998, 206.

⁵⁰ Bietak 2005, 89.

uninformative. The best non-figural fragments (cat. no. AV29) depict a façade of imitation ashlar masonry and red wooden beam-ends as seen in the dump at Palace F (see cat. no. AV05). The fragments are more widespread at this location and appear to have been used in a similar manner to give a mud-brick wall near the northern entrance the appearance of ashlar construction.

*Floral Motifs*⁵¹

The sole example of flora from Palace G comes in the form of a so-called “loop and ivy border” (cat. no. AV30) from either the northern entrance or the courtyard. The motif is typically identified as ivy, although it could also represent other flora such as grape leaves. However, since neither plant is native to Egypt, the motif’s appearance is intriguing and may indicate that the foreign plant was considered something of an exotic.

*Human Figures*⁵²

Fragments found at the entrance to Palace G of what can tentatively be called a “flounced skirt” and a white foot wearing double anklets (cat. no. AV31) attest to the presence of humans in the program. The figure can safely be identified as a female from the style of dress and the white skin color, although without the upper body or any accompanying context the original scene cannot be reconstructed. The fragment itself is poorly preserved and it is impossible to make out the style of dress the figure wears.

⁵¹ Ibid., 89; 1996a, 75; see also Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 57.

⁵² Bietak 2005, 89.

*Stucco Reliefs*⁵³

Two fragments of stucco reliefs were recovered from on top of the debris covering Palace G in area H/II. A white skinned human figure on a red background (cat. no. AV32) similar to that found at Palace F is preserved by a fragment depicting either an arm or a leg and ending in an armband or a boot; the most recent views of this fragment classify it as a leg and boot. The figure's white skin suggests a female classification although the red background urges another interpretation that will be discussed more fully in Chapter 3. The second fragment (cat. no. AV33) portrays a yellow painted horn but was found without specific context. If the horn is from a bull it is again tempting to view the scene as one of bull sports but this is far from certain. The horns of the bulls on the bull-leaping scene at Palace F are painted blue indicating that the two scenes are of a different nature. The yellow could represent the gilded horns of a sacrificial cow, which would suggest a ritualistic interpretation.

Tel Kabri (ancient Rehov? – Fig. 3)

Excavation of this site began in 1986 under the direction of Aharon Kempinski in the western Galilee and continued until 1993.⁵⁴ The hill contains evidence of settlement from the Late Neolithic to the Iron Age II and has sporadic deposits during the Hellenistic and Ottoman periods.⁵⁵ The relevant frescoes were uncovered from a palace in MB IIA/B strata in Area D on the east slope of the hill. Pottery evidence, such as for example the lack of Palestinian Bichrome Ware, indicates that the palace was destroyed

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 89; 1994, 45; see also Cline 1998, 206.

⁵⁴ Kempinski 2002, 1-2, fig. 1.2. Tel Kabri has not been firmly associated with any ancient site.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 3-5.

at the end of MB IIB/C or MB III, depending on the chronology used.⁵⁶ Contemporary finds in Egypt date such pottery to the end of the reign of the Hyksos king Apophis who reigned from 1620-1590/80 BCE, so a destruction date for the palace of around 1600 BCE can be safely assumed.

The MB IIB palace in Area D was built over an older MB IIA public building and consists of three main excavated wings.⁵⁷ The frescoes come from the third building stage (3c), a stage that saw mass renovations to the entire site, and are primarily confined to painted plaster floors in the west and south wings.⁵⁸ Hall 611 in the west wing contains a frescoed floor *in situ* and Threshold 1444 connecting Hall 611 to Room 607 also displays floor frescoes over stone orthostates. The majority of fragments, some 2000 badly broken remnants, were discovered in a layer of fill beneath Threshold 698 to the northwest of Hall 611 joining it to Room 740. Unlike at Avaris, the original location for the fragments found in the fill here can be determined with a reasonable degree of accuracy. It is likely that the fragments once comprised a frieze adorning the top of the walls in Hall 611.⁵⁹

It is valid to question whether this site actually reflects a palace or not. In the absence of an obvious throne room or any overtly political imagery in the form of large-scale scenes adorning the walls, this attribution remains uncertain. The complex could have been part of a religious structure as borne out by certain features of Hall 611 to be discussed below, such as water proof floors. If the fresco frieze did adorn the walls of

⁵⁶ Niemeier and Niemeier 2000, 769. The chronology is an ever-present problem but it should be noted that this palace and the accompanying frescoes predate the first building phase at Avaris by about 100 years.

⁵⁷ Kempinski 2002, 58; see also pages 68-70 for a general overview.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 270; see also Niemeier and Niemeier 2000, 780. The motifs, contexts and technical manufacture of all frescoes from the site are given a full analysis by Niemeier and Niemeier in chapter 6 of Kempinski (2002, 254-98).

Hall 611, then the prevalence of water/riverine imagery is unusual for a throne room but entirely within the bounds of cult decoration.⁶⁰ From the size of the complex, its attribution as a palace is likely correct, but the function of the excavated rooms is debatable. If it was a palace, then it was inhabited during the period when the Hyksos were in Egypt and therefore the owner should not be called a governor as would be fitting later, but neither should he be titled king. Ongoing excavations will hopefully resolve this confusion and provide insight into the culture of the site.

*Non-Figural Motifs*⁶¹

The best example of the non-figural motifs, by far the most common type at the site, is the floor fresco of Hall 611 intended to represent marbled gypsum paving. Some 700 “slabs” are marked in a regular grid (cat. no. TK01) in the center of the floor separated by thin red lines (cat. no. TK02).⁶² The fresco never touches the walls, a feature that will be taken up in Chapter 3, but does extend onto Threshold 1444 curiously covering actual stone paving (cat. no. TK03). A marbling effect is accomplished through the use of varying transitional ribbons of brown, red and blue pigments. This floor is reminiscent of remains of actual stone flags found in the southern wing of the palace in Locus 1550 where unpainted plaster is used to fill the gaps between regularly cut blocks. This may indicate that the plastering of Hall 611 was a cost saving measure to imitate relatively more expensive floors elsewhere in the palace. Due to the current eroded state of the slabs it is difficult to see under normal light, but the original color scheme formed a

⁶⁰ Consider the example of the motifs discussed at Mari below, which are from cult settings and relate to water.

⁶¹ Kempinski 2002, 58, 63, 66-9, 254-9, 266-70; see also Niemeier and Niemeier 2000, 769-772, 776-9.

⁶² The slabs measure 40 cm x 40 cm with little variation.

checkerboard of alternating gray/blue and yellow/ochre blocks. These colors were originally achieved in part through the addition of painted lilies and crocuses, which will be discussed later.

Findings in the room such as jars for libations and ritual and votive vessels indicate that it had a religious function in earlier stages of construction. It is possible that since the frescoed floors were waterproof, this enabled rituals that included water to be performed. It could just as easily, however, have served an administrative function as a throne room, especially if the dais was originally made of wood and therefore no longer extant. Wall additions in Room 607, also during the 3c phase of construction, form a sort of bent-axis entrance to the hall, which could support its interpretation as a throne room. At present there is no consensus on the subject.

Threshold 698 was constructed over a rubble fill that in part contained a series of wall plaster fragments, thinner than those recovered from the floor, depicting a wide gray-red line and marbled speckling decoration (cat. no. TK04) likely indicating the presence of imitation stone dados. Of the over 2000 fragments recovered, however, most can be linked to a frieze-like decoration. Some 371 of the fragments depict spotted brown “knob-like protuberances” (cat. nos. TK05, TK06) that resemble rocks similar to those found along the shore of the riverine scene at Avaris. Other gray “loop-like strokes” (cat. no. TK07) have been reconstructed as the hulls of boats although it should be noted that the fragments are so small and difficult to join together that without knowing the original orientation on the wall or surrounding context this motif could represent any number of things. Several fragments (cat. nos. TK08, TK09) depict gray, blue, red and white rectilinear and circular designs that likely represent isodomic ashlar

masonry or plastered building façades with exposed beam-end construction. This motif parallels the findings at Avaris except that here the fragments cannot signify an actual façade due to their size but rather indicate the presence of a painted town.

*Floral Motifs*⁶³

As mentioned above, the slabs of the floor fresco in Hall 611 derive much of their color from alternating appearances of red (cat. no. TK10) and blue lilies (cat. no. TK11). Both types of flowers appear individually and in more naturalistic chains (cat. no. TK12) that are placed on the slabs either following the red borderlines or cutting diagonally across the slab. Square XXIV/19 contains a small red object (cat. no. TK13) that is too poorly preserved to determine details but could represent a pomegranate; however, this identification is far from certain. The fragments from the frieze fresco contain aquatic reeds with rounded leaves (cat. no. TK14) and grasses but little else.

*Animal Motifs*⁶⁴

Animals are rare at this site. A few fragments represent a four-pointed object (cat. no. TK15) that has been reconstructed as a flying swallow. Other fragments depict black “S” curves (cat. no. TK16) and parallel lines separating rows of curved black triangles and dots on a blue ground (cat. no. TK17), which have been reconstructed as the wings and neck of a griffin. If this is a griffin, then as at Avaris it could originally have been hunting in a riverine landscape as indicated by the aquatic plants and rocky shorelines. It

⁶³ Kempinski 2002, 259, 267; see also Niemeier and Niemeier 2000, 773, 776.

⁶⁴ Kempinski 2002, 267; see also Niemeier and Niemeier 779.

must be remembered that these reconstructions have been based upon parallels that will be discussed in Chapter 3, and as such could possess other interpretations.

*Human Figures*⁶⁵

Humans cannot be identified in any fragments with certainty. Some fragments depicting the ashlar masonry also contain red lines that could indicate the arms of male figures (cat. no. TK18).

Alalakh (modern Tell Atchana / Tell Atçana – Fig. 4)

Situated in the Hatay in modern Turkey, this site was excavated by Woolley from 1937-1949.⁶⁶ Level VII contains a palace built near the main walls and tablets that identify the structure as having been built by Hammurabi of Yamhad and also name his son Yarim-Lim and grandson Niqme-epukh.⁶⁷ Because most of the tablets referred to Yarim-Lim, his was the name Woolley gave to the palace. The annals from the city make reference to conquest by Hattushili I and the lack of Bichrome Ware as at Tel Kabri indicates a contemporary date of MB IIB or around 1600 BCE.⁶⁸

The frescoes come from the northern wing of the palace, which has been identified as the administrative wing.⁶⁹ The temple area to the west has no known frescoes at Level VII. Rooms 5 and 5a have been identified as an audience chamber and

⁶⁵ Kempinski 2002, 267.

⁶⁶ Woolley 1955.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁶⁸ Niemeier and Niemeier 2000, 780. Dates range from 1620 BCE to 1575 BCE and modern thought may lean more toward the latter dating, see Negbi (1994, 79).

⁶⁹ A full analysis of the Level VII frescoes and the motifs can be found in Woolley 1955, 228-33.

across a large open court, Room 9, the rest of the fragments were recovered from the magazine Rooms 11-13.⁷⁰ Because of their position in the rubble, Woolley determined that those fragments found in the magazines had originally adorned the walls of the so-called “Grand Salon” of the “Piano Nobile” on the floor above.

*Non-Figural Motifs*⁷¹

As at Tel Kabri, stone orthostates covered with plaster and painted to resemble marbled stone slabs (cat. no. AL01) can be found as a dado in Rooms 5 and 5a. Most of the other rooms in the northernmost area of the palace likely possessed actual stone dados at some point so the decision to paint imitations in this room is curious. At present no explanation is forthcoming unless the objects identified by Woolley elsewhere as orthostates were originally simply components of the stone foundations. The Grand Salon was divided into two rooms by a pillared partition and each half was painted differently. The outer chamber, over Rooms 11 and 12, was painted white with violet and yellow-brown bands outlined in black along the top of the walls (cat. no. AL02). The inner chamber, over Room 13, was given a red background and likely contained figural decorations. Fragments from the inner chamber also depict the same “knob-like protuberances” (cat. nos. AL03, AL04) seen at both Avaris and Tel Kabri, there interpreted as a rocky shore. Here the motif borders the top and bottom of the wall and therefore more likely represents features of a rocky background landscape. Some fragments display two parallel gray-green lines forming a sort of ladder motif (cat. no. AL04). Whereas Woolley reconstructed this vertically as the trunk of a tree, Niemeier

⁷⁰ Woolley 1955, 92-4; see also Niemeier and Niemeier 2000, 781.

⁷¹ Woolley 1955, 92, 94, 230; see also Niemeier and Niemeier 2000, 781, 783, 785-7.

places it horizontally and creates a border motif. The latter of the two fits the evidence better and is likely the correct reconstruction although room for debate exists.

*Floral Motifs*⁷²

Aside from the previously mentioned “tree,” plants can only be securely identified in one location. Fragments from the inner chamber of the Grand Salon portray white grasses on a red background (cat. no. AL05) that appear to be swaying in the wind. Another section (cat. no. AL02) from the outer chamber displaying the above-mentioned violet and yellow-brown bands also contains the horn of a bull. Inside the horn and barely visible at the edge of the fragment is an object that but could have been a rosette. However, in light of the size of the proposed rosette Niemeier has reconstructed it as a double axe arguing that the preserved curve would create a rosette that is too large for the space. This proposal seems more correct based on the context of the scene although again nothing is certain without more of the scene.

*Animal Motifs*⁷³

The only definitively identified animal motif is in the form of a bull’s head attested by the presence of the above-mentioned horn in the outer chamber of the Grand Salon (cat. no. AL02). The upright position indicates that this was originally either a fore facing bull’s head or a bucranium, but not a charging bull as seen at Avaris. This identification will be returned to in Chapter 3. Other fragments (cat. no. AL04) in the inner chamber accompanying the ladder-motif border depict a series of triangles and lines

⁷² Woolley 1995, 94, 229-30; see also Niemeier and Niemeier 2000, 781, 783-7.

⁷³ Woolley 1955, 230; see also Niemeier and Niemeier 2000, 781, 787.

similar to those from the frieze fragments at Tel Kabri. Tentatively this motif, which Woolley reconstructed as the foliage of his tree, has been turned on its side by Niemeier and labeled as the wing of a large griffin. The white band (cat. no. AL03) seen below this “wing” would then represent the animal’s faded hindquarters. If this is the case then its prominent position on the wall would indicate royal imagery as at Avaris, although it should again be noted that Niemeier’s identification relies on comparisons that will be explored in Chapter 3.

The Minor Sites

Mari (modern Tell Hariri)

Excavations of the ancient city of Mari near the west bank of the Euphrates have been ongoing since 1933 but the palace that contained the frescoes relevant to this discussion was published by André Parrot in 1958.⁷⁴ The palace complex was constructed during the Isin Larsa Period and destroyed with the conquest of Hammurabi around 1760 BCE, therefore predating both Tel Kabri and Alalakh by a couple hundred years.⁷⁵ Attributed to Zimri-Lim, the complex contains living areas, magazines and administrative and religious zones each with their own style of decoration. The overwhelming majority of the wall paintings fit with contemporary Mesopotamian styles; however, Court 106 and the adjoining Room 64 display foreign motifs. These areas

⁷⁴ Parrot 1958.

⁷⁵ Kuhrt 1995, 96, 109. Frankfort (1996, 107) dates the Isin-Larsa Period to 2025-1763 BCE. The frescoes may date to as early as the late Ur III Period (442, Supplemental Note 124-6) but it is agreed that none date to before 2000 BCE.

comprised the temple complex of the palace as indicated by the decoration and tablets uncovered at the site that make reference to a “Sanctuary of the Ishtar of the Palace” within the palace grounds.⁷⁶ It should be noted that the paintings at Mari are all conducted in a secco technique and none display a true fresco manufacture.⁷⁷ The significance of this will be discussed at the end of Chapter 3.

*Non-Figural Motifs*⁷⁸

Spirals are found as a decorative border surrounding the famous Investiture Scene (cat. no. MR01) on the wall of Court 106. The same motif can be seen on the mud brick podium in Room 64 (cat. no. MR02). This podium also possesses a central ochre-red panel surrounded by eight panels of imitation marbled gypsum slabs, as seen at Tel Kabri and Alalakh. Based on the context of the area and the presence of flames that appear between some of the spirals on the podium, it is likely that these motifs were adopted as symbols of earth and water in a religious setting. The Investiture Scene displays goddesses pouring water out of jars that forms an inner border of wavy lines around the central panels; the spirals could simply have been viewed as a more elaborate or decorative version of this water motif.

*Animal Motifs*⁷⁹

This category is only applicable if Woolley’s suggestion that the bull horn and reconstructed head from Alalakh (cat. no. AL02) be compared with the bulls found in the

⁷⁶ Parrot 1958, 69.

⁷⁷ Negbi 1994, 78; see also Parrot 1958, 58.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 58, 67-70.

⁷⁹ Woolley 1955, 230.

friezes of the sacrificial procession on the walls of Court 106. This comparison is weakened, however, by the fact that the Alalakh head is preserved only by one incomplete horn. The horn on its own, isolated from the body, does not provide a suitable point of comparison and as such there is no need to look to Mari for parallels. The mythical animals depicted in the Investiture Scene are wholly within Near Eastern artistic traditions.

Qatna (modern Tell el-Mishrife)

Qatna is located in Syria to the east of the Orontes River. The Mitanni Period of Qatna is roughly contemporary with the sites of Mari, Tel Kabri and Alalakh; however, it dates well before the early 18th Dynasty and Avaris.⁸⁰ Little or nothing has been published on the frescoes aside from one watercolor illustration and the paintings of unknown technique cannot be dated more narrowly than between MB IIB and LB I.⁸¹

*Non-Figural Motifs*⁸²

The only applicable motif comes in the form of an imitation marbled gypsum dado (cat. nos. QT01, QT02) as seen at Tel Kabri, Alalakh and Mari. Curiously, the report on the palace makes no mention of these fragments and they are attested in the original report only by a color illustration on the frontispiece. These two fragments are identified as having been found in the palace to the east of the Room of the Two Bases dating to the Mitanni Period. The Porte des Nattes possesses actual stone orthostates and

⁸⁰ du Mesnil du Buisson 1935, 18-26.

⁸¹ Niemeier 1991, 196.

⁸² du Mesnil du Buisson 1935, Frontispiece, 79-97, pl. 20.

a more or less regularly cut stone paving and so it is likely that here, as at Tel Kabri, the plaster slabs are simply economical copies of architecture found elsewhere in the palace. However, as with Mari, the simple presence of imitation orthostates divorced from any larger context, whatever their original location, can ultimately tell very little and cannot contribute to the larger discussion at hand.

Ebla (modern Tell Mardikh)

Ebla is situated in Syria between the Orontes and the Euphrates to the southeast of Alalakh. The site is often included in discussions on this subject; however, no paintings are present at Ebla that are foreign enough to contribute to the debate. It should be noted, however, that there are a few occurrences of very early actual orthostates at the southwest city gate dating to MB I and others at Palace E dating to MB I-II that will be relevant to later discussions in Chapter 3.⁸³

Conclusions

Non-figural motifs are proportionally the most common motifs represented at all of the sites considered in this chapter that possess relevant motifs. Ebla is a rarity and as stated is only mentioned here because it is occasionally included in discussions of this type. Because of the relative paucity of material from the other two minor sites, the majority of analysis that follows will concern the three major sites of Avaris, Tel Kabri and Alalakh. Non-figural, floral and animal motifs are present at all three major palace

⁸³ Hult 1983, 38.

sites. Avaris and Tel Kabri both possess human figures, although this identification is tentative at Tel Kabri. Avaris displays the greatest variety of motifs and techniques including bull sports and athletes as well as stucco reliefs of bulls and humans. Why Avaris is so singularly invested in the topic of another study. It suffices at this point that such motifs are found at the major palace sites and are stylistically foreign enough to be distinguished from the contemporary native traditions. That being the case, where did these paintings come from? In the following chapter I examine these motifs in relation to Aegean art in an effort to demonstrate their Aegean origin.

Chapter 3

Aegean and Mainland Mycenaean Greek Comparanda

By general consensus, the wall and floor paintings at the eastern palace sites of Avaris, Tel Kabri and Alalakh are Aegean in nature.⁸⁴ Since such claims are central to this study they cannot be taken out of hand and must therefore be demonstrated. The motifs already classified in Chapter 2 will again be used here in consideration of objects from Aegean contexts: non-figural, floral, animal, bull sports/athletes/acrobats, other human figures, and stucco reliefs. All of these motifs have parallels in the Aegean or Mycenaean mainland, often in both locations, in both frescoes and other media.⁸⁵ These comparanda in other media are significant because in demonstrating that the motifs appear in broader social and artistic contexts, they indicate that the motifs are of greater cultural significance. A single motif of great cultural importance can easily travel and be taken out of its original context. However, if multiple motifs are found at a single site, then it is more likely that not only the individual motifs, but the scenes themselves contain cultural significance and link more strongly with the region where the motifs originated. In this chapter I intend to demonstrate that because these motifs appearing en masse at the eastern palace sites all have parallels in the Aegean, they can therefore be classified as “Aegean.”

⁸⁴ Such statements are sometime made in reference to Mari and Qatna, although they are difficult to substantiate. As a result the focus will be on the three major palace sites. As to the Aegean nature of the paintings at those three sites, see Bietak (2000a) for Avaris, Kempinski (2002, 254-81) for Tel Kabri and Woolley (1955, 228-32) for Alalakh.

⁸⁵ It should be noted that TK03 and AL01 depicting imitation stone fresco work over actual stone slabs represents a process, not a motif; however, a comparable process can be seen in MYb08. The fresco comparanda are detailed in Appendix I, while the non-fresco comparanda can be found in Appendix II.

Non-Figural Motifs

Imitation stone possesses a variety of forms and functions in the Aegean. The imitation gypsum flooring and orthostates found at Tel Kabri (cat. nos. TK01, TK04), Alalakh (cat. no. AL01), Mari (cat. no. MR02) and Qatna (cat. no. QT01) have parallels in one form or another at most of the Aegean sites. Imitation stone can be found in dado form in domestic settings at Knossos (cat. no. KN01)⁸⁶ and Thera (cat. no. TH01). Being purely domestic at the West House on Thera and at least situated in a private quarter of the palace at Knossos, the setting differs significantly from those of the eastern Mediterranean examples but the stylistic portrayals are comparable. It should be noted that the stone motif at these two sites appears in a stylized “arc type” giving the stone an appearance more like what is seen at Mari and Qatna than at Tel Kabri.⁸⁷ The later Mycenaean palaces display similar imitation stonework although of a markedly less naturalistic style. Mycenae (cat. no. MY01), Tiryns (cat. no. TR01) and Pylos (cat. nos. PY01, PY02) all display a more stylized appearance that more closely resembles the vertical color bands seen as background dividers in figural scenes at this time. As such they are likely intended more for decorative effect than to imitate actual stone. The “Easter eggs” seen in fragments AV07 and AV08 also appear in this capacity (see cat. no. PY02) but are also seen in earlier figural scenes (cat. no. TH02) that more closely match the context of the motif at Avaris.

⁸⁶ See also Evans (1921, 356-7) for a description of the fresco in relation to Fyfe’s KN01.

⁸⁷ See Lang (1969, 169) for the term “arc type” in reference to imitation stone. The “flags” at Tel Kabri are more mottled and naturalistic in their portrayal of stone veins.

As Niemeier pointed out, the practice of decorating spaces with imitation stone likely originated where actual stone was used for architectural decoration.⁸⁸ Therefore the regions with the earliest intensive use of facing or paving stones is likely the originator of the economical practice of comparable plaster decoration as seen at Tel Kabri.⁸⁹ The site of Ebla in Syria has very old orthostates around the southwest city gate and paving stones in a few places at Palace E all dating to the MB I-II period.⁹⁰ Alalakh possesses early stone flooring dating to MB IIB as does Tel Kabri and Shechem displays MB IIC orthostates around the east gate.⁹¹ However, stone facing is rare in Syria-Palestine and virtually unheard of in Egypt and Mesopotamia until later periods due to the expense of large facing stones, which were essentially rare commodities.⁹²

In contrast, Cretan sites such as the west façade at Phaistos, Mallia and the Chrysolakkos all display thin paving or facing stones from the MM IB-II period and on.⁹³ Palaikastro and Zakro possess grids of red stucco that likely originally held inlay stones of limestone or marble (cat. nos. PKb01 and ZKb01 respectively).⁹⁴ Whereas the dates are comparable between Syria-Palestine and Crete, the pervasiveness of this use of stone in the Aegean indicates that the practice can legitimately be called Aegean and therefore the imitation stone dados and orthostates at least at Tel Kabri should be considered the same. The use there of red lines to mimic the plaster set into the interstices between the stone flags, as seen at Palaikastro and Zakro, and the fact that the grid is set away from

⁸⁸ Niemeier and Niemeier 2000, 773.

⁸⁹ The MB II palace at Tel Kabri displays both real and imitation orthostates, see Chapter 2.

⁹⁰ Hult 1983, 38-40.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 39-40; see also Kempinski 2002, 58.

⁹² Hult 1983, 36, 73-4.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 46-7.

⁹⁴ Hirsch 1980, 456. Archanes may also have possessed marble slabs (459) and Phaistos possessed early stone paved courts; see Niemeier 2000, 773.

the walls, a typically Cretan habit,⁹⁵ all strengthen the Aegean connection. Similar grids on a painted plaster floor as found at Tel Kabri can be seen on palace floors at Mycenae (cat. no. MY02), Tiryns (cat. no. TR02) and Pylos (cat. no. PY03). The origins of the imitation stone frescoes at Qatna and Mari, being farther from the coast and with a stronger Mesopotamian influence, are more difficult to determine, especially in light of the scarcity of evidence from Qatna and the apparent cultic function at Mari.

Fresco maze motifs are rare in the eastern Mediterranean, appearing at only one site in this study (cat. nos. AV01, AV03), but are more prevalent in the Aegean. Bietak related the maze at Avaris to one found by Evans at Knossos almost as soon as he made his discovery.⁹⁶ This motif from Knossos (cat. no. KN02) is strikingly similar to the one from Avaris although it is slightly more complex, perhaps indicating a more evolved version of the motif on Crete or a copying of a Cretan concept for the early 18th Dynasty palace. The “maze” also appears as a staircase decoration in Xeste 4 on Thera (cat. no. TH03) and on a brown and white floor fragment from Phaistos (cat. no. PH01), although it should be noted that these fragmentary examples appear to have more of a meander appearance than a true maze in the modern understanding.⁹⁷ These two types of maze motifs can be seen in other media as in sealings depicting proper mazes or similar spirals from Ayia Triadha (cat. no. ATb01) and Zakro (cat. no. ZKb02),⁹⁸ or meander patterns as again from Zakro (cat. no. ZKb03). Egyptian art, such as on tomb ceilings and the reverse of scarabs, does display spiral form maze motifs dating back to the Middle

⁹⁵ See also the floorings of the megara at Tiryns (cat. no. TR02) and Pylos (cat. no. PY03).

⁹⁶ Bietak 1994, 47-8.

⁹⁷ These two types are both here considered “maze” motifs as they both occur in identical contexts and media. The distinction between maze and meander is likely a modern one and should not be assumed to apply to Bronze Age artists.

⁹⁸ The similarity between the traditional spiral motif, seen here and elsewhere in the Aegean, and the maze motif should suggest a connection. See Shaw 1995, 106.

Kingdom but modern scholarly consensus attributes these early examples either to the mimicking of textile patterns or to earlier Aegean influence.⁹⁹ The closest parallel for the LM IA maze at Avaris is the MM III motif from Knossos and so the former should not be considered a local derivation, but an import.

Borders of the figural scenes consist of a variety of forms including half-rosettes, which will be discussed under *Floral Motifs*, spirals, rocky borders, hilly horizons and ladder motifs. Spirals as a border, seen only at Mari (MR01, MR02), are common in Aegean and Cycladic art, as for example in the reconstructed border of the Dolphin Fresco at Knossos (cat. no. KN03)¹⁰⁰ and in Room Beta 6 on Thera (cat. no. TH04). The spiral has an even older history in other media on the Greek Mainland and in the Cyclades dating back to the Late Neolithic.¹⁰¹ Rocky borders appear in AL03 and AL04; the same motif appears in other fragments but there it occurs as a component of the scene such as a shoreline or river bank. This use of rocks as a border to a figural scene also appears in the Dolphin Fresco at Knossos (see cat. no. KN03), the megaron at Pylos (cat. no. PY04) and in the form of gypsum sculpture in the Queen's Megaron at Knossos (cat. no. KNb01). Hilly horizons as portrayed in AV06 or the wavy termination of the maze background as shown by AV07 and AV23 can be seen on the Dance Fresco from Knossos (cat. no. KN04) although the more common form of the wavy line is to mark the presence of landscape features as in AV06. In this capacity, parallels can be found across the Minoan world as at Knossos (KN05), Ayia Triadha (cat. nos. AT01, AT02) and Thera

⁹⁹ Shaw 1995, 106.

¹⁰⁰ Whether this motif was originally associated with this scene or not, its presence somewhere nearby in border or frieze form is sufficient.

¹⁰¹ Hitchcock and Preziosi (1999, 41-2) discuss spiral motifs on Late Neolithic pottery from Sitagroi and Dimini and Early Cycladic "frying pans" with continuous spiral designs (54). See also Vermeule (1964, 37-8, fig. 5) for spirals on Early Helladic seals.

(cat nos. TH05 – TH08). This style of portraying landscape appears to drop out of use by the Mycenaean period and thus aids in dating the frescoes in the eastern Mediterranean to the Minoan period.¹⁰²

The ladder motif as a fresco border is seen for certain only in AL04. As such it is difficult to make any firm statements about it, but it does appear frequently in Aegean art. Often the motif represents masonry, as for example in the Dance Fresco from Knossos (cat. no. KN04) where the motif is used to depict the raised walkways to the west of the palace. It also appears as part of the composition of the scene in the Grandstand Fresco from Knossos (cat. no. KN06) at the base of the tripartite shrine. Given that this last representation most likely symbolizes painted ashlar masonry, the ladder motif can be linked to stone architecture. The most common use of the motif however is as a bichrome border with black lines as seen at the top of the Grandstand Fresco (cat. no. KN06), surrounding the bull-leaping scenes at Knossos (cat. no. KN07), Mycenae (cat. no. MY03) and Tiryns (cat. no. TR03) and also on the rosette frieze from Xeste 3 on Thera (cat. no. TH09), at Pylos (cat. nos. PY05) and on the Warrior Goddess plaque (cat. no. MYb01) and a porphyry half-rosette relief (cat. no. MYb02) from Mycenae. The ladder motif also appears in trichrome in the Women's Frieze from Tiryns (cat. no. TR04).

In these cases there is a range of use from one of representative art to an abstracted decorative motif. Depictions from the Final Palace phase of Knossos, from which the Dance (cat. no. KN04), Grandstand (cat. no. KN06) and toreador panels (cat. no. KN07) come, use the motif as a component of or to surround palatial activities. It is

¹⁰² Note that the lyre player from the throne room at Pylos (cat. no. PY04) sits on a rocky outcropping but that the rocks appear entirely in the "Easter egg" style and so are different than the hilly landscape of the Minoan period discussed here. Niemeier (1991, 194) states it is unknown outside of Crete.

possible that the use of the motif in AL04 links the scene with a palatial setting. Taken together with the hypothetical griffin discussed below, the scene would then emphasize the power of the ruler whose throne room the patterns adorned. Another interpretation of the ladder motif was put forth by Barber stating that the pattern could be easily replicated by contemporary weaving techniques.¹⁰³ If true, then the link between the motif and a palatial setting is no longer valid and the motif would simply reflect an otherwise common border pattern.

As components of the figural scenes, architectural façades as seen in AV04, AV05, AV25, AV29, TK08, TK09 and TK18 find their closest parallels in the Aegean world.¹⁰⁴ Such façades appear in frescoes from Knossos (see cat. no. KN06), Mycenae (cat. no. MY04) and in other media including the faience Town Mosaic from Knossos (cat. no. KNb02).¹⁰⁵ The miniature fresco from the West House on Thera not only depicts an identical type of construction (cat. no. TH10), but does so in a similar scale to what is seen at Tel Kabri.¹⁰⁶ TK08 clearly displays red lines dividing the gray ground into blocks and a similar effect is achieved with gray lines and circles on a white ground in TK09.¹⁰⁷ This same pattern can be seen on the buildings in Poleis IV and V in the West House fresco where the ashlar masonry is colored white, gray, red, yellow and blue,

¹⁰³ Barber (1991, 325-6) describes her own experiments where ancient methods were used successfully to arrive at this result.

¹⁰⁴ Only photographs of those from Tel Kabri have been published, Bietak (2005, 89) describes the Avaris fragments as looking Aegean but no images of the fragments have yet been published.

¹⁰⁵ Depictions of architecture in Aegean art often indicate the power of the sovereign who rules the city; see Krattenmaker 1995, 57-8. In lieu of the appearance of the leader himself, the architecture can still serve as an icon of legitimate rule and therefore as a symbol of the foreign sovereign or land. If such a scene is represented in the eastern Mediterranean fragments, then the scene could be interpreted as one of legitimacy over foreign kings or lands. This concept will be discussed in Chapter 5.

¹⁰⁶ Since the architectural fragments from Avaris are most likely an actual façade, the comparison to a miniature fresco may not be the most apt. However, the type of construction is the same and is markedly different from what is seen locally in either Egypt or the Levantine coast.

¹⁰⁷ Consider the red lines dividing the blocks on the floor fresco, which has already been linked to Aegean prototypes.

with a variety of mortar colors. More importantly the West House fresco identifies the circles in the masonry as beam-ends, a typically Aegean architectural feature.¹⁰⁸

Considering that contemporary Levantine and Egyptian buildings were not composed of ashlar courses and did not display the same beam-end construction depicted on the fragments, the conclusion must be reached that this style of building was a foreign one and likely an import from the Aegean where such construction was prevalent and native. It is also significant that similar scenes appear in southern Palestine and Egypt. Since the represented architecture is similar yet alien to both locations, it is tempting to read a connection into the sites. However, without more information caution must be exercised.

The miniature fresco from Tel Kabri also displays two other non-figural motifs as compositional elements of the figural scene: a rocky shore line (TK05, TK06) and hypothetical boats (TK07). The rocky shoreline has obvious parallels with the rocky border motif as seen above (see cat. nos. KN03, PY04, KNb01) but as a shoreline and component of the scene a closer comparison can again be made with the West House miniature fresco on Thera. The Shipwreck Scene (cat. no. TH11) displays the motif in a similar color scheme and contributes to the reconstruction of the Tel Kabri fragments as portraying such a scene. The “boats” in TK07 can be compared to those in the Shipwreck Scene, although the parallel is not exact and without more it is difficult to make any firm statements.

That all of these elements find close parallels with Aegean murals and other objects supports a connection between the eastern Mediterranean sites and the Minoan and Mycenaean worlds. The combination and concentration of these motifs counts against the idea that these non-figural motifs were imported from the east rather than

¹⁰⁸ Niemeier and Niemeier 2000, 773, 780.

from the west. Moreover, the buildings depicted in the miniature fresco from Tel Kabri and the architectural façades from Palaces F and G at Avaris do not correspond with local styles but with Aegean techniques. While later palaces in Mesopotamia were painted to resemble stone construction, at this time they were built of mud bricks. The landscape depicted at Tel Kabri does not show the shores of the Levant but rather the rocky wave-swept islands of the Aegean.¹⁰⁹ All of this suggests an Aegean connection in the manufacture and perhaps even planning of the frescoes.

Floral Motifs

Floral motifs are found at all of the major sites and take a variety of forms and functions. As decorative borders they appear only at Avaris as in the “loop and ivy” border from Palace G (AV30) and the half-rosette frieze (AV12) from the bull-leaping scene from Palace F. As mentioned in Chapter 2, ivy is not native to Egypt and so must be seen as an exotic and foreign inclusion into the palace scheme. Whereas ivy borders are not as common as rosettes or spirals in the Aegean, a good parallel can be found in Room Beta 1 on Thera (cat. no. TH12) and also in the ivy depicted in Room 4 at Ayia Triadha (see cat. no. AT01). The parallel is not exact, as the Theran example is more naturalistic while the Egyptian depiction is more of a line drawing; however, the general form of both the leaves and the overall composition is a close match and the employment of the motif as a decorative border in both cases is a strong link.

Rosettes are very common in both Aegean and Mycenaean art as decorative elements in wall paintings, pottery, seals, gold work and most other media. Full rosettes appear in wall paintings at Knossos (see cat. no. KN03), Thera (see cat. no. TH09),

¹⁰⁹ Kempinski 2002, 267-70.

Tiryns (see cat. no. TR04) and most every other location that Minoan or Aegean artistic influence spread. Half-rosettes are another matter entirely, however, and are much rarer, appearing only in major palace centers on Crete and the Mycenaean mainland during the late New Palace or Final Palace periods.¹¹⁰ As such the motif is most often employed as a decoration for buildings in figural scenes as in the Grandstand Fresco (see cat. no. KN06) from Knossos, a possible bull-leaping scene from Mycenae (see cat. no. MY03) and a very fragmentary scene from Pylos (cat. no. PY06). Fragments of actual half-rosette friezes appear at Knossos (cat. no. KN08), Mycenae (cat. no. MY05) and Pylos (cat. nos. PY07, PY08). The motif is not restricted entirely to painting and does appear in limestone decorative reliefs from MM III Knossos (cat. no. KNb03) and a later porphyry example from Mycenae (see cat. no. MYb02).¹¹¹ Mycenae also displays a gold ornament (cat. no. MYb03) in the shape of a tripartite shrine with two half-rosettes at the base similar to what can be seen in the Grandstand Fresco (see cat. no. KN06) and Zakro yields a similar scene on a sealing (cat. no. ZKb04).

The appearances of these friezes are not identical; some rosettes face inward from the sides of a structure (see cat. nos. PY06, ZKb04, MYb03), whereas others face outward from a central core (see cat. nos. KN06, KN08, KNb03, MYb02). The distinction between these types, if any, is unclear and the possibility must be left open that these were considered the same motif regardless of position and, much like the difference between mazes and meanders, differences may have been due to artistic license. In any case, the fact that this motif is found entirely at major palace centers

¹¹⁰ Crowley 1989, 87-8. Avaris is the sole exception to this rule known at this time.

¹¹¹ The similarity between KNb03 and MYb02 is striking and could indicate that the motif was copied directly from the earlier Minoan palace by later Mycenaean efforts. However, it should be noted that as with all of Evan's dates, due to more recent developments in dating the MM III attribution may need to be revised.

suggests that the half-rosette was a symbol of either the palace or of the ruler. That the symbol was adopted by the Mycenaeans for use in their palace decorations and preserved on gold pendants strengthens this idea. However, the later Mycenaean half-rosettes are often associated with either tripartite shrines (see cat. no. MYb03) or horns of consecration (see cat. no. PY06) and so may possess religious meaning derived from similar use by the Minoans. Since the nature of the Minoan palace may have been both religious and administrative on an eastern model,¹¹² the half-rosette could have held either symbolic association. Its use in a bull-leaping scene at Avaris does not clarify its significance since the purpose of such bull sports also remains unclear. At the very least, the motif found at Avaris can be linked with the LM/LH Aegean and Mycenaean Greek mainland.

Other plants appear as lilies and a possible pomegranate on the floors at Tel Kabri (TK10 – TK12 and TK13 respectively), as *waz* lilies, palms and aquatic plants in figural scenes at Avaris (AV09 – AV11) and in the miniature frescoes (TK14) at Tel Kabri. These also appear in the form of white grasses blowing in the wind on a dark background (AL05) from the inner chamber of the Grand Salon at Alalakh. The pomegranate from Tel Kabri is problematic as that tentative identification made by Niemeier was likely influenced by the preconceived notion that the motif was Aegean.¹¹³ Nevertheless, pomegranates do appear, albeit rarely, in Aegean art (cat. no. KNb04), although typically not in fresco form. Lilies have numerous Aegean parallels from both palaces and private dwellings from Crete and the Cyclades. As at Tel Kabri the flowers may appear both

¹¹² Zaccagnini (1983, 245) ties the administrative and religious functions of the eastern palaces to the artistic output of the ruler. Therefore, artistic motifs would directly reflect the rule of the sovereign who controls their production.

¹¹³ Kempinski 2002, 259.

isolated or as if growing as at Knossos (cat. no. KN09, KN10), Thera (see cat. nos. TH05, TH06, TH13), Ayia Triadha (cat. no. AT03) and on a dagger from Mycenae (cat. no. MYb04), or as chains as on the necklace of the “Lily Prince” (cat. no. KN11) or the tassels on the sleeves of a saffron gatherer from Thera (see cat. no. TH08). These lilies are consistently white, red and blue as seen at Tel Kabri and strengthen the connection between the Aegean and the east. That the lilies primarily appear during the Minoan periods suggest that the frescoes from Tel Kabri could legitimately be called Minoan.¹¹⁴

Waz lilies are different and appear only at Avaris (AV09) and, as the name indicates, are likely of Egyptian origin. However, there are parallels with the Aegean, as *waz* lilies can be seen capping the *ikria* in Room 4 of the West House on Thera (cat. no. TH14). The practice of making plants blue instead of the more natural green has been linked to Aegean conventions and the lack of a green pigment.¹¹⁵ Palms like those appearing at Avaris (AV10, AV11) are also present on wall paintings (cat. no. KN12), pottery (cat. no. KNb05) and as faience sculptures (cat. no. KNb06) from Knossos and a wall painting from Thera (cat. no. TH15). Whereas palm trees are common in Near Eastern art they more often have the appearance of those in the Investiture Scene at Mari (MR01) and lack the smooth stylized curves of the Aegean and Avaris examples. The other plants, both in riverine scenes and aquatic plants as seen at Tel Kabri, have parallels in similar scenes at Knossos (cat. nos. KN13, KNb07), Ayia Triadha (see cat. nos. AT01, AT02) and on Thera in the riverine landscapes from the West House (see cat. nos. TH02,

¹¹⁴ Levantine art more commonly represents Egyptian-style lotus blossoms and other floral motifs of similar origin. The only instance of lilies included here occurring outside the Minoan world is the Mycenaean dagger, which likely would have been of either Minoan manufacture or Minoan influence. See Davies (1974) for an account of Minoan influence on the Vapheio Cups and Immerwahr (1990, 163-4) for a discussion of Minoan influence on Mycenaean painting.

¹¹⁵ Barber 1991, 312-3; see also below discussion of pigments under *Technique and Composition*.

TH16) and elsewhere (cat. no. TH17). The rounded leaves on TK14 link best with the myrtle found on Thera (see cat. no. TH17), although rounded ivy leaves are also a possibility (see cat. no. AT01). In either case, the plant is one that is not native to either Egypt or the Levant and so must again be considered a foreign artistic import.

The grasses found at Alalakh (AL05) are more difficult to place. Woolley first said that the grasses were blowing in the wind when he published the fragments in 1955, saying that they were “unmistakably in the style of Cretan art.”¹¹⁶ This drew the observation that the flowing of the grasses reflected the “absolute mobility” seen in Cretan art according to Groenewegen-Frankfort,¹¹⁷ as opposed to the rigidity and order seen in contemporary Egyptian and Near Eastern nature scenes. The most common portrayal of grasses in Minoan art comes from “Floral Style” pottery of the LM IA period (cat. nos. KNb08, PHb01), although the closest pottery comparisons comes from LC I Light on Dark and Dark on Light wares as from Thera (cat. nos. THb01, THb02).¹¹⁸ This last example mimics the white grasses on a dark red background; however, the portrayal of the grasses or reeds in a crossing lattice structure is not seen in AL05. Similar grasses on wall paintings in the Aegean are rare except on Thera as seen in Xeste 3 (cat. nos. TH18, TH19). Here the grasses are depicted as long flowing stalks with light tufts of seeds almost identical to what is seen at Alalakh. The idea can be supported that there existed a connection between Alalakh and Thera or the Cyclades, not necessarily including the Cretan mainland. Any political implications of this idea are beyond the

¹¹⁶ Woolley 1955, 231.

¹¹⁷ Quoted in Niemeier and Niemeier 2000, 784.

¹¹⁸ Two jugs in the National Archaeological Museum of Athens represent these styles and are good comparisons. However, even though the style of the grasses is similar, they lack the movement present in the Alalakh fresco.

scope of this study; however, the Thera-Levant connection is intriguing and possibly borne out by the number of shared motifs.¹¹⁹

Animal Motifs

Animals are again present at all three major sites as both real animals and mythical creatures. Bulls are the most common, appearing in bull-leaping scenes and stucco reliefs at Avaris, which will be discussed later under *Bull Sports / Athletes / Acrobats* and *Stucco Reliefs*, and as a simple bucranium at Alalakh (AL02). Griffins appear as components of figural scenes at Tel Kabri (TK16, TK17) and possibly Avaris (AV16), but are also components of larger decorative schemes (AV17, AL03, AL04). Other animals such as swallows (TK15), dogs (AV13, AV14) and lions (AV15) are shown in figural scenes and friezes.

The bucranium at Alalakh (AL02) is a difficult motif to pin down because so little of it remains. It is clear from the context that it served as a decorative motif in a frieze along the top of a wall and the identification of a bull head or skull is reasonably certain from the inclusion of the left horn. Whether this is a depiction of a head or a skull is not merely an academic debate but figures largely in the influence behind the scene. Bucrania appear early in Syro-Palestinian art dating back to the Halaf culture.¹²⁰ Beyond the early connections, however, bucrania are rare in Near Eastern art. Bullheads appear in Egyptian art during the New Kingdom, as for example on the ceilings at the palace of

¹¹⁹ It should be noted that the number of shared motifs could also be explained simply by the fact that no other single site to date has provided such a variety of private motifs as Akrotiri on Thera. The later palace sites such as Knossos, while providing numerous frescoes, also lack many of the earlier MM III and LM IA examples that would be useful for comparison purposes due to continued LM/LH II-III habitation.

¹²⁰ Woolley 1955, 230; see also Niemeier and Niemeier 2000, 781.

Amenhotep III at Malkata,¹²¹ but are equally rare before that period.¹²² By contrast, both bullheads (cat. no. ZKb05) and skulls (cat. no. ZKb06) appear early on the Minoan seals dating back to the MM IB/II and on MM III vases.¹²³

If the object between the bull's horns on AL02 could be identified then the motif could be more easily placed. Woolley wanted to identify the object as a disk similar to that in the sacrifice scene at Mari briefly mentioned in Chapter 2.¹²⁴ However, this idea has little support as the horn is too fragmentary for comparison and the contexts of the two scenes are different, one being a border frieze, and the other being a narrative scene. Niemeier prefers not to see the object as a disk, or more likely a rosette, due to its size and placement within the space; instead, he identifies it as a double axe and therefore of undoubted Aegean origin.¹²⁵ The Aegean provides examples of the fore-facing bullhead or bucranium being employed as a decorative motif on gold ornaments, rhyta and on sealings. These depictions often place something on the forehead or between the horns, either a rosette (cat. no. MYb05) or a double axe (cat. nos. MYb06, ARb01). Again, however, it is difficult to place the motif because so little remains for comparison; as a result the motif cannot be securely linked with the Aegean. Since both bucrania and fore-facing bull heads appear in the Aegean, it is not unreasonable to propose a connection, but this is not certain.

¹²¹ Karetso and Andreadake-Blazake 2000, 294. Based on the iconography of this scene and others at the site, it seems likely that Malkata was itself in some way influenced by Aegean artistic traditions.

¹²² Cow heads are ubiquitous symbols of the goddess Hathor and have a long history stretching back to the Predynastic period as seen for example on the Palette of Narmer. However, these depictions are linked specifically with the goddess and are therefore different from those appearing at Malkata and possibly also at Alalakh.

¹²³ Niemeier and Niemeier 2000, 781.

¹²⁴ Woolley 1955, 230.

¹²⁵ Niemeier and Niemeier 2000, 781. Again, however, this could reflect circular reasoning where Aegean motifs are expected and therefore found. The bull heads found on the ceilings of Malkata possess small rosettes between the horns.

Griffins, it must be admitted, are hypothetical at all three major eastern Mediterranean sites, but the evidence supports such identifications. While the notched plume motif and strings of spirals may represent other things in isolation, together they are only found on the wings of griffins and sphinxes. The notched plume designs, the series of parallel lines, triangles and dots on griffin wings, discovered at Tel Kabri (TK17) and possibly also at Alalakh (AL04) connect with plumage patterns found on griffins from Knossos (cat. no. KN14) and Thera (see cat. no. TH02, TH20), and the spirals found at Avaris (AV16, AV17) and Tel Kabri (TK16) connect with wing decorations from Thera (see cat. no. TH20), Mycenae (cat. no. MYb07) and possibly also Tiryns (cat. no. TR05). The smaller griffins (AV16, TK16) were likely components of figural friezes as seen in the West House on Thera (see cat. no. TH02) and were probably shown hunting in a landscape. That they were hunting alongside real predators such as lions on Thera and Avaris indicates that they may have been viewed as actual exotic animals rather than mythical creatures.

The larger griffins (AV17, AL03, AL04) were likely placed alongside thrones or other important locations as seen in the Aegean at Knossos (cat. no. KN15), Thera (see cat. no. TH20) and Pylos (cat. nos. PY09, PY10). In this role griffins seem to have been either markers or companions of rulers or divinities.¹²⁶ Sphinxes are more common in Egyptian art, but in the Near East and Mesopotamia griffins are often associated with divinities. The major difference between Near Eastern and Aegean griffins, aside from slight differences in portrayal, is the use of the animals to emphasize the nature of the figures they accompany. In the Aegean, animals including griffins are shown

¹²⁶ Marinatos (2000, 117) asserts that the Aegean griffin was a companion and guardian of the Mistress of Animals figure.

approaching female figures freely and appear as guardians (see cat. no TH20); the scenes display little of the forceful control and authority that the Near Eastern divinities assert directly over their companion griffins.¹²⁷ This idea of the griffin as protector can be seen in the animals flanking thrones and podiums in the Aegean and Mycenaean mainland as seen above, but the question remains: were the griffins at Avaris and Alalakh interacting with figures in the scene along an Aegean model or passive along a Near Eastern model? Without more of the scenes represented it is impossible to tell at present and it must be noted that while the style of the griffins may be Aegean, that does not necessarily mean that the significance was also. These animals could easily have represented Near Eastern sensibilities in a foreign artistic style.

Other animals appear in hunt scenes in AV13 – AV15 in a manner very similar to what can be seen in hunt scenes from Mycenaean frescoes. Such scenes were popular subjects in Mycenaean palaces, as seen in the depiction of dogs hunting a boar at Tiryns (cat. no. TR06) but were also present in earlier Minoan contexts as proven by predators like lions and occasionally griffins appearing in a flying gallop pose hunting in a riverine landscape (see cat. nos. TH16, ZKb07).¹²⁸ The hunting dog shown in AV13 even wears a collar proving it is not simply a depiction of a wild hunt, but a structured and ordered scene with human hunters no longer preserved. The feathery tail of the dog in AV14 corresponds directly to the style found at Tiryns (see cat. no. TR06) and the general pose of a flying gallop is distinctive of animals of all types in Aegean art.¹²⁹ It is significant

¹²⁷ See Marinatos (2000, 115-7) for a fuller description of the differences in these representations.

¹²⁸ Lions not being native to Crete, the need to attribute artistic transmission of this motif from the east to Crete is obvious; see Crowley 1989, 183.

¹²⁹ Immerwahr 1990, 30; see also Crowley 1989, 183. The pose is itself a specialized motif of Aegean art, the movement of which stands in stark contrast to the static and stiff animal poses of contemporary Egypt and the Near East.

that hunters appear alongside the dogs in a natural setting in AV13 – AV15, as this is inconsistent with hunting scenes in contemporary Egyptian tombs.¹³⁰ Egyptian hunting scenes typically portray the dogs intermingled with the game animals and physically separated from the hunter and his attendants. Swallows as seen in TK15 are not directly associated with hunt scenes but are present in at least one section of the miniature frescoes at Tel Kabri. Excellent comparisons can be found in room Delta 2 on Thera (see cat. nos. TH05, TH06) where the four-pronged appearance of the swallow recalls the example from Tel Kabri.¹³¹

Bull Sports / Athletes / Acrobats

Bulls and accompanying acrobats appear only at Avaris (AV02, AV07, AV18 – AV24) but there it seems that the subject was a popular one, at least at Palace F, and comprised a long running scene not unlike what is found at Knossos (see cat. no. KN07). That such a subject held appeal for the palatial centers of Crete and the Mycenaean mainland has long since been established and need not be reevaluated here; it suffices that scenes of bull sports are only found at palatial centers or on goods produced with palatial influence and are not found elsewhere, as for example on Thera.¹³² Scenes of bull-leaping in monumental painting appear at Mycenae (see cat. no. MY03) and Tiryns (cat. no. TR03) and elsewhere in glyptic and other minor arts (cat. no. ZKb08). Bulls can

¹³⁰ Stevenson Smith 1998, 104-5, figs. 189-90, 140, figs. 244-5. The question can be raised if it was even proper for such scenes to adorn the walls of New Kingdom Egyptian palaces or if this entire concept was foreign.

¹³¹ Niemeier writing in Kempinski (2002, 266) was tentative about his identification of this four-pointed object as a swallow. Based on the comparisons, this identification seems likely.

¹³² Ideas such as those proposed by Betts and explained by Shaw (1995, 105) asserting that bull imagery was exclusively the provenance of Knossian kings take the issue too far. That all bull imagery in all media from Crete and the mainland ultimately derives from Knossian prototypes is a stretch that requires too many assumptions about LBA Cretan politics and artistic symbolism than can be made with the present state of understanding about Bronze Age Cretan politics.

also be found isolated from toreadors at Tiryns (cat no. TR07) and Pylos (cat. no. PY11). All correspond to the general style of portrayal found at Avaris in the use of the flying gallop, the position within a “palatial” border and the style and color of the quatrefoil spots on the skin of the bulls. This style of using quatrefoils and dots to spot the bulls is not unique to the Aegean but is there used exclusively in contrast to other styles shared in Egypt and the Near East.¹³³

The acrobats themselves as seen in AV02, AV10, AV11, and AV18 – AV20 are depicted with long curly black hair, wearing short white kilts and black boots with blue ties and arm bands or seals, depending on the interpretation, around the upper arm and wrist. This style is identical to what can be found in the toreador panels from Knossos, (see cat. no. KN07), Mycenae (see cat. nos. MY03, MY06),¹³⁴ Tiryns (see cat. no. TR03) and Pylos (cat. no. PY12). It is more difficult to discern the dress of figures on seals and rings; however, it is sometimes possible to see some similarities in attire (see possibly cat. no. ZKb08). Bull sports were not restricted to the Aegean during the Bronze Age and so based solely on the general theme the motifs could link with various origins. Bull sports appear in Syria and in a sealing from Alalakh dating back to the 17th century BCE and representations may exist in India from third millennium contexts.¹³⁵ However, the

¹³³ Compare with irregular patterns on bulls at Malkata (Stevenson Smith 1998, 164, figs. 282-3) and from Mari and Byblos (Frankfort 1996, figs. 142, 305).

¹³⁴ Note that MY06 is not a scene of bull sports but the falling figure does display a similar style of dress.

¹³⁵ Collon (1994, 81-3) gives an analysis of depictions of bull sports in Syrian glyptic, which all seem to have originated in the area around Aleppo. The proximity of Aleppo to Alalakh, where Aegean influence is attested, is tantalizing although caution should be exercised. Morgan (1995, 40) gives references to bull sports in India, and Galán (1994, 81-94) does the same for Egypt. It is possible that these sports evolved anywhere that cattle were domesticated and so the sports could have been widespread, see Collon (1994, 83). However, even if cattle and the accompanying games were imports to Crete, the development into full-scale leaping is characteristically Minoan and foreign depictions of such scenes as in Syria appear to depict leapers with the Aegean “wasp waists” and kilts. The concept may have been imported from Syria or Anatolia but once it evolved on Crete it was then transmitted back to Syria in the evolved form that appears on both the Aleppo and Cretan sealings.

style of dress in the Avaris fresco fragments is purely Aegean and is not seen in the east. Such a depiction at Alalakh may suggest the presence of an early fresco that influenced later seal designs, as several such depictions appear on seals manufactured at nearby Aleppo.¹³⁶ Once again, it is the combination of features that elsewhere appear together exclusively in Aegean contexts that establishes the scene as Aegean.

The forward facing bull seen in AV02 is unusual for Aegean art, as charging bulls in wall paintings are generally posed in profile. The frontal face is seen in other media as for example a sealing from Zakro (see cat. no. ZKb08), the Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus (cat. no. ATb02) and the “violent” Vapheio Cup (cat. no. VAb01). This depiction likely carries a representation of death or danger either for the bull, as in the case of the Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus, or perhaps for the leapers, as in the other instances.¹³⁷ The bull-leapers display one curious feature not otherwise known from Aegean scenes: the scalps of the leapers and acrobats are blue. Thera provides examples of this convention and is the only site considered in this study that does, likely indicating that this is an older, pre-Mycenaean method of depiction.

In these cases (cat. nos. TH08, TH21 – TH23) the figures that bear the blue scalp with semi-shaven heads are all youths and can be either male or female. Furthermore, the one known instance where yellow skin is utilized in Aegean wall paintings is on the walls of Room 3b of Xeste 3 on Thera. This figure is a very young child and may indicate that yellow skin is a color convention indicating extreme youth. Applying these conventions

¹³⁶ Collon (1994, 81-2) does not speculate on the existence of such a scene and in fact never mentions the Alalakh-Aegean connection; however, based on her descriptions and figures of Aleppo seals, this idea seems plausible. It is also possible that the motif transferred in the other direction, from seals to frescoes, although this concept will not be dealt with here. It is sufficient that the motif appears at Aleppo and in an Aegean style.

¹³⁷ Morgan 1995, 43.

for young age groups to the paintings at Avaris, it would appear that the leapers are young, and in the case of the acrobat in AV02, very young. This does not necessarily make sense in context, as children can hardly be expected to have the physical strength to vault over a charging bull; however, it does explain the emphasis on danger, especially considering that the yellow-skinned leaper has a low, unstable grip on the bull and another leaper in AV19 has fallen beneath the bull. Since palm trees, present just to the left of the leaping scene with the bull grapplers, may also carry the connotation of death or sacrifice, the scene becomes one of uncertainty and danger.¹³⁸

Bull grappling or taunting can be seen alongside the bull-leaping scene in AV11 and, as all other depictions of bull sports at Avaris, has parallels with Aegean wall paintings. Knossos produces a stucco relief (cat. no. KN16) of a bull's horn being held by a man's arm in a scene that can be reconstructed as depicting a human figure wrestling a bull to the ground. If the reconstructions are correct, then the parallel between the two fragments is obvious. Why a depiction of two men holding a beleaguered bull to the ground would be desirable for the palatial setting at Avaris is unknown. Considering the Aegean heritage and the apparent cultic association of bulls it could emphasize sacrifice, superiority over creation or the cosmos or some similarly religious or authoritarian message.¹³⁹ Whatever its meaning, the Avaris scene's close parallels in the Aegean world, Knossos in particular, and lack of local artistic connection underscores its Minoan

¹³⁸ Ibid. The connection between palm trees and death may also be seen on the Ayia Triadha sarcophagus where the supposed deceased individual is standing next to a palm. Whereas scenes of death would not be unfamiliar to an Egyptian audience, the focus on uncertainty is an unusual choice for palatial decoration and could indicate that the patron and/or artists were unfamiliar with the exact meaning of the foreign motifs.

¹³⁹ Galán (1994, 94) states that the *k3* bull was well established by the beginning of the 18th Dynasty as an emblem of strength. The idea of bull-fighting in Egypt began as a simple way for farmers to choose the strongest bull for mating, but evolved into a royal symbol of military might. Kamose, the father of Ahmose, the first king of the 18th Dynasty, was especially associated with this image of the king as champion. In this light the Aegean motifs could have doubled to fit Egyptian sensibilities.

influence. That the leapers display blue scalps may indicate a specifically Thera or Cycladic connection, although again this idea remains to be proven and without better knowledge of Bronze Age Aegean regional styles could prove misleading.¹⁴⁰

Other Human Figures

Human figures can be identified with certainty only at Avaris. Fragments from Tel Kabri may indicate the presence of at least one human male through the inclusion of a possible red arm set against a masonry backdrop (TK18) on the miniature frieze. If true then this provides another link to the West House miniature fresco (see cat. no. TH10) where human figures are seen along the top of walls and through window openings. Avaris, however, displays clearly human forms, as for example the man shown hunting (AV14), whose parallels have already been discussed in *Animals*, or the figures running (AV25) or standing in front of a building (AV04). In the last two cases the figures are nondescript allowing only general parallels based on skin color and the general form of the face. In this, however, there are telling features; bearing a long straight nose and high round eyes not typical of Egyptian self-portrayals, the figures look more like individuals in Aegean frescoes or Egyptian depictions of Aegeans as seen in the tombs of Rekhmire and Menkheperaseneb.¹⁴¹ The supposed priest in front of a building is identified as such by the long robe he wears, which appears on priests in the Aegean (cat. no. KNb09).¹⁴² Figures in long robes can also be seen in the miniature West House fresco from Thera

¹⁴⁰ Whether a uniquely Cycladic style of fresco painting existed or not is another sensitive issue that will be sidestepped here. The question remains: are the Cycladic blue scalps the result of different conventions from Crete or of chance preservation? Without more contemporary paintings, this will remain unanswered.

¹⁴¹ See Davies (1943, pls. 16-23) and Davies (1933, pls. 4, 5) for depictions of Minoans or *Keftiu* in the tombs of Rekhmire and Menkheperaseneb respectively.

¹⁴² Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 55-56.

(see cat. nos. TH10, TH16), but their social positions are unclear and so only general parallels are possible.

Palace G yields evidence for what were most likely women (AV31) flanking the entrance to the palace. The sole published fragment depicts only an ankle and anklet below the hem of a dress and the colors are very badly faded hindering detailed comparison. However, the fabric of the dress could be Minoan as seen in frescoes from Ayia Triadha (see cat. no. AT02) and Thera (see cat. nos. TH07, TH08, TH23, TH24). A key feature of this Avaris representation is the anklet, which appears as a central band of light color outlined in black flanked by two rows of blue beads. This resembles the typical portrayal of bracelets, armbands and anklets found on Thera (see cat. nos. TH 07, TH08, TH23), where the typical band appears as a central line of color, either blue or red, flanked by two rows of black beads. The Boxing Boys (see cat. no. TH22) wear simply strung blue beads. The formal similarity of such a minor detail as jewelry indicates that the Avaris figure is adorned in the same cultural style as the figures from Thera. It is doubtful that this suggests a special connection between Thera and Avaris although based on other conventions this possibility should not be ruled out. The Aegean figures in the tombs of Rekhmire and Menkheperaseneb show that Egyptian artists occasionally paid attention to minor details of foreign peoples. However, these tombs also display a great deal of hybridization whereby aspects of different foreign peoples were combined into conglomerate types.¹⁴³ If more of the scene were preserved additional observations might be possible but at present only general parallels can again be drawn.

¹⁴³ Wachsmann (1987, 4-12) discusses this artistic phenomenon in the 18th Dynasty tombs at Thebes. Unfortunately, not enough of the Avaris woman remains to determine if the figure was hybridized, indicating Egyptian artistry, or not, indicating a non-Egyptian artistic style.

The only human figure that is not easily countered in Aegean wall painting is the life-size bearded man from Palace F (AV26). His beard identifies him as a priest, as Bietak himself observed early in the analysis of the fragments.¹⁴⁴ This style of portrayal in the Aegean is primarily limited to priests on sealings and so the figure can tentatively be identified as such. It is important to remember that most of these human portrayals are without uniquely identifiable features and, with the possible exception of the female figure from Palace G, the parallels made with the Aegean are made because Aegean parallels are already expected. Similar forms of dress can be seen on Syrians and Hittites in the previously mentioned tombs of Rekhmire and Menkheperaseneb and so caution should be exercised before attempting to read connections into the fragments that the often poor states of preservation may or may not allow.

Stucco Reliefs

Stucco Reliefs appear only at Avaris but surface there from Palaces F and G. Bulls appear in both locations in both half-scale (AV27) and at least near life-size (AV33). In these comparisons can be drawn to Knossos, and only Knossos,¹⁴⁵ where bull reliefs appear at the north entrance to the palace (cat. no. KN17) and even miniature non-relief frescoes (cat. no. KN18). The scenes in all cases are not clear from the fragmentary record that remains. Some reliefs from Knossos (see cat. no. KN16) clearly depict action scenes with humans and bulls interacting and it is clear that full animals were once portrayed by the presence of stuccoed bull feet;¹⁴⁶ however, too little now remains to

¹⁴⁴ Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 55-7.

¹⁴⁵ Stucco reliefs of male figures and animals do not appear outside of MM III – LM I/II Knossos. See Shaw 1995, 98-100; see also Immerwahr 1990, 40.

¹⁴⁶ Evans 1921, 376, fig. 273.

generalize the subject matter. AV33 from Palace G displays a yellow horn, which as mentioned in Chapter 2 may represent the gilded horns of a sacrificial animal as seen on the bull on the Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus (see cat. no. ATb02). The different color of the horns from those animals in the bull-leaping and wrestling scenes indicates that this bull was part of a different type of scene.

Humans are present in both cases and it is tempting to reconstruct the scenes as depicting bull sports; however, the golden horn at Palace G and the scale difference at Palace F discourage this interpretation. AV28 and AV32 both display life-size, or near life-size, appendages; AV28 represents a leg and boot and AV32 depicts what is thought to be a forearm. Both of these find parallels at Knossos in a relief of a white skinned lower leg and anklet (cat. no. KN19) and in the Lily Prince fresco (see cat. no. KN11). The red background and white skin visible on AV32 link strongly with the Lily Prince and opens the figure to the debate over skin color conventions in Minoan art, which will not be dealt with here. It is sufficient that a parallel exists and in close proximity to the gold horned bull relief, possibly strengthening the idea of a religious scene. Whereas the life-size AV28 cannot be a bull-leaper in the same scene as the smaller scale bull relief, it is important that the bull sport reliefs from the north entrance to Knossos likely flanked the entrance way.¹⁴⁷ If the entrance was the original location of at least one of these reliefs from Avaris, then considering the bull-leaping imagery already seen on the ramp leading to the main entrance of Palace F, it is reasonable to assume that these reliefs are the remnants of decorations similar to those found at Knossos.

¹⁴⁷ Evans 1930, 176-7.

Technique and Composition

Based on all of these motifs, a strong case can be made for the iconography of the wall and floor frescoes at Avaris, Tel Kabri and Alalakh to be called Aegean. The iconography, however, tells nothing about the people who made the frescoes, since anyone versed in the style could to some degree replicate the scenes. What is more difficult to replicate, or what few artists would likely have bothered to replicate, are Aegean techniques. An Egyptian artist ordered to paint an Aegean scene would most likely have painted with the familiar materials and preparations, only the product would look different. If the materials and preparations at the three eastern palace sites departed from local artistic traditions, they would indicate that the artists were not themselves native, but were imported for the job.

The wall paintings at Avaris are generally true frescoes utilizing lime plaster with some inclusions of quartz sand, ilmenite and dolomite for the coarser lower layers.¹⁴⁸ The pigments range in composition utilizing primarily natural organic materials such as black manganese for black and various shades of ochre mixed with hematite for shades from yellow to red; man-made Egyptian Blue also appears.¹⁴⁹ The pigments were applied in a mix of fresco and secco techniques as proven by the occasional occurrence of egg or casein adhesive and gum arabic mixed with the pigment layer. The Tel Kabri paintings were also constructed on lime plaster and can legitimately be called true frescoes due to the presence of calcium carbonate on the surface of the painting integrated with and above the pigments and the uneven line of demarcation between the pigment and the

¹⁴⁸ Seeber 2000, 94-9.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., table 2, 98-9.

unstained plaster.¹⁵⁰ The pigment compositions are similar to those at Avaris: charcoal creates black, blue is Egyptian Blue, and ochres in various shades create yellows to reds.¹⁵¹ One unique case exists where plaster on the floor of Hall 611 was mixed directly with yellow ochre and other elements to create a “yellow soil” that was applied to the floor without being painted. This method is without parallel in the Aegean, although mud plasters at Mari, to be discussed later, and Alalakh may come close.

The wall paintings at Alalakh were based on lime plaster, although some were mixed with earth to create a sort of gray plaster ground.¹⁵² The painting combined fresco and secco techniques where the ground appears to be fresco and the details secco. Woolley speculates this may have been due to the simple passage of time; however, Aegean examples tell a different story, as will be seen later. The lime plaster is not pure lime but mixed at the lower layers with inclusions of calcite, likely marble, and displays calcium carbonate, thereby proving at least the partial use of fresco technique.¹⁵³ The pigments are similar to what has already been seen whereby black is a carbonaceous silicate or an aluminum silicate containing carbon,¹⁵⁴ yellows to reds are ochres and blue is Egyptian blue. At all three sites white is simply plain unpainted calcium carbonate.

These patterns convey a unified picture of the painting traditions, or tradition, which created the scenes. This tradition bears strong similarities to what is found in the Aegean world. Lime plaster was not exclusive to the Aegean during the Middle and Late

¹⁵⁰ Kempinski 2002, 254-5. The uneven line of demarcation is not a universally accepted test for the fresco technique; see Perdikatsis et al. (2000, 116). In a true fresco, unslaked lime (calcium oxide) is mixed with water to become slaked lime (calcium hydroxide) and applied to the surface and painted. As the intonaco layer dries it chemically reacts with the air to become calcium carbonate and covers the surface of the painting in a process not only making it waterproof and more durable, but also chemically detectable.

¹⁵¹ Kempinski 2002, 287-8.

¹⁵² Woolley 1955, 228-9.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 233-4.

¹⁵⁴ Shale or carbonaceous slate.

Bronze Ages but pure lime plaster, unmixed with other ingredients except perhaps calcite, was characteristically Aegean.¹⁵⁵ The fine lime plaster was a mixture of slaked lime and calcite fragments, as seen at Alalakh, and sometimes a fine wash of plaster was added prior to painting in true fresco technique.¹⁵⁶ On Thera black was carbon based, reds, oranges and yellows were formed by different shades of ochre and blue was formed by Egyptian Blue, amphiboles or a mixture of both.¹⁵⁷ Generally these materials were locally available and easily acquired with the possible exception of blue amphiboles, which were likely traded from other Aegean islands such as Siphnos and Syros. The pigments were applied in a mixture of true fresco and secco techniques largely depending on color. Since the pigment particles were smaller for yellows, the color penetrated farther into the plaster and naturally was more durable. The larger particles that comprised the blue and black colors could not penetrate as far and so were often mixed with a binder to make them more permanent. Often this meant that the outlines would be painted in fresco technique and the details filled with the more easily controlled secco. These same compounds and combination of techniques can be seen throughout the Aegean at Knossos, Ayia Irini, Phylakopi and even LM IB/II Ialysos on Rhodes,¹⁵⁸ and match well with what is found at the three major eastern Mediterranean sites.

To fully appreciate the technical similarities that the paintings at Avaris, Tel Kabri and Alalakh share with the Aegean it is necessary to look at the local traditions in Egypt and the Near East. Egyptian plasters were gypsum based and were not painted in a

¹⁵⁵ Forbes (1965, 243) states that lime plaster does appear in Mesopotamia and lime kilns can be found dating back to 2500 BCE at Khafadje; however, this lime plaster was often mixed with ash. See also Niemeier and Niemeier (2000, 776) for Pre-Pottery Neolithic B period lime plaster in the Levant.

¹⁵⁶ Perdikatsis 2000, 105.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 112-5. Amphiboles are silicates in metamorphic rock.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 115-6.

true fresco technique until the New Kingdom; this at once establishes them as markedly different from the Aegean frescoes.¹⁵⁹ Egyptian pigments are more difficult to discuss because of changes that occurred from the beginning to the middle of the New Kingdom. Before the New Kingdom white was not pure calcium carbonate, but a mixture of calcium sulphates like gypsum and anhydrite; slaked lime was used much earlier in the 4th and 5th Dynasties.¹⁶⁰ During the New Kingdom huntite also became common as a white wash, as seen at Malkata.¹⁶¹ Ochre was used to create a range of color from yellow to red, although orpiment (As₂S₃) and realgar (As₄S₄) also appear during the New Kingdom.¹⁶² Black is soot based and therefore charcoal.¹⁶³ Egyptian Blue (CaCuSi₄O₁₀) was a popular type of blue pigment throughout all phases of Egyptian painting; however, during the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th Dynasties, copper glazes, green frit and cuproan wallastonite were also employed as synthetic blue pigments.¹⁶⁴

Generally the Egyptian pigments were similar to those used in the Aegean with the exception that synthetic or more exotic pigments could also be employed and white was often a fabricated color. The main difference is in the composition of the plaster itself; lime plaster and the fresco technique were not utilized in Egypt during the LM IA/B period when the frescoes at Avaris were created. Near Eastern pigments were largely the same as what can be found at Tel Kabri, Alalakh and the Aegean and the

¹⁵⁹ Shaw (1995, 105) states that the frescoes at Avaris were the first such frescoes in Egypt. See also Forbes 1965, 243.

¹⁶⁰ el Gorse 2000, 52-5. These dynasties date to the middle to late third millennium BCE.

¹⁶¹ Uda et al. 2000, 759; see also el Gorse 2000, 52.

¹⁶² It is important to note that Arsenic (As) appears nowhere in frescoes at Avaris, Tel Kabri or Alalakh. Ochre is used at Malkata (Uda et al. 2000, 759-60) and may have been the dominant red pigment of the time.

¹⁶³ el Gorse 2000, 55.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 57-62.

difference is again in the technique.¹⁶⁵ Near Eastern wall paintings could be either secco or fresco endeavors, more study needs to be conducted on Near Eastern wall paintings to determine the frequency of each.¹⁶⁶ Mud, lime and gypsum plasters were all employed by Near Eastern artists although not necessarily at the same time or in the same location.¹⁶⁷ From 2000 – 1000 BCE, the only locations where lime plaster can be identified are Alalakh (Levels VII and IV), Qatna and Boğazköy. It is telling that two of these sites also display Aegean motifs, or in the case of Qatna at least a motif originating in the Aegean. Mud plasters, the most commonly used plaster type, can likely be explained by the same lack of stone that prevented the widespread adoption of stone architecture, dados and orthostates. Mud plasters and lime-ash mixtures in Mesopotamia may relate to the rare practice of using “yellow earth” at Tel Kabri and gray earth mixed with lime plaster at Alalakh. This could indicate a mingling of local and imported practices.

A final note can be made of the procedure of painting the walls. At all three major eastern Mediterranean sites the use of straw as a backing or mixed in with the lower layers of plaster for support can be observed.¹⁶⁸ While this pattern is found in Egypt and the Near East,¹⁶⁹ it is not always present in the Aegean, where plaster surfaces could be applied directly to ashlar masonry. This could also indicate a mixing of local and foreign techniques in the construction of the wall paintings. String impressions in the

¹⁶⁵ Forbes 1965, 215-43. Two major differences were the Near Eastern use of malachite to create green and the use of glazes instead of paints.

¹⁶⁶ Nunn (1988, 5-13) discusses the use of fresco and secco techniques in Near Eastern wall paintings, but she does not state which was used more often. Parrot (1958, 58) states that fresco paintings do not appear at Mari. See also (Negbi 1994, 78) and Winter (2000, 750) for the popularity of secco technique in the Near East.

¹⁶⁷ Nunn 1988, 14-5, table 1.

¹⁶⁸ Seeber 2000, 94; see also Kempinski 2002, pl. 20; Woolley 1955, 228.

¹⁶⁹ Nunn (1988, 6) states that lime plaster and straw was used as an undercoating for gypsum plaster at Guran in Luristan; see also Forbes 1965, 246-7.

plaster at Alalakh on the floors at Tel Kabri have parallels in the Aegean as guide lines for the artists.¹⁷⁰ However, the technique also has parallels in Egypt where at least in the 18th Dynasty rock-cut tombs at Thebes, strings dipped in red paint were similarly used as guide lines.¹⁷¹ Because these tombs are cut into the poor quality limestone hillside, an approach unknown in earlier tomb designs, the plastering of the walls became a necessity where earlier tombs had been carved or paint had been applied directly to the walls or on a thin wash. Since it is unclear how far back the use of string lines can be traced in Egypt or the Aegean and because the Theban tombs are dated later than the Aegean wall paintings at Avaris, the origin of this practice is uncertain.¹⁷² Regardless, the Aegean character of the floor frescoes at Tel Kabri and the non-Levantine practice of string lines help make the case for Aegean or Aegeanizing production.

Conclusions

The iconography of the wall paintings from the three major sites of Avaris, Tel Kabri and Alalakh can be strongly linked with the Aegean. The bull-leaping scene at Avaris is strikingly Aegean through the maze background, flying gallop poses, the quatrefoil spots and the Minoan attired acrobats above a half-rosette border. Moreover, certain conventions such as the use of blue on bulls, rocks, and plants are without parallels in contemporary Egypt, but are often found in the Aegean.¹⁷³ The miniature fresco at Tel Kabri with its numerous, albeit fragmentary, parallels to the miniature fresco

¹⁷⁰ Nunn, 1988, 30; Kempinski 2002, 255. This technique is unnecessary for secco painting and further establishes the presence of fresco painting at the two sites; see Niemeier 1991, 195.

¹⁷¹ Forbes 1965, 246-7.

¹⁷² The Egyptian use of the string lines is likely tied to their use of canons of proportion, which are much older than the earliest New Palace Minoan wall or floor paintings. This could indicate that the practice originated in Egypt.

¹⁷³ Bietak 2000b, 196. These color conventions only appear in later Egyptian art.

from the West House on Thera, depictions of Aegean architecture and landscape and even similarities to the riverine scene from Avaris, itself with Aegean influence, reinforce the position. The fact that a miniature fresco was present at all is strong testimony since miniature frescoes are a uniquely Aegean art form.¹⁷⁴ Alalakh displays fewer parallels but the notch plume wings, if that is truly what is depicted, are a typically Aegean trait for griffins and sphinxes. At all sites, the non-figural elements such as imitation stone dados and orthostates with red “mortar” and the border motifs such as the rosettes, ladders and spirals are classically Aegean. Although these and the more complex figural elements may appear elsewhere in Egypt or the Near East, they likely originated in the Aegean. Whereas individually the isolated motifs could have come to the east from elsewhere, together the fragments depict thoroughly Aegean scenes.

The connections are strongest between the eastern sites and Knossos and Thera. The royal iconography of bull-leaping, the half-rosette borders, and large-scale griffins all point to a royal tie between Knossos and the Egyptian and Near Eastern palaces. Other more subtle motifs such as the blue scalps and yellow skin of youths, the scene of the miniature fresco at Tel Kabri and subject matter like the grasses from Alalakh that are only otherwise found only on Thera link the island specifically with the east. Whether this establishes a pattern of competition between Cretan and Cycladic artistic centers or simply represents the eastern preservation of once widespread Aegean conventions, now lost, remains to be seen and is beyond the scope of this examination. Based on the similarities between the plaster composition and the fresco painting technique found at the three major eastern sites and the Aegean, it seems logical to assume that Aegean craftsmen had a hand in the production of the frescoes; otherwise, one would expect a

¹⁷⁴ Shaw 1997, 485-6. The style ends with the LM IB appearance of the Mycenaean.

greater number of altered motifs and native inclusions. In order to demonstrate this hypothesis, three things must be established: first, that direct trade and contact, and thus travel, occurred between the Aegean and the east; second, that artists or workshops capable of travel existed in the Aegean; and third, that the social and political settings in Egypt and the Near East would have permitted the employment of Aegean artists.

Chapter 4

Contact and Trade between the Aegean and the East

If the frescoes at Tell el-Dab‘a, Tel Kabri and Alalakh are to be understood as Minoan productions and not simply Minoan-like or imitations, then it must be demonstrated that the Minoans or peoples of the larger Aegean in fact had direct contact with Egypt and the Levantine coast during the periods in question. A consideration of exchanged and imported iconography would aid in understanding the motifs found in the frescoes, but would not illuminate the full extent or method of contact and can only provide general dates at best. The best way to comprehend the nature of international interconnections is to examine the trading patterns of the eastern Mediterranean in the late Middle and early Late Bronze Ages, giving special attention to the regions under consideration. Archaeological evidence supports Aegean contact with the east, albeit not continuous or necessarily intensive, throughout the requisite period. This contact is not attested by one source only, but is also evidenced by Near Eastern texts and mythology, and Egyptian tomb paintings.

Egypt and the Aegean

Contact between Egypt and the Aegean is archaeologically confined primarily to the LM IB and the LM/LH III periods. No pottery in the Nile Valley originating from anywhere in the Aegean can be unambiguously dated to MM III – LM IA,¹⁷⁵ and only

¹⁷⁵ Betancourt 1997, 429; see also Kemp and Merrillees 1980, 226

two sherds can be dated to LM II at Marsa Matruh.¹⁷⁶ Hyksos trade seems to have been concerned almost exclusively with the southern Canaanite cities as borne out by neutron activation tests of traded vessels.¹⁷⁷ Only one object found in the Aegean, an alabaster lid from Knossos bearing the name of the Hyksos king Khyan, is of certain Hyksos manufacture.¹⁷⁸ In this light the controversial dating of the frescoes at Tell el-Dab‘a to the first half of the 18th Dynasty makes more sense. Tuthmose III was a prolific conqueror and campaigner and expanded contacts with northern Syria, Anatolia and Mesopotamia;¹⁷⁹ it should therefore come as no surprise that LM IB pottery and imitations appear at el-Lahun, Sidmant, Medinet el-Ghurab, Saqqara and Abydos.¹⁸⁰ Cartouches of late Tuthmoside kings, 11 of which bear the names of Amenhotep III or his wife, queen Tiye, have been found on objects throughout the Aegean.¹⁸¹ The picture is less clear on the islands and the mainland with a few Hyksos scarabs and elite imports such as ostrich eggs and ivory appearing in the MH III – LH I Shaft Graves at Mycenae, but little else.¹⁸²

During the LM II period, Egyptian kings appear to have been less concerned with maintaining contacts with the Aegean and as already stated the only objects dated securely to LM/LH II come from Marsa Matruh near the Libyan border. Contact resumed later with trade shifting to the LH III mainland and bypassing Crete almost

¹⁷⁶ Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 57; see also Negbi 1994, 89-90.

¹⁷⁷ See McGovern 2000, 70-4; McGovern and Harbottle 1997, 151-2. The pattern appears to be of a decrease in foreign trade following the MB IIB-C period except with the cities of southern Palestine such as Tell el-‘Ajjul and Ashkelon forsaking such northern Syrian ports as Byblos and Ugarit.

¹⁷⁸ Betancourt 1997, 429. It is important to note that whereas Evans dated the object to MM III, it was stored with other artifacts later dated to LM IIIA:1, possibly indicating a very late transmission of the vessel.

¹⁷⁹ Cline 1994, 33.

¹⁸⁰ Kemp and Merrillees 1980, 227; see also Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 57.

¹⁸¹ Negbi 1994, 95.

¹⁸² Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 63-4; see also Betancourt 1997, 429.

altogether.¹⁸³ Kommos on the southern shore of Crete closest to Egypt is unique on the island in possessing numerous Egyptian storage jars in LM III levels. Late Minoan/Late Helladic III pottery is rare in Egypt, although Egyptian alabastra and faience begin appearing at the mainland centers of the Peloponnese and Attica. This imbalance in traded goods raises the question of what the Aegeans were exchanging for the Egyptian imports. Whereas no answer is readily forthcoming, it has been proposed that trade in perishable items such as textiles, olive oil, perfume, spices, hides, slaves, etc. must have flourished at this time.¹⁸⁴ Aegean designs appear on leather objects in Egyptian tomb paintings from the time of Hatshepsut and the meanders, linearized spirals and palmettes decorating the ceilings of Amenhotep III's palace of Malkata can be linked with Aegean textile patterns.¹⁸⁵ It is worth noting that the Keftiu appear in roughly 15 tombs from 18th Dynasty Thebes dating from the time of Hatshepsut to Amenhotep II.¹⁸⁶ In many of these scenes, emissaries are shown bearing fine metal and ceramic containers, for which no physical evidence now exists, and also textiles, foodstuffs and agrimi horns for use in bowyer's workshops.¹⁸⁷ Whereas these goods were surely shipped in some kind of

¹⁸³ Cline 1994, 36-7; see also Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 56.

¹⁸⁴ See Betancourt (1997, 429) among others. Textiles appear in gift lists in the Amarna Letters and in the tombs of Menkheperaseneb and Rekhmire; see Feldman 2006, 120.

¹⁸⁵ Barber 1991, 343, 345-7. Sherratt (1994, 239) suggests that the influence from textiles would explain the limited use of colors in wall paintings and the absence of a distinct pigment for the color green (see *Technique and Composition* in Chapter 3), as no dye for green is known from the time; see Barber 1991, 312-3.

¹⁸⁶ Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 57. "Keftiu" is a debated term that is generally accepted to indicate the Aegean; see Wachsmann (1987, 93-9) for a convincing argument as an identification with Crete and/or the Aegean, and Strange (1980, 113-4, 147) for a less convincing association with Cyprus. Whether the term is more specific in referring to the islands, the mainland or only Crete is a matter of debate.

¹⁸⁷ Barber (1991, 350-1) cites the presence of an Aegean low-whorl spindle at Medinet el-Ghurab and dyed wool at Kahun. Since contemporary Egyptian textiles were exclusively linen and there is no evidence that wool or even the proper breeds of sheep were known in Egypt at the time, it can be assumed that Aegean textiles were in demand in at least the Fayum between the 12th and 18th Dynasties. Weaving and dying indicate the presence of women and therefore also possibly an Aegean colony. It is interesting that the earliest decorated private tomb ceilings reflecting these designs also appear during the 12th Dynasty as in the tomb of the nomarch Hepzefa at Asyut; see Shaw 1970. See Wachsmann (1987, 12, 89-92) for evidence for the trade in agrimi horns largely based on Egyptian tomb paintings.

container it is possible that the paintings are a more accurate reflection of the true extent of trade at this time than the preserved and understood archaeological record indicates.¹⁸⁸

Two other pieces of evidence are worth considering here. A topographical list from the funerary temple of Amenhotep II at Kom el-Hetan lists 13 named locations in cartouches under the titles of *kftiw* and *tin3yw*.¹⁸⁹ These place names have been associated with cities in a circuit moving around Crete, the islands and the Mycenaean mainland and could therefore reflect an itinerary of a trading voyage or royal expedition undertaken by the Egyptian crown.¹⁹⁰ The fact that some of the cities listed on the itinerary are also those that produced objects with the names of his grandson Amenhotep III and his wife is telling. There is also the aspect of an apparent market for Minoan pottery in early 18th Dynasty Egypt. Many of the “Minoan” vessels found in Egypt possess visibly local fabrics and therefore indicate that there was a demand for Minoan Kamares vessels that exceeded the availability.¹⁹¹ If there was a demand for one Minoan elite good, it follows that a demand for others would have been likely. If this were the case then the appearance of Minoan frescoes in the palaces at Avaris would not have been as culturally isolated as it may at first seem. This is especially true in light of the possible connection between fresco painters and potters in the Minoan world, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁸⁸ Negbi 1994, 94.

¹⁸⁹ Wachsmann 1987, 95-9. *Tin3yw* may be understood as the Mycenaean mainland, although this is not certain.

¹⁹⁰ Negbi 1994, 95. Itineraries are known in Egypt from the time of Tuthmose III at Karnack, see Wachsmann (1987, 98).

¹⁹¹ Kemp and Merrillees 1980, x.

Syria-Palestine and the Aegean

When dealing with Syria-Palestine, it is important to remember that the region was never a single unity in the Bronze Age but was composed of a number of smaller, but powerful, cities such as Ugarit, Byblos and Tyre and the Canaanites in the south.¹⁹² Egypt extended its influence from the south and the Mitanni controlled farther inland until being replaced by the Hittites, who pressed in from the north, establishing a border near the cities of Qatna and Qadesh. In all cases, however, the conquerors appear to have allowed the major port cities to act with a degree of freedom and so trade continued normally through the successive conquests.

Generally evidence for early trade is rare or non-existent. No Early or Middle Helladic pottery exists in the Levant, although Ugarit in Syria possesses MM II and imitation MM III vessels.¹⁹³ Kamares ware pottery appears at Qatna, Byblos and Hazor, and LM I stone vessels have been found at Alalakh, Byblos, Amman, Ugarit, Hazor and Tell el-‘Ajjul with a similar distribution for LM II objects.¹⁹⁴ In the Aegean, Canaanite jars from Knossos, Zakro, Kommos and Pseira can be traced by chemical analysis to Ugarit and Akko in Syria and Yaffa in Palestine.¹⁹⁵ Late Minoan IA Thera displays three examples of Palestinian Tell el-Yahudiya vessels, a Round Shouldered Canaanite Jar and a gypsum vase possibly of Syro-Palestinian manufacture.¹⁹⁶ Trade at this time is primarily restricted to Crete and the Aegean, as the only evidence for Mycenaean contact during the LH I period is restricted to objects of dubious origin in the Shaft Graves at

¹⁹² Cline 1994, 48.

¹⁹³ Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 68-9, 80.

¹⁹⁴ Niemeier 1991, 196; see also Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 69-70.

¹⁹⁵ Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 68-9.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 74-5.

Mycenae such as ostrich egg shells and ivory, which could just as easily have originated in Egypt.

In stark contrast to this pattern, LB III trade shifts almost exclusively to the Mycenaean mainland.¹⁹⁷ Late Helladic III pottery made in the Peloponnese is widespread in the Levant but is especially prevalent at Ugarit, Byblos and Tell Abu Hawan and on the Mycenaean mainland LH III contexts preserve Syro-Palestinian jars, seals, ivory and faience.¹⁹⁸ A curious case is found at LH IIIB Thebes where a cache of eastern seals was uncovered during excavations in 1963.¹⁹⁹ Being of Third Old Dynasty, Old Babylonian, Mitannian, Hittite, Kassite and Cypriot manufacture, the seals have an effective original date ranging between 2500 – 1300 BCE. While the seals were almost certainly part of a single hoard, and therefore reflective more of a royal gift than of trade, they are still firm evidence of the extent and level of contact between the Aegean and the east during the Late Bronze Age.

As with Egypt there is a difference between what is seen in the archaeological record and what can be found in written documents from the period. The archives from Ugarit preserve a fragment from the king exempting the wealthy private merchant Sinaranu from taxes on his goods stating “his [grain], his beer, his [olive] oil to the palace he shall not deliver. His ship is exempt when it arrives from Crete.”²⁰⁰ It is hard to imagine a Near Eastern merchant trading for Aegean beer but the other two items can easily be understood as being Cretan in origin and may reflect the elusive trade in perishable goods already proposed for Minoan commerce. Mari documents also record

¹⁹⁷ Cline 1994, 49.

¹⁹⁸ Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 75, 80.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 76.

²⁰⁰ Cline 1994, 49.

Cretan merchants, with the king granting “1 + x/3 minae of tin to the Caphtorian, 1/3 minae of tin to the interpreter [of the] chief merchant of the Caphtorians in Ugarit.”²⁰¹

Not only does this indicate trade between Mari, Ugarit and the Aegean, but it suggests that such contact in Ugarit at least was not unusual since a chief merchant in a foreign city with his own interpreter suggests an intensive and fairly regular level of commerce.

Other Mari documents can be partially matched with archaeological findings where they refer to metal vessels (*katappum kaptaru*) and weapons with gold and lapis lazuli inlay (*kakkum kaptaru*).²⁰² Two such metal bowls have been discovered at Byblos and it is tempting to make a connection between the inlaid weapons, here presented by king Zimri-Lim of Mari to other Mesopotamian kings, and the type found in the Shaft Graves at Mycenae, themselves of plausible Minoan manufacture.²⁰³ Such a demand for Aegean-made objects is reflected in the mythology of the region as attested by tablets uncovered at Ugarit telling the story of the god of handicrafts, Kothar-wa-Khasis, who was seated at *kptr*.²⁰⁴ When Baal wished to build a palace he brought Kothar-wa-Khasis from *kptr* to furnish his surroundings in the most beautiful manner possible. That a

²⁰¹ Ibid., 49. Caphtor, Kaptara or *kptr* is generally understood to reflect the Aegean in the same manner as *kftiw*.

²⁰² Niemeier 1991, 195-6. Note that the root *kptr* is used to distinguish origin.

²⁰³ Extreme caution should be exercised here, as over 200 years separate Mari and the Shaft Graves at Mycenae. If a Minoan connection can be assumed for the technique of metal working found in the Shaft Grave weapons, then the craftsmanship can be linked to the earlier periods more suitable for Mari. Vermeule, quoted in Bloedow (1997, 440, footnote 6) states that “there is almost nothing in the religious sphere of Shaft Grave art which is not Minoan.” See also Davis (1974) for an account of Minoan influence on the Vapheio Cups and Immerwahr (1990, 163-4) for a discussion of Minoan influence on Mycenaean painting. It is perhaps more significant that *kptr* is the identified point of origin.

²⁰⁴ Gibson 1977, 8-14, 46-67. The section of the myth introducing Kothar-wa-Khasis (3F col. vi lines 13-6) describes a messenger god being sent “towards all broad Memphis, [towards] *kptr* the throne on which he sits, Memphis the land of his heritage.” In this the god may be associated with the Egyptian god of craftsmen, Ptah, whose throne was at Memphis. This could reflect a combination of influences with the place name *kptr* coming from a lasting memory of imported fine wares and the association with the god Ptah being the result of Egyptian conquest of Ugarit during the early 18th Dynasty. The fact that the same root is used for the place name *kptr* and the place of manufacture *kaptaru* discussed above should not be ignored simply because of the reference to Memphis.

“foreign artist” was imported to decorate Baal’s Near Eastern palace is telling, especially in light of textual patterns established in texts to be discussed in the next chapter.

However, here it suffices that the myth, which plausibly dates back into the Middle Bronze Age,²⁰⁵ attests to contact between the Aegean and the Near Eastern coast at the proper time. Based on the location of Ugarit and Mari in northern Syria and Mesopotamia it is only to be expected that Alalakh would have been in some level of contact with Minoan trade goods and possibly the merchants themselves. Tel Kabri remains a mystery, however, due to the lack of MM II/ III finds in the Levant.

Cyprus, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia and the Aegean

Since the three major palace sites of Avaris, Tel Kabri and Alalakh are not located in these areas it is not necessary to discuss here in detail the nature of this trade.

However, because Mari, Qatna and Ebla are both located in Mesopotamia and because later Hittite documents (see Chapter 5) attest to some level of royal contact between the Aegean and the east, it is worth briefly looking at the trade between these regions.

No Minoan pottery exists in either Mesopotamia or the lands of the Mitanni with the possible exception of a few sherds of LH III pottery from Babylonia.²⁰⁶ Apart from the Mesopotamian seals from Mycenaean Thebes and the references in the Mari documents mentioned above there is precious little evidence for contact of any kind between Mesopotamia and the Aegean during the Middle or Late Bronze Age. Based on this, the Minoanizing motifs at the three minor sites should not be taken as evidence for

²⁰⁵ Niemeier 1991, 199.

²⁰⁶ Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 68-9, 80.

direct contact with the Aegean; instead, passive transmission should be assumed, perhaps via textiles that would have left no discernable archaeological record.

Considering its proximity, Asia Minor likewise presents a curious lack of evidence for connection with the Aegean, especially between the Early Minoan period on Crete and the LH III period.²⁰⁷ Hittite seals have been found at Phaistos and Knossos on Crete as well as Thebes, Mycenae, Perati, Ialysos, Thermi and Paleokastro in Laconia.²⁰⁸ Small statuary appears at Ayia Triadha and Tylissos, a possible bronze female figure of unknown origin comes from Iraklion and bronze weapons can be found throughout the Dodecanese and the Cyclades.²⁰⁹ White obsidian knives and a rhyton from Platanos and Tylissos attest to a certain level of contact, since the only known contemporary source of the material was located in southern Asia Minor. Miletus appears to have been a Minoan colony from MM III – LM/LH II and MM II Kamares Ware pottery and other LM I – II types appear at Iasos in Caria, Didyma and Urla Iskelesi (Clazomenai).²¹⁰ Late Bronze I – III cemeteries at Kos and Troy possess Minoan trade goods and Kos even appears to have been an export center for Minoanizing or imitation Minoan wares.²¹¹ It is not clear, however, if these centers had any larger influence beyond their immediate regions.

LH III wares appear sporadically in the north of western Asia Minor and along the coast from Miletus, although made of local clay, to Cilicia and inland as far as Smyrna, but does not penetrate into Anatolia except at Mashat and Beycesultan. Whereas this may seem to be a fairly respectable distribution, when considering that the corpus of artifacts just mentioned consists primarily of scattered fragments and imitation pottery it

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 96-7, 102

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 101. Only the cache at Thebes provides numerous examples from any one site.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 97, 101.

²¹⁰ For Miletus see Niemeier 2005, 3-8; see also Lambrou-Phillipson (1990, 97) for other sites.

²¹¹ Niemeier 2005, 5; see also Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 101-2.

is difficult to discern the difference between direct trade, as seems to have been the case in Syria-Palestine and Egypt, and indirect passive contact. The only evidence for direct commerce comes from a Hittite document from king Tudhaliya IV to his vassal Šaušgamuwa of Amurru stating that ships from the Ahhiyawa were to be prevented from trading with the Assyrians.²¹²

Cyprus provides the best evidence for commerce most likely due to its strategic location as intermediary between the west and the eastern ports of southern Anatolia, the Levant and Mesopotamia beyond. Cypriot wares appear at MM III Kommos, Zakro and Mallia and Late Cypriot I pottery has been found at Gournia and Knossos.²¹³ Cypriot seals appear at Knossos, Katsambas and Palaikastro and of course imported copper and Cypriot Milkbowls, the most popular ceramic import behind Canaanite Jars, can be found across Crete.²¹⁴ On Cyprus early MM IB/ IIA Kamares pottery appears at Karmi and Kourion and an MM III seal comes from Ayia Paraskevi.²¹⁵ Late Minoan I – II pottery can be found across Cyprus at Toumba tou Skourou, Maroni, Enkomi, Ayia Irini, Hala Sultan Tekke, Kouklia and others and LH III wares appear in enormous quantities all over the island.²¹⁶ Late Cypriot seals also appear at the major LH III Mycenaean centers on the mainland. For the purposes of this discussion it is not necessary to go into greater detail; it suffices that the above examples prove that Aegean contact with the east was in

²¹² Beckman 1999, 103-7. Ahhiyawa can be understood to represent the Mycenaean mainland; a generally accepted though by no means certain attribution. It should be noted that this is a very late document and aside from establishing a pattern of commerce should be taken carefully when applied to earlier periods. The Uluburun wreck is also a good indicator of commerce, but without additional examples and without knowing the precise destination or origin of the vessel it is difficult to make statements about the specific course of trade.

²¹³ Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 86.

²¹⁴ Cline 1994, 60; see also Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 86.

²¹⁵ Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 87.

²¹⁶ Cline 1994, 60-1. Pre-Late Cypriot III trade seems to have been focused on Crete whereas Late Cypriot III commerce shifted almost entirely to the Mycenaean mainland. See also Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 87, 90-2.

effect throughout both the time when the frescoes at Avaris, Tel Kabri and Alalakh were being constructed and the later documents were being written that will be crucial to the discussion in Chapter 5.

The Nature of Commerce

Trade is not the only factor in determining the intercultural transmission of artistic motifs. However, a detailed examination of other modes of transmission is not necessary to explore in detail here. It is worth pointing out that artistic motifs can be transmitted through ordinary trade and passive contact as explored by scholars such as Collon, Sherratt and Winter.²¹⁷ In the cases of Mari and Qatna this method is likely the phenomenon represented. However, in the cases of the three major sites the combination of motifs and complexity of the scenes, especially at Avaris, makes the possibility of exclusively passive transmission unlikely. For bull-leaping and grappling scenes to appear in close conjunction with stucco reliefs and miniature frescoes and all be transmitted wholesale along with lime plaster techniques, some form of more direct contact must be sought than has previously been maintained.

The general consensus is that Bronze Age trade took the form of what can be called either “direct commercial,” whereby relatively rare official or semi-official expeditions traveled to specific ports for specific purposes, or “tramping,” where private merchants more commonly hopped from port to port selling their wares as they went.²¹⁸

²¹⁷ Collon 2005, 51; Sherratt 1994, 239; Winter 2000, 746, 754-6.

²¹⁸ Cline 1994, 86-8. He states that Renfrew’s “down the line” model in which goods were passed from port to port indiscriminately cannot be accurate. Warren (1991, 298-9) notes a very large number of Egyptian alabaster vessels at Knossos and argues reasonably that such a concentration of nearly identical vessels is unlikely to have been a gift, but is rather evidence for continuous trade. It is unclear how such concentrations of Egyptian items could appear in the Aegean if all trade goods had to first pass through every port around the eastern Mediterranean.

Trade was conducted by a combination of these independent or semi-independent merchants of a class known in the Near East as the *tamkar* and royal diplomatic missions.²¹⁹ In both of these the merchants traveled in a large counterclockwise circle around the eastern Mediterranean north from Egypt, up the Levantine coast, west along the southern coast of Anatolia to the Aegean before turning south to Egypt.²²⁰ The Uluburun wreck is the most famous piece of evidence for this route, although wind and sea current patterns in the summer months also support this conclusion. Due to the prevalence of unpredictable storms in the winter months, it is logical to assume that the majority of trade would have been conducted during the summer months when northerly winds dominate.²²¹

This pattern would easily explain the phenomena of artistic transmission if the Aegean were located more centrally in this ring of commerce as are Cyprus or the Levantine cities; however, especially from the point of view of Egypt, the Aegean is instead located at the extreme western end of a very long line of trade that can only be reached by first dealing with nearly every other state known at the time. As previously stated, this is not the sort of direct pattern of contact that is conducive to the wholesale transmission of artistic traditions, as seen for example at Avaris. Lambrou-Phillipson's assertion that elite goods, which frescoes certainly are, could be transmitted primarily by "seasonal, opportune but random trading from port to port"²²² cannot account for the level of planning, time and cost required for the decorations seen at the major palace sites. Avenues for more direct contact must be sought.

²¹⁹ Cline 1994, 49.

²²⁰ Lambrou-Phillipson 1991, 12-13. She gives useful wind tables (tables 1-5) from Palaiochora, Ieropetra, Sitia, Irakleion and Chania.

²²¹ See the wind tables in Lambrou-Phillipson 1991.

²²² Lambrou-Phillipson 1991, 14-5.

If a direct bidirectional route between Egypt and the Aegean could be established, then the opportunity for the direct transmission of artists themselves would have strengthened support. Unfortunately, there is little direct evidence for this. One of the major arguments against this direct contact is the absence, with the exception of Marsa Matruh, of Bronze Age sites along the Libyan coast; such trading posts do not occur until the Archaic period.²²³ However, it is important to note that the winds in the Aegean do not permanently blow from the north. While southerly winds only predominate during the stormier winter months, southeast and westerly winds do occur in sufficient strength and regularity in the spring and fall, during April and October, to allow a brief window for travel.²²⁴ Watrous has noted southerly winds from Libya during the summer months and even cites some evidence for later Archaic or Classical sailing directly from Egypt to Crete.²²⁵ That Libyan sand is deposited in quantities on beaches in southern Crete is testament to the strength of these winds, which occur with the same force in April and October as during the stormier winter months.²²⁶ In the later Roman period Crete and Cyrene were combined into the administration of one proconsul attesting to the relationship between these two regions and Strabo describes the journey from Cyrenaea to Criumetopon on Crete as taking two days and nights; it is worth noting that his account begins in the south, not on Crete.²²⁷

²²³ Negbi 1994, 89. Marsa Matruh could have been a staging point for Canaanite merchants heading north and the presence of Minoan and Mycenaean pottery indicates ties with the Aegean. It is entirely possible that earlier Bronze Age sites once existed but have since disappeared as a result of changing sea elevations on the Libyan coast.

²²⁴ See again the wind tables in Lambrou-Phillipson 1991.

²²⁵ Cline 1994, 91-3.

²²⁶ Personal communication as to the existence of Libyan sand on Crete and confirmed by Dr. Watrous.

²²⁷ Kemp and Merrillees 1980, 268-9.

Of course such late evidence must be taken very cautiously and is only direct evidence of commerce and travel from the Archaic period on. However, Negbi states that provided that the ships used for travel during the Late Bronze Age possessed keels and properly rigged sails, they could have sailed in conditions without the wind blowing from directly aft and thereby made the voyage directly from some point in the south to Crete.²²⁸ This only makes sense as sailing between and around the numerous islands of the Aegean would be impossible without the ability to move at least partially against the wind. Travel between Cyprus and Egypt could be direct, as evidenced by the story of Amanmašša,²²⁹ and the Levantine cities surely traded directly with Egypt; why then not also the Aegean?²³⁰ Of course direct routes are not required for the frescoes to be explained, such a pattern would simply draw the Aegean closer into the Egyptian and Near Eastern sphere and clarify the cultural context for the transmission not merely of motifs, but of people.

Regardless, it is clear that the Aegean had contacts with Egypt and the Near East at the proper times to allow the frescoes to be understood not simply as Minoan-like, but as in fact Minoan. The Egyptian 18th Dynasty had the most intensive contacts with the Aegean during the Tuthmoside period, during which the Avaris frescoes occur. The area

²²⁸ Negbi 1994, 92-3. Marsa Matruh could have served as one of these points. The Uluburun wreck possessed a keel, and some Minoan seals depict ships with features at the base of the hull that could indicate the same. The ships in the Miniature Fresco from the West House on Thera possess upper and lower yards supporting a narrow sail that would have allowed the ships to sail at closer angles to the wind; see Roberts (1991, 57-8) who bases his conclusions partly on experimentation and Georgiou (1991, 66-7).

²²⁹ Amanmašša was staying with the Egyptian vassal-king of Byblos, Rib-Hadda, and was prevented by war from returning directly to Egypt via the coast. EA 114, written by Rib-Hadda to the Egyptian pharaoh, requests that the king “ask... Amanmašša if it was not <from> Alašiya that I sent him to you.” This confirms that direct travel between Cyprus and Egypt was possible regardless of prevailing wind and current patterns. See Wachsmann (1989, 101-2) and Moran (1992, 188-90) for this story. Wachsmann (1989, 102) and Winter (1993, 31) relate a similar story of Wenamun returning to Egypt from Byblos via Cyprus.

²³⁰ See Bachhuber (2006) for a recent view of the Uluburun wreck as representing an Aegean embassy departing from somewhere around Ugarit in northern Syria.

around Ugarit was a hub of commerce with the Aegean from the MM II period on, and based on the proximity of Ugarit to Alalakh and the legend of the Caphtorian god of handicrafts present in the area, it is not unreasonable to assume that Alalakh was acquainted with Aegeans and their arts at the time of the Level VII palace. Tel Kabri remains a slight problem as no archaeological evidence exists for Minoan contact with the Levant during the MB II – III periods. This phenomenon could be explained by the passive transmission of Aegean objects and second hand gift-exchanges between local rulers inciting interest in Aegean art. This pattern would explain why miniature frescoes and a painted plaster floor appear at Tel Kabri exclusively in and around what seems to have been a cult room in the palace while such scenes appear in public and administrative contexts at Avaris, Alalakh and the Aegean.²³¹ Having established relevant contact, it is now possible to consider the political implications for the Near East and Egypt, specifically the sociopolitical context by which the artisans would have been able to travel out of the Aegean to the eastern palaces.

²³¹ The different context at Tel Kabri could indicate that either the artists or the patron was unfamiliar with the native setting for such frescoes. Since the techniques and imagery are both exclusively Aegean in nature indicating an Aegean artist had a hand in the construction of the frescoes, it is more likely that it was a local individual in charge of the decorative program who confused the setting. Consider also the emphasis on danger and uncertainty in the bull sports scene at Avaris.

Chapter 5

Traveling Artisans and their Contexts

The motifs depicted on the walls of the palaces at the major palace sites of Avaris, Tel Kabri and Alalakh are Aegean in both nature and technique. The question therefore becomes how and why. The Cretan New Palace and mainland Shaft Grave periods display the greatest incidence of artistic transference between the larger Aegean world and Egypt and the Near East.²³² Conflicting chronologies notwithstanding, these periods in the east correspond with the appearance of the Aegean frescoes in the three major palace sites in the eastern Mediterranean. With this as an established base, the artistic transference from west to east can be analyzed for mode. Two options exist as primary methods of transference: passive transmission, whereby the motifs are passed via trade goods and no direct contact is required; and active transmission, in which case direct contact led to the transfer not only of finished goods, but of the artists themselves.

As already seen, there is some merit to the idea of passive transmission; trade and contact can be established between the Aegean, Egypt and at least Syria at the proper times to allow for such a transfer. The spirals at Mari (cat. nos. MR01, MR02) could easily have come from traded goods such as pottery and metal vessels, which are attested in written sources even if no archaeological evidence now exists. The idea of painting plaster to imitate stone orthostates is not a complex one and since stone was already used

²³² Crowley 1989, 195-6. This corresponds to MM/MH III – LM/LH IA in the Aegean, the Hyksos 15th Dynasty to the early to mid portion of the reign of Tuthmose III in Egypt, and MB IIB – LB IA in Syria-Palestine and the Levant. See Fitton 2002, 6-7; Warren 1990-1991, 35; Ward 1992, 63; Dever 1992, 3; Weinstein 1992, 29; consult also Manning 1999. See also Appendix VI.

sparingly for architectural decoration in the Near East at the time, it is only natural that an economical variation would appear sooner or later.²³³ Barber has shown that Aegean-like patterns on the ceilings of Egyptian tombs at 18th Dynasty Thebes are drawn from textiles and that other Aegean motifs could have been transmitted through textiles and leather, which were almost certainly traded.²³⁴ However, she admits that spirals would have been exceptionally difficult and time-consuming to create on a loom and bull heads such as those at Malkata and Alalakh (cat. no. AL02) would have been nearly impossible.²³⁵ There is always the possibility that textiles could have been embroidered, as was done in Syria, or painted to create the elaborate figural designs sometimes seen on Minoan figurines. However, it is not certain that these processes were practiced in the contemporary Aegean and it is unlikely that entire scenes such as what would originally have appeared in the miniature frescoes at Tel Kabri or the bull-leaping scene at Avaris would or could have been conveyed in this manner. Seals are another possibility, although elements such as color and fine details like jewelry, too minute to be displayed in microscopic form, are unlikely to have traveled through this medium.

Complex scenes, as they appear at Avaris and Tel Kabri, do not simply combine random foreign elements into a disjointed whole. Rather, the scenes are composed as logically and completely as they would have been had they been originally located in an

²³³ This practice does not need to rely on transmission at all; however, as Niemeier and Niemeier (2000, 773) pointed out, it is likely that the concept of imitating stone orthostates in plaster originated where actual stone orthostates were used. See my discussion of orthostates under *Non-Figural Motifs* in Chapter 3. Hult (1983) suggests that the earliest examples of this adornment occurred in the Aegean and so the idea of imitation orthostates passively transmitting to the east cannot be ruled out.

²³⁴ Barber 1991, 343, 345-7. Egyptian tomb paintings bear this out although such materials have long since disintegrated and so cannot be confirmed. Consider again the ceilings of the 12th Dynasty tomb of Hepzefa at Asyut; see Shaw 1970.

²³⁵ See Barber (1991, 320-2, 338-51) for a larger discussion of what she believes would have been physically possible to create within the boundaries of the technologies known to have been employed at the time.

Aegean palace. This complexity, properly arranged according to the exporting culture's conventions, therefore indicates that more than simply isolated motifs were transmitted, but instead ideas with specific cultural significance. For these more complex scenes another method of dissemination is required, and active transmission is the best solution.

As Wedde stated so effectively in reference to the adoption of foreign motifs, "the idea... is not tradable as such. A culture does not conduct shopping tours in the immediate or larger neighbourhood for captivating ideas."²³⁶ Of course foreign ideas are adopted, but in the absence of a "Versailles Effect" they are chosen not as a result of randomly viewed yet interesting patterns on traded goods, but for the symbolic effect of the scenes that convey them.²³⁷ An idea will never be adopted if it is completely alien; there must be some kernel of communally intelligible meaning to allow it to be grafted onto a local frame of understanding. Spirals and meanders are simple patterns and do not require an inherent meaning to be employed as decorative motifs. On the other hand, scenes of bull sports or a life-size griffin placed in a throne room are impossible to view without interpretation and so must have been chosen carefully and with purpose. Woolley wrote that "one cannot export a palace onboard of a ship," nor is the technique of fresco working a form of merchandise.²³⁸ The transference of these motifs, the proper combination of so many motifs into single scenes and the presence of the fresco technique itself must indicate that artists traveled in order to adorn the palace walls and floors of the three major palace sites. Whether Aegean artists traveled to the east or Near

²³⁶ Wedde 1997, 72, see also 73-4.

²³⁷ The "Versailles Effect" refers to the adoption of symbols of power or culture employed by a cultural center by outlying settlements or societies. The art and society of these outlying settlements then change to resemble those of the original center. This option cannot be considered here because apart from the examples at the three major palace sites, no large-scale artistic or cultural changes are observed in Egypt or the Near East following expanded contact with the Aegean.

²³⁸ Quoted in Niemeier 1991, 196.

Eastern artists traveled to be trained in the Aegean before being sent back is now the question at hand.²³⁹

The Nature of Aegean Workshops

If it is to be asserted that Aegean artists traveled, it must first be established that they could in fact do so within the bounds of both the Aegean and recipient societies. However, before doing this it is important to recognize two things in the consideration of this topic: first, that frescoes are inherently elite objects; and second, that very little is known about the organization of the Minoan elites and less about the elites of the larger Aegean. As previously stated, figural frescoes do not appear in the Aegean until the MM IIIA New Palace Period on Crete. Whatever the origin of the practice, the motifs that appear are of classically Minoan subjects derived from earlier glyptics and pottery.²⁴⁰ The artists themselves are relatively invisible in the archaeological record as no decipherable writing indicates specific scribes or painters as may be found in Egypt or the Near East. As a result, only vague assumptions may be made about their organization based on their art and what is currently known about the structures, associations and roles of artisans in the contemporary Near East and Egypt.

It is likely that the artists were organized into a sort of hierarchy, with a master at the top and pupils at the bottom. Shaw states that “the relative overall homogeneity that marks Aegean frescoes, coupled with the sharing of a thematic repertoire, imply rigorous

²³⁹ See Niemeier (1991, 196, 199) and Niemeier and Niemeier (2000, 765-7) for Aegean artists. See Shaw (1995, 94, 110-1) for the idea of non-Minoan artists or at least Minoan artists turned native.

²⁴⁰ Boulotis 2000, 845; see also Immerwahr 1990, 32-4, 39-40. It is important, however, to note the influence from Egypt; see Immerwahr 1990, 160.

and structured apprenticeship among the painters.”²⁴¹ This assertion fits well with patterns seen in the Near East and Egypt, in which apprenticeship took the form of hierarchical workshops localized around palace centers.²⁴² Logically this organization most easily accounts for not only the uniformity of the frescoes from region to region, with only minor regional differences, but also for the time-consuming and complex nature of the fresco medium itself.²⁴³ The medium is difficult to master and it cannot be assumed that the average person would be capable of decorating a palace or even a smaller residence without the direct supervision of one already experienced in the technique, here termed a “master.” Since attaining a master status in any profession takes years of training, it can be assumed that their number would be small. As to the pupils, it cannot be known how many apprentices a master would have had, and the number was almost certainly not standardized. Considering the preparatory work of assembling and preparing the pigments, plaster and equipment in addition to the actual work of painting it seems unlikely that even one experienced painter could have adorned an entire house or villa, let alone a palace, on his own. Whereas additional common workmen were probably added to the workforce for large jobs, in the interests of efficiency and quality control, more than one painter with some degree of training would likely have been employed in the task. Subsistence to a single supervisor is almost a necessity for large jobs such as these, and therefore a hierarchy can be established.

Boulotis states that this system of hierarchical workshops is attested from the LH IIIA period on;²⁴⁴ however, it cannot necessarily be assumed to have existed earlier

²⁴¹ Shaw 1997, 484.

²⁴² See Zaccagnini 1983, 245; see also Crowley 1989, 248-51.

²⁴³ Boulotis 2000, 851.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 851; see also Shaw 1997, 484; Bloedow 1997, 443.

during the Minoan period. Because of the cultural and societal differences between the Minoans and the Mycenaeans, it is dangerous to apply Late Helladic trends to theoretical Minoan organization. However, due to the Mycenaean adoption of older Minoan social conventions such as writing, palatial organization and the implementation of numerous artistic motifs associated with power, it is possible that the artists were organized along older preexisting lines. The appearance of Minoan manufactured objects in Late Helladic Mycenaean contexts may indicate not only the trade in such goods but the transfer of artists themselves to the mainland.²⁴⁵ The continuation and imitation of this artistic tradition for generations after the end of the old Minoan palatial centers is good evidence for the establishment of mainland workshops along the lines described above.

It is impossible to know if the workshops were associated with specific centers or not. Because of our incomplete knowledge of the Late Bronze Age Minoan political situation, it is unwise to attribute too much emphasis to Knossian models, as suggested by Boulotis.²⁴⁶ Certain regional artistic differences appearing on Crete and especially in the Cyclades and the Dodecanese during the Mycenaean period indicate that there were various artistic schools operating simultaneously in the Aegean.²⁴⁷ Major palatial centers like Knossos, Phaistos and Mallia would certainly have been able to support the regular employment of stable workshops and satellite centers such as Ayia Triadha would undoubtedly have used the same artisans as the nearby palaces. More distant centers and

²⁴⁵ Boulotis 2000, 849-50; see also Bloedow 1997, 443-4. The mechanism behind this is likely to have been patronage. With the collapse of the Minoan palaces, the Mycenaean counterparts stepped in to fill the role as patron. Whether this idea of artists being tied to the palaces is applicable or not remains to be seen, but the focus on the palaces for elite goods makes the connection seem likely.

²⁴⁶ Boulotis (2000, 849-50) writes of the sanctioning and protection of royal motifs by Knossian rulers giving rise to an even more rigid state of hierarchical organization centered at Knossos.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 853-4; see also Manning et al. 1994, 221. "School" should be taken loosely here and represents a master and his apprentice(s) and is not intended to make a statement about stylistic variation. Workshops should be included in this term, which is only employed for lack of a better word.

especially islands pose a different problem. Even though Thera displays numerous examples of fresco work, it is doubtful that such a small community would have been able to support a large full-time workshop. For this reason it is likely that workshops operated in spheres that serviced a larger regional area; in this, a degree of itinerancy can be traced.

Itinerant artists in the Aegean is not a new concept; the connection between Mycenaean goods and Minoan artists has long been discussed. Whether they were fully itinerant and independent or subject to the will of a palatial ruler and sent out for work as trade or objects of exchange is uncertain; the evidence could go both ways.²⁴⁸ Unlike Near Eastern and Egyptian sources, Linear B tablets do not refer in depth to large exchange transactions involving artists; however, from the available non-literary evidence it is clear that some level of travel was undertaken. The similarity between Hittite and Mycenaean fortifications, especially in regards to the diameter of the holes used in the anchoring armatures for the upper walls, indicates that there was some level of connection between Mycenaean and Hittite masons.²⁴⁹ George Bass asserts that there is evidence for the transport of raw clay over long distances, although admittedly this was an extraordinarily rare practice.²⁵⁰ It is unclear why raw clay, a ubiquitous natural resource, would be shipped abroad unless the potters accustomed to working with it were also transported.

²⁴⁸ Bloedow (1997, 445) prefers to see them as fully itinerant, at least when dealing with the Mycenaean. See also Negbi 1994, 87; Manning et al. 1994, 221. It is worth considering that schools or workshops require some level of infrastructure in order to function; palaces would provide this structure in a way that would be difficult to find otherwise.

²⁴⁹ Collon 2005, 51. Hittite masons were known widely for their skills and also traveled to Egypt or at least were requested to do so; see Zaccagnini 1983, 252.

²⁵⁰ Bass 1997, 153, note 1.

The transportation of pottery clay is interesting due to the connection between Aegean fresco motifs and both contemporary and earlier pottery styles. As already reviewed in Chapter 3, many of the motifs occurring in the eastern palaces find correlations in Kamares, Floral and other styles of Aegean pottery; it is even possible that figural wall painting developed from figural pottery designs.²⁵¹ These ties between painter and potter likely continued into the New Palace Period. When no frescoes were needed, the artists may have focused their attention on ceramics and small portable objects like offering tables.²⁵² The broader market for these objects would have provided a steadier source of employment, especially for regional workshops in the islands without palaces.

Recent work in Late Bronze Age Macedonia by Kiriatzi and by Broodbank in Kythera has produced evidence for two simultaneous pottery traditions in their respective regions: one local, and the other reflecting Mycenaean court styles.²⁵³ The tentative conclusion in both locations is that Mycenaean potters associated with one of the palaces were located in the regions and were actively producing pottery in the royal styles. The implication of an association between fresco painters and potters is that if potters could be migrant, and potters could work in frescoes, then fresco painters could be migrant. Again, it can be hazardous to take a Mycenaean period model and adopt it wholesale for the Minoans; however, if Minoan artists were involved in the formation of Mycenaean

²⁵¹ Immerwahr 1990, 6, 32-4; see also Boulotis 2000, 853.

²⁵² Boulotis 2000, 852-3. This should not be interpreted to negate the previous assertion that the lack of fresco work on individual islands can be interpreted as evidence for the itinerancy of the craftsmen. The high degree of skill evident in the frescoes indicates that while the artists may have bided their time painting smaller objects, the main focus of their attention was on wall and floor paintings. Still, a degree of overlap was present and certain artists may have transcended media.

²⁵³ Broodbank 2004, 60, 67.

art, there is no reason to assume that the structure of Minoan workshops would be radically different from the pattern established for the Mycenaeans.

Whatever the system of political organization the Minoan and larger New Palace period Aegean possessed, on Crete at least society was clearly organized around palace centers of greater or lesser significance, much as can be seen on the Mycenaean mainland. Since palaces are unknown on the mainland before contact with the Minoans, it is reasonable to assume that a similar system of organization existed in the Minoan world and was adapted to suit Mycenaean society.²⁵⁴ If this was the case then it is entirely reasonable to argue that Minoan or Aegean artists or workshops traveled, or at least were capable of traveling, if work required it. Regional variation in adopted styles suggests some basic degree of itinerancy both on Crete and the islands and so a foundation can be observed allowing fresco artisans to move around if need be. The question now becomes why an artist or workshop would have traveled abroad if the pattern of itinerancy and flexible employment was present in the Aegean.

Why Travel?

Bietak has suggested that the wall paintings adorning the palaces at Avaris were the result of a political marriage between the ruling houses of the 18th Dynasty in Egypt and the Minoans.²⁵⁵ This pattern fits well with what is seen in the period, whereby a

²⁵⁴ This is not to say that Minoan kings existed and reigned supreme over citadel-like palaces, as no evidence for this exists. It is more likely that the idea for centralized palatial organization arrived from Crete or the islands and was adapted to fit preexisting Mycenaean political structures. A similar process has been proposed as a method for the sudden appearance of palaces on Crete, whereby the influence came from Near Eastern models; see Fitton 2002, 64-5.

²⁵⁵ Bietak (1992, 28) first proposed a tie between the ruling families in the “Hyksos and Minoan worlds.” Even though this idea was developed while the frescoes were believed to be of a late Hyksos or early 18th Dynasty date, it was maintained in his recent work. A royal marriage with the 18th Dynasty

foreign princess is married into the royal family and brings with her valuable gifts and servants.²⁵⁶ One reason for this proposal was that the nascent 18th Dynasty theoretically lacked sufficient naval power to secure its coastline against the recently expelled Hyksos, who had retreated into Canaan, and so allied itself with the Minoan thalassocracy.²⁵⁷ There were two political marriages between the Theban 17th Dynasty and the Hyksos king Apophis, but after that there is no evidence that Egypt successfully participated in international marriage negotiations until the time of Tuthmose III.²⁵⁸ If Bietak's hypothesis is correct this would account for the frescoes, as the Tuthmoside date is roughly contemporary with the frescoes at Avaris and socially the Minoan princess may have wanted to bring a piece of her homeland with her when she traveled to a strange and foreign land.

There are, however, major problems with this idea and it cannot account for the other two major sites since frescoes appearing in a throne room and a religious area are of an inherently more political or religious nature than this domestic context would support. Ignoring for the moment the issue of whether or not the Aegean possessed a kingship that would have drawn the political attentions of Egypt, Bietak assumes that there was a thalassocracy capable of defending Egypt's borders and that its fame would have spread as far as the Nile Delta. More recent scholarship has questioned the older assumptions that the Minoan rulers possessed a formidable naval fleet capable of forcing the islands and beyond into submission. It is more likely that the islands experienced a "Versailles

(2000a, 39; 2005, 89) has been maintained in later works in which he dated the frescoes to the early Tuthmoside period.

²⁵⁶ Schulman 1979, 170-80; see also for example EA 25 and EA 31.

²⁵⁷ The Second Stele of Kamose describing the siege of Avaris by the Theban king clearly references the naval power of the 18th Dynasty and so seems to render this point moot. See Kempinski 2002, 274.

²⁵⁸ Schulman 1979, 181-2.

Effect” and adopted Minoan culture through trade and contact more than by sword-point.²⁵⁹ Moreover, without evidence for a strong centralized authority on Crete there is little conceivable way for such a naval power to accumulate. The best evidence for the existence of a thalassocracy comes from Classical sources, which must by their late date be questioned, and reflect decidedly Classical political drives.²⁶⁰

It is also worth noting that the theoretical Minoan princess (there were almost never princesses married into foreign royal lines²⁶¹) would simply have been one of many and it is unlikely that the Egyptian king would have forsaken his own artistic language and taken up a new vocabulary in his own palaces purely to please her. The adoption of foreign artistic motifs is nothing to be taken lightly and the local significance of such an execution is likely to reflect more than simply the king’s new wife, especially when he would certainly have another in a few years. The more probable cause lies in a political message desired by the king and espoused in the decorative scheme of the palaces. If artists made the journey from the Aegean to the Egyptian Delta and also to Palestine and Syria for political reasons then the dynamics of their transit change. The idea of freely itinerant artisans traveling out from work-deprived islands may explain this phenomenon; however, a complete answer cannot be found from an Aegean perspective. Because artists are for all practical purposes archaeologically invisible in the Aegean world, to understand their motivation to travel beyond their homelands we must examine the

²⁵⁹ van Effenterre and Effenterre 1991, 269-70; see also Negbi 1994, 83-4.

²⁶⁰ Baurain 1991, 266. He states “l’identification de Minos à l’impérialisme maritime athénien offrait une façon commode pour certains Athéniens critiques de *s’objectiver* [sic] et de parler d’eux-mêmes et de la politique suivie par leurs compatriotes en prenant un certain recul.”

²⁶¹ A roughly contemporary example of Ankhsumennu’s attempt to gain a Hyksos husband is worth noting, although so too is the tragic result.

political organizations and opportunities in the Near East and Egypt that would encourage or allow Aegean artists to find employment.

The Near Eastern and Egyptian Perspective

It is somewhat misleading to refer to “the palace” in the Near East and Egypt since the construct took various forms and performed numerous, and not always identical, functions across time and space. Mesopotamia, Mari included, provides the best evidence for the concept of the palace due to the texts preserved describing their day-to-day administration. However, it is unwise to indiscriminately adopt Mesopotamian conventions for Egyptian politics. The methods for representing power and authority are not unlimited and one must be careful to distinguish between actual similarities and valid intercultural connections while acknowledging the dangers of what Winter labels “spurious homologies.”²⁶² That said, general points can be extrapolated from Near Eastern palaces that provide a base for additional consideration.

If generalization can be conducted for the sake of simplicity, the palace in the Near East was not the seat of a king, but was the seat of a kingship and functioned to enforce the institutional nature of the palace as part of the larger state apparatus.²⁶³ As far as artists and specialized craftsmen in general were concerned, the palace was the center of their world; they were intimately tied to the palaces and were “a direct consequence of the process of surplus accumulation.”²⁶⁴ Art objects and their production

²⁶² Winter 1993, 38.

²⁶³ Ibid., 36, 38.

²⁶⁴ Zaccagnini 1983, 245-7. This is a plainly economic view of specialized craftsmen and Zaccagnini attributes it to a substantivistic school of economic anthropology. However, due to the treatment of these craftsmen as any other precious resource, as borne out in contemporary documents, it is fitting.

were controlled by the palaces and temples and did not exist without these infrastructures.²⁶⁵ In this sense the artists themselves were resources to be protected and controlled at the will of the ruler and should something happen to them great efforts were made to secure their safe return. From the third to the first millennium BCE, they were not slaves, but were instead free men and women working in lifetime posts in administrative centers; they were not entirely free though, and documents attest that runaways were often returned by force.²⁶⁶ In this view the artists and other specialized craftsmen were themselves crucial components of the palaces and the larger state apparatus mentioned above. Being attached, especially at sword-point, to the palace structures, there is little or no evidence for the sort of freelance itinerancy attributed by Negbi and Bloedow to Aegean artisans. This is not to say that this organization could not have occurred in the Aegean, simply that Near Eastern rulers, accustomed to thinking of such figures as palace-based resources, would have found the idea entirely alien.

The concept of the “palace” and its accompanying functions cannot be generalized too far, as substantial differences occurred from region to region. Artists were not tied as strongly to the palace economy in Egypt as evidenced by the prevalence of New Kingdom private tombs at Thebes, which honor the king but attribute patronage to private individuals. Whereas Mesopotamian texts use the Akkadian word *ekallu* to refer to local palaces,²⁶⁷ the Semitic word *bīt-hilāni* is used to denote Syrian palaces.²⁶⁸ This difference in title likely indicates that the function or form of the palaces was sufficiently different in Syria to require a distinction be made from the accustomed

²⁶⁵ Feldman 2006, 99-100.

²⁶⁶ Zaccagnini 1983, 247-8.

²⁶⁷ From the Sumerian *é.gal* meaning “great house;” see Winter 1993, 27.

²⁶⁸ Possibly from the Ugaritic/Hebrew *hln* meaning “window;” see Winter 1993, 34.

Mesopotamian type. The exact nature of this difference need not be elaborated here; although considering that much of the region where the *bīt-hilāni* type of palace existed was under the control of the larger Mitanni, Hittite or Egyptian states, it is possible that the emphasis of palatial decoration was also different from what existed in Mesopotamia. For this reason, it is worth considering that political or ideological differences contributed to the appearance of a foreign style of wall painting in Syria-Palestine, especially if the decorative motifs of the master state were unwanted.²⁶⁹

If freelance Aegean artisans were to travel to Egypt or the Near East, is it conceivable that they would be able to find royal patronage? It seems unlikely. Not only would it have been a long and uncertain journey to find employment in the east when so many islands and palaces existed closer to home, but significant cultural obstacles existed that would have limited the options of a freelance artisan. Artists in the Near East were attached to the palaces and did not, moreover could not, exist outside that infrastructure; it was simply culturally inconceivable.²⁷⁰ The artists may have changed hands or run away, but to find employment they had to be associated with palatial patronage from one source or another. Artists who were to some degree freelance could survive in Egypt due to the greater power of the wealthy nobility; however, even here, the royal decorative programs differ significantly from the private schemes and it seems likely that royal artisans would have been employed to represent the royal iconography.

An Aegean fresco painter landing in the east may have been able to find employment in private sectors but unless linked with a palace or a specific ruler it does not fit the eastern political pattern for a ruler to commission an unaffiliated artist, even if

²⁶⁹ This possibility will be considered later with ideas of art as symbolic control or order.

²⁷⁰ Zaccagnini (1983, 258) calls the idea of itinerant artists in the ancient Near East “a serious historical mistake.”

he desired foreign motifs. As contemporary documents attest, if such foreign objects were wanted, there were three main ways a ruler might set about acquiring them: he might obtain them through ordinary trade as discussed in Chapter 4; he might write to another king requesting either a specific object or the materials to make it himself; he might request a specialized craftsman be sent in person to create the object in the king's own setting.²⁷¹ The last two processes reflect a practice of royal gift-exchange that provides the best way of explaining the transmission of the Aegean artisans; however, because the process is a complex one, it requires an understanding of the nature of international politics in the ancient Near East and Egypt to fully appreciate the relevance.

International Politics and Gift-Exchange

It is important to remember that the Near Eastern and Egyptian kings of the Late Bronze Age were essentially god-kings.²⁷² In such a light the only proper kingdom from one king's point of view was the one over which he reigned.²⁷³ The king's duties were not simply administrative or social as in the modern understanding of royalty but included the religious realm as well. These seemingly obvious statements must be kept in mind if anything is to be made of the political discourse of the period. In essence, because of the king's divine nature or at least special connection with the divine, each king was perceived to rule over a "universal empire" that covered all lands known at the

²⁷¹ The Amarna Letters, Mari Documents, various Hittite treaties and documents from Ugarit are considered in this study, as well as research by Liverani (2001), Zaccagnini (1983) and Cline (1995). It is of course not possible to fully comprehend every possible action that an ancient ruler would have considered appropriate or possible. However, from these sources, these patterns are clear.

²⁷² This is not necessarily to imply that all kings were viewed as gods, as in the Egyptian understanding, but that the kings possessed a special link with the divine that was different from the priesthood and exclusive to the king. Thus the term here applies to all major civilizations of the Late Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean.

²⁷³ Liverani 2001, 25. Liverani's interpretations of actions and their political motivations tend heavily toward a commercial perspective; however, his ideas are still useful and well-crafted.

time. His duty was to keep the natural order of the world and prevent that order from being destroyed by the chaos that always threatened creation.²⁷⁴ The borders of this world were not as rigid and delineated as is now understood; rather, they fell under two classes that can be represented by the Egyptian words *t3š* and *drw*.²⁷⁵ *T3š* represented the actual boundaries of a kingdom, the ones within which the king could exercise direct control and which were flexible and dependent upon earthly political affairs. *Drw* on the other hand represented the mythical boundaries of the cosmos as a whole that were permanent and over which the king held symbolic control.

Because of the special connection with the divine that the kings possessed, all other kingdoms existed simply because they were allowed to do so.²⁷⁶ In this view, other kingdoms existed not because they were unconquerable, since this would reflect a failure in the powers of the god-king; instead, they existed to serve the king as vassals or as suppliers of royal goods through processes of trade and exchange. Essentially ownership was claimed over all, but practiced over relatively little. Tuthmose I claimed to have “made the boundaries of Egypt as far as that which the sun encircles” and Mesopotamian kings frequently referred to their lands as stretching from the “Upper Sea” to the “Lower Sea.”²⁷⁷ The real limits of their dominion likely differed significantly from this self-important and slightly arrogant world-view but this opinion is necessary to understand the diplomatic situation and the dialogues between rulers.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 91. These duties of the king are most often associated with Egypt but should be considered in reference to the contemporary Near Eastern kingdoms as well.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 29-30.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 32, 37.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 30. The Upper and Lower Seas represented the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf respectively and formed the edges of the great sea that encompassed the world in Mesopotamian understanding.

Since any region not subjected to the will of a king claiming dominion over all undermines the entire ideology, it is natural that the king would emphasize his power and consolidation through the acquisition and display of foreign goods.²⁷⁸ These foreign objects would serve to order the cosmos and reinforce symbolic control over the lands from which the goods were sent.²⁷⁹ This is especially the case if such control was only symbolic, as in the case of “gifts” exchanged between rival kingdoms like Egypt and the Hatti. Such symbolic objects would serve to support the idea that the king truly possessed a universal empire with borders of the *drw* type and whose sovereignty encompassed all of creation. This is most likely the role into which the Aegean fit in the minds of the eastern kings; rulers in the Aegean were never direct vassals, instead they were suppliers of royal goods for symbolic purposes to eastern sovereigns through trade and exchange.

Also relevant to this issue are the polar concepts of war and peace in the eastern Mediterranean. As previously stated the only proper state from any king’s perspective was the one over which he ruled; all others were considered natural enemies until proven friends.²⁸⁰ Foreign peoples were recognized as friends of the king through the highly ritualized practice of establishing treaties setting the two kingdoms into their respective places and ensuring that the cosmic order was maintained against the chaos of conflict.²⁸¹ This phenomenon can be seen in the numerous interactions between the major kingdoms of Egypt, Babylon, the Hatti and Assyria.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 32, 155-9.

²⁷⁹ Helms 1993, 158, 163, 214.

²⁸⁰ Liverani 2001, 123. Other states were natural enemies because in their simple existence they attempted to defy the power of the one true celestial king. This pattern is borne out through general readings of the Amarna Letters and other diplomatic texts from the Hatti and Mesopotamia.

²⁸¹ Liverani 2001, 126.

The Hittites, however, took this concern for order to another level by establishing such treaties with politically less well defined kingdoms such as can be seen in the treaties with the local chiefs of the Kashka tribes.²⁸² This need to establish order in the world, even with peoples lacking a formally defined kingship, can also be applied to the Aegean. It negates the need to find formal kingships in pre-Mycenaean Crete, the islands or the mainland. Whether such kingships existed in the Aegean or not is still a matter of debate; however, this evidence proposes that the Aegean perception was irrelevant for formal relations with the eastern Mediterranean to be established since in the east any treaty established with a nominal ruler could be considered at least symbolically binding. To an eastern ruler, all that had to exist in the Aegean was an individual who could appear to speak for the larger population; whether or not they wielded any actual power was irrelevant since this ordering of the world was largely symbolic anyway.

Once a treaty was established then the natural progression of relations between the two rulers was to engage in a more or less permanent cycle of royal gift-exchange. The treaties, which always took the form of alliances, were established between the kings themselves and not between the states or the peoples; this makes sense when considering that for all practical purposes, the king was the state.²⁸³ As such there was an obligation for the rulers of competing nations to maintain personal relationships with one another in order to ensure a more or less static order for the cosmos. These relations would take the form of marriages if sons or daughters were available or more often elite goods and precious raw materials. Gift-giving was not one-sided but obliged both sides to engage in

²⁸² Ibid., 126-7. EA 31 attests to the Egyptian attempt by Amenhotep III to gain a daughter and “men of the Kashka.” A royal marriage indicates formal recognition of the Kashka as a valid political entity.

²⁸³ Schulman 1979, 192-3. Two states could either be enemies or allies, there was no neutral position.

regular and continuous exchanges in order to maintain good standing and enhance both personal and national prestige.²⁸⁴ Failure to do so would result in outrage and often letters would be sent by the slighted king reminding the negligent ruler of his royal duties as illustrated in the letter sent by Kadašman-Enlil I of Babylon to Amenhotep III of Egypt asking why the Egyptian king refused a royal marriage request.²⁸⁵

The exchanges can also be viewed in an economic light by which the gifts would be requested and sent for specific purposes or to compensate for deficiencies in supply; however, such foreign materials could still serve a double purpose in emphasizing symbolic ownership. Contemporary communications make reference to gifts being sent for specific purposes as for example the request by Kadašman-Enlil I to Amenhotep III for gold for a new building project,²⁸⁶ or where Amenhotep III sends Kadašman-Enlil I furniture to adorn a new palace.²⁸⁷ Often such gifts would only be requested for a specific period of time with the understanding that if the gift was not received promptly it would no longer be needed since such a request for a material the king did not possess could be viewed as a failing in the universal power of that king.²⁸⁸ This complicated system served not only to bind the kings together and maintain good relations, but also to ensure solidarity and maintain the order of the world.²⁸⁹ In making peace, the king opened the options of trade and exchange and at the same time established the place of both parties in the cosmos. Peace meant formal recognition of both parties and carried

²⁸⁴ Cline 1995, 143-5; see also Liverani 2001, 147-8; Feldman 2006, 160-1. Such practices can still be seen in many parts of the world today, from the Yānomamö of Venezuela to the Trobriand islanders' Kula concept and the Maori *hau* system; see also Feldman 2006, 112-3.

²⁸⁵ Schulman 1979, 179; EA 4.

²⁸⁶ EA 4; see also Liverani 2001, 156-7.

²⁸⁷ EA 5; see also Moran 1992, 8-11. This message is in answer to EA 4 where Kadašman-Enlil I requests 3,000 talents of gold, nearly 100 tons, and offers his daughter if the gift is received in time. The furniture sent by Amenhotep III is nowhere near as expensive and is presumably a sort of consolation gift.

²⁸⁸ Liverani 2001, 155-6.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 126.

some connotation of equality. Once a treaty had been created the two kings became valid partners in contact and commerce and both kings were recognized as legitimate rulers in the eyes of the other; this then obliged both parties to engage in gift-exchange.

Specialized craftsmen could be included in these gifts; the Mari documents make mention of craftsmen being sent from the central palace to outlying vassals.

Metalworkers,²⁹⁰ leatherworkers,²⁹¹ carpenters²⁹² and masons²⁹³ appear in communications between rulers and vassals and are documented as being both requested and sent. Occasionally they are requested by name as in the cases of the Dani-El²⁹⁴ and the masons mentioned above, and care is taken in all situations to ensure that the craftsmen are employed properly. Mukannišum received orders from his “master” to “give [all the artists he earlier requested] strict orders so they might not be negligent in completing their work.”²⁹⁵ Sometimes vassals would be ordered by the king to send the craftsmen on their way when it became apparent that they were idle and other craftsmen can be found filling in for others when tasks go uncompleted.²⁹⁶

This pattern can be seen later into the Hittite period when Hattušili III of the Hatti requests a sculptor from Kadašman-Enlil II of Babylon for the purpose of placing images in family quarters.²⁹⁷ Hattušili III also states “[did I not send back the previous] sculptor,

²⁹⁰ ARM 13 16.

²⁹¹ ARM 13 44.

²⁹² ARM 13 40.

²⁹³ ARM 2 2; ARM 2 101.

²⁹⁴ ARM 18 30.

²⁹⁵ ARM 18 17, 7-15.

²⁹⁶ Šamši-Addu orders his vassal Iasmaḥ-Addu to send his mason to another palace since Iasmaḥ-Addu has completed his own palace, and Šamši-Addu sends the same vassal another craftsmen to take the place of a previous loan in ARM 2 2, and ARM 1 99 respectively.

²⁹⁷ Beckman 1999, 143. These sovereigns date the document to between 1300 and 1250 BCE and therefore is much later than any of the wall paintings at the major sites. However, because the process of exchange is similar to what was established above, the text verifies a pattern of political intercourse that based on earlier Near Eastern sources can relate to the earlier Minoan period and so can be applied to the discussion at hand

and did he not return to Kadašman-Turgu?” implying that the process of artisan exchange between the Hatti and Babylon was not an uncommon occurrence dating back at least to the time of Kadašman-Enlil II’s father. This care in micromanaging the employment of specialized craftsmen emphasizes their importance as both resources and status symbols for the king. Artists and craftsmen were a kind of “gift that keeps on giving” that by their very existence could make a ruler’s domain appear more important and powerful. When the concept of foreign art as symbolic control is introduced, the role of the artist takes on new importance.

The Amarna Letters do not mention artists traveling but do describe the exchanging of specialized professionals such as physicians and augurs.²⁹⁸ Niqm-Adda II of Ugarit requested a physician from Amenhotep IV,²⁹⁹ better known as Akhenaten, and an unidentified king of Alašiya asked the king of Egypt for an expert in vulture augury.³⁰⁰ Egyptian physicians were also requested by kings of the Hatti and Babylonia appears to have filled a similar role as supplier of physicians and augurs.³⁰¹ Nowhere in the Amarna documents are artists specifically mentioned as they are in the Near Eastern writings; however, art objects are described and requested.

Artistic gifts in specifically foreign styles can be seen in the negotiations between Amenhotep III for the daughter of Tušratta of the Mitanni, where Tušratta requests that a golden image of his daughter be made in Egypt and sent back to him in exchange for his

²⁹⁸ The Amarna Letters date from late in the reign of Amenhotep III and late in the reign of Amenhotep IV and perhaps later to the early years of the reign of Tutankhamen; see Moran 1992, xxxv, xxxiv. This places them by a typical low chronology dating roughly to the 1360s – 1330s BCE. and makes them significantly later than the wall paintings at Avaris and the Theban tomb paintings. In spite of this the documents again factor into the discussion at hand in the same way as the Hittite text above in establishing a fully developed pattern of political intercourse that can be assumed to have existed earlier.

²⁹⁹ EA 49.

³⁰⁰ EA 35. Alašiya is associated with Cyprus and vulture augury can be understood as eagle augury; see Moran 1992, 107-9.

³⁰¹ Zaccagnini 1983, 250-1; see also Cline 1995, 149-50; Beckman 1999, 138-43.

actual daughter sent in marriage.³⁰² Burra-Buriyaš of Babylon writes to Amenhotep IV asking that Egyptian carpenters create a wooden animal to be shipped back to him.³⁰³ These are not objects created in the International Style and exchanged as part of a larger gift-exchange program; instead, these items are asked for in detail and in a specific foreign style. Generally, documents place a great focus on the material, little on the motif or design, and almost none on the style or tradition of the objects.³⁰⁴ The objects themselves are usually small and easily transportable and in their iconography are culturally non-specific adopting generally understood concepts of power and sovereignty in non-narrative forms.³⁰⁵ Luxury objects made for the express purpose of being exchanged between kings lost individual cultural traits and acquired “culturally non-specific motifs... to express a restricted repertoire of themes or topics.”³⁰⁶ It was less important what the gift was than that a gift was made, and previously given objects were most highly valued.³⁰⁷ Therefore, when either such details are specifically requested, as in the above documents, or appear with specific cultural motifs in a large and nontransmissible scale, as in the cases of the wall and floor frescoes from three major sites, something special must be represented.

This pattern of gift-exchange is nowhere expressly applied to the Aegean in texts from Egypt, the Near East or Hittite Anatolia and it has yet to be proven that the Aegean participated in the same level of royal interaction as Near Eastern or Egyptian kings.³⁰⁸

³⁰² EA 24 and EA 25.

³⁰³ EA 10.

³⁰⁴ Feldman 2006, 105.

³⁰⁵ Feldman 2002, 24; 2006, 1-22.

³⁰⁶ Feldman 2002, 24.

³⁰⁷ Feldman 2006, 112-3; Cline 1995, 145.

³⁰⁸ Manning et al. 1994, 220-1. He states that “such an Aegeocentric approach is unwarranted on present evidence. We cannot therefore assume that diplomatic exchanges of the kind discussed by Zaccagnini (1983) took place.” Marinatos (1995, 45) on the other hand asserts that such alliances existed.

However, as already outlined, intensive trade or trade in elite goods indicates peaceful contact since enemies did not conduct commerce. Peaceful contact necessitated an alliance of some sort, since two states were either at war or at peace, and an alliance meant that two rulers engaged in a process of royal gift-exchange to fix their respective places in the cosmos and ensure both goodwill and access to royal resources. Since commerce is attested between the Aegean and the Near East and Egypt, and elite goods were included in this commerce, it is not unreasonable to assume that exchanges between rulers also took place.³⁰⁹

While direct evidence for this assertion is not immediately forthcoming or undisputed, evidence can be found. The alabaster lid from Knossos bearing the name of the Hyksos king Khyan may indicate contact at a level above that of the normal *tamkar* model. Due to the uncertain context of the lid it is unclear if this idea is correct or not. In the Aegean there is very little that can be used to identify royal exchange as opposed to commerce. Monkeys appearing in Aegean wall paintings may be an exception to this rule as they appear at such sites as Knossos and Thera and are not native to Crete, the Aegean islands or the mainland.³¹⁰ Since the animals are portrayed as either companions to the divine as in Xeste 3 on Thera (TH20) or depicted with cult objects like crocuses as at Knossos (KN05), the monkey carried a special significance in Minoan or Aegean ritual or political spheres.³¹¹ As a result, the monkey was not an animal associated with

³⁰⁹ The issue of finding rulers in the pre-Mycenaean Aegean is still a debated one and will not be dealt with here. However, as previously stated, the actual nature of Aegean political structures is irrelevant for this discussion since all that is needed is for sovereigns in the Near East or Egypt to interpret the existence of such figures in the Aegean.

³¹⁰ Immerwahr 1990, 41, 208, note 3.

³¹¹ Monkeys appear in other media such as seals across the New Palace period Aegean. Because of the imperfect state of understanding regarding Minoan ritual and politics and the boundaries between them, it is unclear which role the monkey served.

common people or tasks, it was an elite animal with significance and was likely acquired with a similar level of significance, as for example through gift-exchange.

Once again, however, it is the Near Eastern and Egyptian perspective that must be sought for evidence of the kind of interaction described here. The Hittite treaty between the king Tudhaliya IV and Šaušga-muwa of Amurru uses the word LUGAL to refer to the king of Ahhiyawa.³¹² Not only is this the same word used to title kings of Egypt, Babylon and Assyria, but the kings of those respective countries are mentioned in the same thought as the king of Ahhiyawa, commonly understood to refer to the Mycenaean mainland. Through this document the picture of the formal recognition of kings in the Aegean begins to emerge, at least during the Mycenaean period. Another letter from Hattušili III to his vassal, the king of Arzawa, refers to a gift from the king of Ahhiyawa to Hattušili III, although the nature of the gift is not described.³¹³

Wall paintings from private tombs at 18th Dynasty Egyptian Thebes can fill out the picture of royal gift-exchange. *Keftiu* appear in 15 tombs dating from the reigns of Hatshepsut to Amenhotep II, but the tombs of Rekhmire and Menkheperaseneb display the best and most complete processions bringing gifts to the king.³¹⁴ The tomb of Rekhmire depicts rows of Aegean and Syrian figures bearing gifts in a procession toward Rekhmire himself who receives the gifts in place of the king. The tomb of Menkheperaseneb mixes Syrians and Aegeans processing toward a seated Tutmoses III

³¹² Cline 1995, 146; see also Beckman 1999, 103-7. Another document, an indictment of the vassal Madduwatta by king Arnuwanda I of the Hatti, establishes that Madduwatta was chased from his lands by king Attarissiya of the Ahhiya[wa] indicating that the region was separate from Hittite domains and beyond the western borders of Anatolia; see Beckman 1999, 153-60. Thus Ahhiyawa most likely referred to at least part of the Mycenaean mainland.

³¹³ KBo II 11 rev. 11'-12' in Cline 1995, 146.

³¹⁴ See Lambrou-Phillipson (1990, 57) for total *Keftiu* representations in tombs; see Davies (1943, 3, 18-20, pls. 16-23) and (1933, 3-5, pls. 4-5) for the tombs of Rekhmire and Menkheperaseneb respectively. Most of the other tombs possessing *Keftiu* depictions are poorly preserved or fragmentary.

and seems to blend traits of each people into a sort of hybridized ideal intended to convey a sense of the foreign to the viewer.³¹⁵ In both cases the Aegeans are shown wearing geometrically woven kilts and long curly hair and the gifts they carry are a combination of actual Aegean pottery and textiles and hybridized goods again intended to give the impression of the foreign. Regardless of the realistic or stylized nature of the figures or their wares, the quantity indicates that more is being depicted than the contents of a simple trading expedition.

The inscriptions identify the leaders of the Aegeans as the “Prince of the Keftiu” in the case of the tomb of Menkheperaseneb and the “Princes of the Keftiu and the islands in the midst of the Great Green Sea” in the case of the tomb of Rekhmire.³¹⁶ The word used here and translated as “prince” is *wr*, which literally translates as power or the powerful man and has no direct connotations of hierarchy.³¹⁷ The same word is used of the other processing leaders from Syria-Palestine depicted on the tomb walls, presumably vassals, but is also used elsewhere to title proper kings of major Near Eastern powers;³¹⁸ one *wr* of the Kheta in the tomb of Menkheperaseneb may reflect a Hittite embassy.³¹⁹ The word therefore is simply a title of legitimate power and indicates a formal recognition of the *wr* from the Egyptian point of view. Another word, *nsw*, is used when referring to the king of Egypt, the only true earthly realm, and so the employment of the

³¹⁵ This method of hybridizing foreigners, an effect more prominent in the tomb of Menkheperaseneb, has been studied by Wachsmann (1987, 4-12). His assertion is that the combination of features is in part due to the fact that the artist may not have known the appearance of a foreign people and so mixed characteristics of its neighboring cultures and in part to give the scene artistic variation. Hybridization should not therefore suggest that the event portrayed is mere fantasy.

³¹⁶ Translation mine, the inscriptions read *wr n kftiw* and *wr(w) nw kftw iw hriw ib w3d wr* respectively.

³¹⁷ The word is similar to the Sumerian/Akkadian LUGAL used by the Hittites, which literally means “great king/man;” LUGAL, however, does carry a connotation of legitimacy.

³¹⁸ Moran 1992, xxvii.

³¹⁹ Davies 1933, 4.

term *wr* likely reflects the characteristically arrogant Egyptian world-view more than any direct value judgment of the foreign leaders represented. With this formal recognition, a treaty is implied and thus the objects being presented could legitimately be called gifts.

The inscriptions go on to describe the gifts and the reason for their offering. The tomb of Menkheperaseneb identifies the scene as “a gift to the lord of the two lands [Egypt] paying homage (by bending to the ground) to the good god by the princes of all [lands].”³²⁰ The gift is here represented by the word (*r*)*di* meaning literally gift and is without a sense of tributary obligation; the same word, in verb form, is used in offering formulas in royal tombs to designate gifts the king gives to the gods for the safety of his soul.³²¹ An inscription in the tomb of Rekhmire uses the phrase *inw nb h3stw* meaning “tribute from the ruler of foreign lands.”³²² The word *inw* is a precarious term that has traditionally been thought to indicate tribute but can also carry the less subjugating meaning of supply or a gift.³²³ The term makes more sense in this context if it is understood to simply indicate a changing of ownership. Viewed again from an Egyptian point of view, any gift may be interpreted as tribute and used symbolically for the transfer of ownership over the land where the (*r*)*di* or *inw* originated. The same word *inw* is used elsewhere in reference to goods received from the Hittites, a circumstance that should certainly not indicate actual tribute.³²⁴ In both tombs the inscription states that the gifts were given to the king so that his vital breath might be given to the princes.³²⁵ In this light the gifts were not sent out of the one-sided and slave-like tributary obligation that

³²⁰ Translation mine, it reads *rdi n nb t3wy sn t3 n ntr nfr in wrw nw t3 nb*. Note the use of the word *wr* here again.

³²¹ The phrase *h3p di nsw* begins many formulaic offerings and may be translated as “an offering the king gives...”

³²² The word for ruler here is *nb*, which simply means ruler and is a more general term than *wr*.

³²³ Liverani 2001, 176-9.

³²⁴ Cline 1995, 146.

³²⁵ Davies 1933, 3; 1943, 20.

might be expected from a vassal but were given freely in supplication with the expectation of a return of some sort.³²⁶

Conclusions

The display of foreign objects gives the owner a degree of prestige in the minds of anyone who views such imports; it is important not to underestimate the sociological impacts of the gift. The real prestige lay with the one who could prove his self-sufficiency by giving. Once a gift was received the recipient king must then respond in kind so as not to appear churlish. Nevertheless, the fact remains that not everyone would have been wealthy or important enough to warrant such goods. To the average loyal subject, foreign gifts given to the king by far off princes must have seemed like offerings in recognition of the power and sovereignty of the local king. To those worthy of viewing foreign murals in the palaces and perhaps even the artists painting them, it would have been as if the entire world had come to adorn the house of the mighty king, much as can be seen in the legend of Baal's palace. Scenes of tribute and valuable foreign goods were common in palaces throughout the Near East and Egypt.³²⁷ Curiously such scenes are largely absent from the three major palace sites, indicating that it was the foreign motifs themselves and also those who painted them that accomplished this political goal. The wall and floor frescoes from the major palaces are the best evidence for this esteem of the Aegean in the minds of the Near Eastern and Egyptian rulers. By importing artists to decorate palaces in the Aegean style that had already made the region so

³²⁶ Required tax-like tribute was referred to by a different word, *b3k*. See Liverani 2001, 176.

³²⁷ Winter 1993, 37.

internationally famous, the kings emphasized their ability, if only symbolic, to order the affairs, resources and peoples of the distant islands.

This is the cultural context into which the wall and floor paintings at Avaris, Tel Kabri and Alalakh would have fit. The display of foreign motifs gave order to the cosmos and allowed the foreign land to be assimilated into the worldview of the owners of the palaces in which the motifs were exhibited. With increased and more direct contact with the Aegean during the New Palace period, the Near East and Egypt were compelled to formally recognize and find a place for the civilization or civilizations of the Aegean in their older models of viewing creation.³²⁸ Whereas this was the age of the International Style of art circulating in the eastern Mediterranean, it cannot be said that the wall paintings fit into this category. Instead, they were acquired with care and choice since they could not be moved and passed on in other gift-exchanges, and reflected the need to conceptualize the far-off islands. By displaying the art, whether in domestic or administrative settings as at Avaris and Alalakh or in a religious location as at Tel Kabri, the Aegean motifs gave the eastern kings a symbolic authority over the islands. Displaying the art allowed them to understand the place of the Aegean in their world.

This interpretation provides a possible answer to the question of whether Aegean artisans traveled to the east or whether eastern craftsmen were sent west to learn the techniques they would later employ at home. The acquisition of the artists themselves would emphasize even more directly the pattern outlined above. In this case, since the paintings cannot be shipped from one palace to another, the prestige of the gift must therefore travel with the artists. Contemporary documents do not describe the sending of

³²⁸ During the 18th Dynasty the Keftiu often appear as one of the Nine Bow peoples. This representation was canonized around the reign of Amenhotep III and is not seen earlier indicating this reconciling of tradition and new contacts; see Hodel-Hoenes 2000, 217-21.

artists from one region to learn the techniques of another artistic tradition and then be sent back.³²⁹ Such a request for the reeducation of palatial craftsmen would suggest a deficiency in the power of the king sending his artisans and an admission of the recipient king' superiority; this may be acceptable in dealings between vassal and master states but certainly not for international diplomacy between supposed equals.

Moreover, the logistical concerns of sending artists abroad and arranging for their safe and timely return would likely have rendered such an idea unacceptable. Documents referring to specialized craftsmen often mention previous loaned individuals who were either returned promptly and safely, indicating that this was something to be recognized as exceptional, or of the lack of responsibility on the part of the recipient king for those who never returned to their homelands.³³⁰ It would have taken perhaps years for an artist to master a foreign style sufficiently so as to be able to replicate it virtually identically to the original. Over such a length of time there is no guarantee for the artisan's master that the artist will be returned home or that either individual will not die before the building project can be completed. It is far more expedient to request that an artist already versed in the desired style be sent. Not only could the project begin more quickly, but the king would not lose face in admitting the inferiority of his servants; moreover, the mere presence of the foreign artist or artists would give prestige to the recipient sovereign.

An idea is tied to the image that represents it.³³¹ The transmission of that image across cultures changes its meaning, function and purpose and so in the process generally loses the idea. It is therefore interesting that the iconography found at the three major eastern palace sites is both generally royal, emphasizing power and authority, and at the

³²⁹ This is also never mentioned by Liverani (2001), Zaccagnini (1983) or Cline (1995).

³³⁰ Beckman 1999, 143.

³³¹ Wedde 1997, 72-3.

same time so characteristically Aegean in the combination of motifs, indicating the transmission of not only images, but ideas. There is no guarantee that an Egyptian artist would have so faithfully copied the details of a bull-leaping scene from another medium onto the walls at Avaris, even if the original object was present as a guide.³³² Instead, it is more likely that he would have placed into the image his culture's own ideas that the transferred motif had lost, and in the process altered the form of the scene in a way imperceptible to a foreign audience but immediately obvious to one versed in the native style. Even if merchants had brought back tales of wall paintings portraying one scene or another, there would have been no way to prevent this stylistic drift; direct contact must have been established for these three palaces to display the scenes they do.

Such features as the turned head of the bull at Avaris, the depiction of the rocky shoreline at Tel Kabri and the use of true fresco technique on lime plaster throughout, are the sort of small details that a native artist would likely have changed as he saw fit since they had no special meaning in his native culture. The Egyptians would not have depicted a fore-facing bull in flying gallop any more than the Palestinians would have painted rocky shores rather than the sandy beaches to which they were accustomed. The process of preparation of the frescoes using lime plaster is a basic feature that would not have been replicated unless the artist was accustomed to working in such a medium; otherwise, there is no advantage of using this technique over native methods. The mixing of soil and lime plaster at Tel Kabri and Alalakh may indicate the presence of native artisans alongside the imported Aegeans, yet the process must have been learned from someone and an alien technique would be more easily acquired if learned in person.

³³² Crowley 1989, 245-7.

Based on the patterns established above, royal gift-exchange is the most natural method by which foreign art would have been acquired by a Near Eastern or Egyptian ruler. Since artisans, as specialized craftsmen, could take part in these exchanges this pattern fits well with what is observed at the sites of Avaris, Tel Kabri and Alalakh. Gift-exchanges were carried out in an effort to symbolically make sense of the world and with the broadening of social contacts during the New Palace period, the need for understanding was as vital as ever. Following the patterns established in written documents, the artisans who painted the major eastern palaces were not local servants trained in foreign palaces, but were foreign themselves and were imported for the purposes of prestige and political standing.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

The frescoes at Avaris, Tel Kabri and Alalakh are Aegean in both style and technique. Whereas certain motifs, such as bucrania and spirals, may be present at other sites in the Near East and Egypt, the distribution and concentration of the same motifs in the Aegean and Mycenaean mainland strongly indicate an Aegean influence. The combination of so many of these motifs into single scenes in patterned ways that are also found in the Aegean indicates that the motifs were not adopted individually, but as components of larger scenes likely with specific significance. The method of transmission is more difficult to pin down, although it is most likely that artists traveled directly to adorn the walls and floors of the eastern palaces. Certain combined motifs, such as bull-leaping, a maze background and a half-rosette frieze indicating a palatial setting, are too complex to be represented in other media and processes like stucco reliefs, found only at Knossos, and miniature frescoes are by their nature impossible to transmit through other means. Indirect transmission through traded goods and even word of mouth may explain the appearance of non-figural motifs at the minor palace sites of Mari and Qatna, but cannot account for the acrobatic scenes at Avaris or the hypothetical coastal landscape at Tel Kabri. As Crowley stated, there is no guarantee that an artist would have faithfully copied a foreign scene without adding his own culture's interpretations even if the original pattern was sitting before him for reference.³³³

³³³ Crowley 1989, 245-7.

Minor discrepancies in the style of the scenes that caused Shaw to reject a Minoan association can easily be explained either by the presence of multiple artists reflecting differing regional styles within the Aegean or by the separate work of a master and his pupils. The majority of Minoan frescoes that survive have a narrow chronological range and are geographically limited, primarily being from Knossos and Thera. It is dangerous to assume that based on these few examples it is possible to construct the entire picture of pre-Mycenaean figural painting and therefore to rule out examples that do not fit the limited view currently available.

The paint pigments used at the three major palace sites correspond to those employed across the eastern Mediterranean. With the possible exception of not including uniquely Egyptian arsenic based yellow pigments or Mesopotamian glazes, very little can be learned from the pigments themselves except that they conform to compositions known in the Aegean at the time. The pattern of coloring displays certain Aegean aspects, however, as in the use of blue for plant foliage at Avaris. It must also be remembered that lime plaster was not used in Egypt at this time and the use of string impressions serving as guide lines as seen at Tel Kabri was foreign to the Near East. Moreover, a true fresco process was not employed in either eastern region until after the periods under consideration here. Only in the Aegean were all of these techniques used contemporaneously; any one of which may conceivably have transferred to the east in isolation, yet in combination are characteristically Aegean. There is no reason for an Egyptian or Near Eastern artist to use lime plaster when the traditional gypsum or mud bases were perfectly adequate in the local understanding. Ultimately it is the combination of small details, those that an artist attempting to imitate a foreign style

would change without thought, that confirm an Aegean identity for the frescoes. If such minor aspects of the scenes as the formation of the spots on the bulls, the style of the wings of the griffins, or the pattern of depicting a rocky shore conform to Aegean practice, it is reasonable to assume that Aegean artists had a hand in the construction.

Based on the available evidence, the Aegean was in contact with the major states of the eastern Mediterranean throughout the New Palace period. Orientalia in the Aegean have been known for the last century and foreign influences on Minoan art are well documented. Minoan elite goods have been found in tombs in Egypt dating to the end of the Second Intermediate Period and the beginning of the 18th Dynasty. Likewise, large Near Eastern ports such as Ugarit and Byblos display evidence for trade with the Aegean dating back to the MM II Old Palace period. Aleppo exhibits Minoan cultural motifs such as bull-leaping on seals. Based on the presence of Aleppo seals at Alalakh bearing Aegean motifs and the proximity of the two cities, it is only logical to assume the existence of an Alalakh-Aegean connection. For Tel Kabri, no evidence exists for direct trade or contact between the southern Levant and the Aegean until the Late Minoan period. However, based on contemporary written documents from Mari and Ugarit, trade with the Aegean was constant and regular and it is not unreasonable to assume that the Aegean reputation for craftsmanship could have indirectly reached the southern Levant. Through the process of gift-exchange, an Aegean artist could even have been sent to an allied or vassal king at Tel Kabri from either Egypt or more likely Syria. Additional evidence is required before a more definite hypothesis can be proposed.

Gift-exchange appears to be the most likely way for Aegean artists to have transferred to the eastern palaces. Based on political discourses revealed in the Amarna

Letters and the Mari Documents, gift-exchange was the natural course for international relations in the east at the time; it was the manner in which rulers related to each other and understood their places in the world. Specialized craftsmen, including artisans, could form part of the gifts and were requested when gifts in the more common International Style were unwanted or insufficient. Otherwise artists were tied to the palaces for royal patronage and were dependent upon that structure for their existence; freelance artists in the Near East were unheard of. Egyptian artists enjoyed more freedom in terms of private commissions for tombs; however, royal palaces were almost certainly painted by artists under the king's employ.

There is little evidence that Aegean artists were so rigidly controlled by the palaces and there is no reason that itinerant craftsmen could not have traveled to the east, but two questions remain. First, why would they travel so far to find work? The Tuthmoside date of Avaris enables the scenario of artists escaping the turmoil of the collapse of the New Palaces to arrive in Egypt; however the early dates of Tel Kabri and Alalakh do not permit a refugee explanation. Since it is still not certain what precisely caused the end of the New Palace period, it is dangerous to assume that refugee populations existed and to base a theory around that ambiguous core. It is possible that an overpopulation of fresco artists in the Aegean required some to leave to seek employment elsewhere. However, without a more complete understanding of the nature of the workshops and with the proposed connection between fresco painters and potters, which would have enabled alternate local employment, this possibility again relies on a dangerous assumption. There is no clear reason why Aegean fresco painters would have left their homeland of their own free will in an uncertain search for work in foreign lands,

especially considering that travel in the ancient world was never a predictable and safe undertaking.

The second question is would itinerant craftsmen have been able to find work had they arrived in Egypt or the Near East? Even though private commissions for tomb paintings could have been possible in Egypt, it is questionable whether a foreign artist would have been employed for the task. With such highly ritualized and canonized scenes that were required for the safety of the soul in the afterlife, would any nobleman have placed his eternal well-being in the hands of a foreigner? It seems unlikely at best, especially considering the traditional Egyptian arrogance towards foreigners.³³⁴ In the Near East, since freelance artists did not naturally exist, a king would have found the idea of employing someone not attached to his palace inconceivable or at the very least, unnecessary. What guarantee did the royal patron have that the unfamiliar artisan was capable of creating something worthy of the palace? A king is unlikely to have hired such a figure since he, by all extant textual evidence, controlled all specialized craftsmen in his domains.

If a foreign style were desired, the proper and honorable means of acquiring the object involved royal requests through gift-exchange. However, gift-exchange did not simply provide the proper forum through which a king could voice his desire without appearing weak, but it also ensured the quality of the gift. Because the gifted craftsman would likely have been sent by the very king who employed the artist, the recipient king was assured of the quality of the artisan's work; what was good for one king was good enough for another. Without this royal context and the assurance it provides, it seems

³³⁴ Consider the traditional Nine Bow enemy peoples in Egyptian art, which were canonized around the time of Amenhotep III; see Hodel-Hoernes 2000, 217-21. It is worth noting that *Keftiu* are included in this category around this time.

unlikely that a royal patron would have risked his own palace, his ultimate status symbol, on an untested artisan. The contemporary political climate and palatial organization of craftsmen, as revealed by the sources, renders the idea of itinerant Aegean fresco artists finding royal patronage in Egypt or the Near East simply impractical.

The question can legitimately be asked: what if the structures at Avaris and Tel Kabri are not palaces? As mentioned in Chapter 5, scenes depicting tribute and foreign goods were common in Egyptian and Near Eastern palaces, but are absent from these two sites.³³⁵ Avaris was a strong military base, but had a relatively short political importance once the war against the Hyksos moved north out of the delta. Indications of cultic practices in Hall 611 at Tel Kabri suggest more of a religious role than a political one. This indicates that the structures may not have been palaces at all, and that the assertion that the decorative programs reflect royal concepts may be invalid. This, however, is an overstatement and ignores the intricate link between monumental constructions of these types and the royalty that they served. Regardless of specific function, the buildings at all three major sites were important and carried political significance. A fortress that served, even temporarily, as the campaign base for the king was worthy of royal imagery that emphasized the king's place within the world and right to rule. A cultic space blending religious and political roles was common in the Near East: consider the Investiture Scene at Mari depicting the king and deities side-by-side and placed within the temple precinct in a larger palace.³³⁶ From a royal perspective, the buildings would have been relevant stages to emphasize sovereignty and power; as a result, the thesis relating to royal power and symbols can still be applied.

³³⁵ Winter 1993, 37. Alalakh was undoubtedly a palace site and is, therefore, omitted from this question.

³³⁶ The ongoing excavation at Tel Kabri should help to establish the larger context of the site.

To understand the role of the fresco artist and his purpose in the east, this Egyptian and Near Eastern political perspective must be kept in mind. Since the Aegean point of view is silent, the eastern sources are the best window to understanding the processes behind the transmission of the Aegean artists. Royal gift-exchange is the primary culturally acceptable way that foreign art objects were acquired by kings during this period without military plundering or a loss of prestige in admitting deficiency. As far as specialized craftsmen were concerned, they were not sent to a foreign king unless first requested, and they were requested for specific jobs. Nowhere in the extant sources does there appear a pattern for the process proposed by Shaw where Egyptian or Near Eastern artists would be sent to the Aegean to learn the artistic style and then be sent back.³³⁷ If Aegean artists were to take part in this process of gift-exchange, they would have been requested by an Egyptian or Near Eastern ruler to travel from the Aegean to be returned upon completion of the desired task. It is important to keep in mind that this proposal focuses on royal patronage; itinerant Aegean artists may have found employment in the east, but most likely from non-royal elites, not from royal patrons.

This study is not, however, without its weaknesses. As stated at the outset, the greatest problem is a lack of information that allows incompatible conclusions to be drawn from the same data. As the fresco fragments from Avaris are not fully published at the time of this study, it is not possible to examine and find comparisons for every motif represented at the site. A full stylistic analysis of especially the Avaris and Tel Kabri fragments would be particularly useful. With the wide-ranging dates between the

³³⁷ Shaw 1995, 94, 110-1. Again this assertion takes into consideration patterns established in the Amarna Letters, Mari Documents, various Hittite treaties and documents from Ugarit, as well as research by Liverani (2001), Zaccagnini (1983) and Cline (1995).

sites chronology is an ever-present concern and awaits a comprehensive study to link the Egyptian, Near Eastern and Aegean chronologies and determine which of the high or low chronologies works best for the Aegean and Egypt and which proposal best fits the international data for the Near East. Ultimately additional palace sites in Egypt and particularly in the Near East that display Minoan cultural motifs would be beneficial. There is little doubt that such sites will appear in future. After all 20 years ago, a study such as this would have come to a very different conclusion in the absence of frescoes from Avaris and Tel Kabri. At present, however, the idea of Aegean fresco artists being royally gift-exchanged to adorn the palaces of eastern monarchs best explains the phenomenon observed at Avaris, Tel Kabri and Alalakh and is fully supported by the available archaeological, textual and mythological evidence from the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean.

Appendix I: Catalogue of Frescoes

The catalogue entries listed here and in Appendix II are arranged geographically by site and region: The Eastern Sites (Avaris, Tel Kabri, Alalakh, Mari, Qatna); The Aegean Sites (Knossos, Phaistos, Ayia Triadha, Palaikastro, Zakro, Thera); The Mainland Sites (Mycenae, Tiryns, Pylos, Vapheio, Argos). Within each site the specific entries are listed in order as they first appear in Chapters 2 and 3. As a result, certain entries may not appear in the most logical order; however, because many fragments display more than one motif, organizing them in this way makes the entries more readily accessible while reading the chapters.

Aegean motifs are primarily what these catalogues illustrate and each entry may consist either of individual fragments or fragments groups depending on what organization best displays the motifs. The entries are intended to be comprehensive, at least as far as is possible with the information published to date, for the appropriate stratigraphic levels of the three major eastern Mediterranean palace sites (Avaris, Tel Kabri and Alalakh). For the two minor sites included in the appendices (Mari and Qatna only, as Ebla has no motifs that can be included in these catalogues), only those fragment groups that display Aegean motifs have been included. For the entries from sites in Crete, the Aegean and the Mycenaean mainland, only selected comparanda are included. These catalogues are not intended to be comprehensive when dealing with either Aegean sites or the motifs represented therein. The accompanying references at the end of each entry list only the most relevant source or sources where a brief discussion and

illustration of the entry may be found. Those entries for which no published pictures exist are referenced as being “reported” since I cannot verify the author’s identification of the motif(s). References are also not intended to be comprehensive.

Key

| | | |
|-----------|---|--------------|
| AL | - | Alalakh |
| AR | - | Argos |
| AT | - | Ayia Triadha |
| AV | - | Avaris |
| KN | - | Knossos |
| MR | - | Mari |
| MY | - | Mycenae |
| PH | - | Phaistos |
| PK | - | Palaikastro |
| PY | - | Pylos |
| TH | - | Thera |
| TK | - | Tel Kabri |
| TR | - | Tiryns |
| QT | - | Qatna |
| VA | - | Vapheio |
| ZK | - | Zakro |

The Eastern Sites

Avaris (modern Tell el-Dab'a / 'Ezbet Helmi)

AV01: Floor fresco fragment showing black, blue, red and white maze motif (?), from Palace F; originally identified as a wall fragment; compare with TH03.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak et al. 1994, pl. 14B; see also Bietak 2005, 88.

AV02: Fragment showing bull-leaping with head and torso of red-skinned leaper and head and chest of bull against maze motif background, from Palace F; associated with AV20; compare with KN07, KN18, PH01, ATb02, TH21, TH22, MY03, TR07, PY12, VAb01.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak 1994, 46, pl. 15B.

AV03: Fragment of red, blue and white maze motif background for bull-leaping scene, from Palace F; compare with KN02, PH01, ATb01, ZKb02, ZKb03.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak 1994, 47, fig. 15A.

AV04: Fragments showing red-skinned priest (?) standing in front of building façade with window, from Palace F; see also AV29, AV25; compare with KNb02, KNb09, TH10, TH16, MY04, MY06.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak and Marinatos 1995, fig. 9.

AV05: Imitation ashlar façade with exposed wooden beam-ends, from Palace F; see also AV29; compare reports with KNb02, TH10, MY04, MY06.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Reported in Bietak 2005, 89.

AV06: Hilly horizon fragment with brown land on red background, from Palace F (?); compare with KN04, KN05, AT01, AT02, TH05, TH06, TH07, TH08.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 59, fig. 15.

AV07: Fragment showing a blue spotted bull head below ovoid patches, from Palace F; associated with AV23; compare with KN04, KN07, TH02, TR07, PY02, PY11.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 53, fig. 4.

AV08: Fragment of rocky riverine coast with “easter egg” rocks and the feet of a white dog (?), from Palace F; compare with KN03, KN18, KNb01, TH02, PY02.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 59, fig. 14.

AV09: Fragment showing two blue *waz* lilies on a red ground, from Palace F; compare with TH14.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 58, fig. 12.

AV10: Fragment with upside-down red-skinned acrobat in white kilt with blue-leaved palm tree (?), from Palace F; compare with KN12, KNb05, KNb06, ZKb07, TH15, MY06.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak 1994, 49-50, pl. 17B.

AV11: Fragments showing bull taunting by two red-skinned figures in front of multicolored architectural feature (?) with palm trunk base (?) on top, from Palace F; compare with KN12, KN16, KNb06, ZKb07, TH15.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak 2005, pl. 13(1); 1994, 46-8.

AV12: Fragment series depicting half-rosette border frieze below bull-leaping scene, from Palace F; compare with KN06, KN08, KNb03, ZKb04, TH09, MY03, MY05, MYb02, MYb03, MYb05, PY06, PY07, PY08.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak et al. 2000, 82, fig. 2.

AV13: Fragments with white dog in flying gallop pursuing two ungulates over blue ground with shrubs, from Palace F; compare with ZKb07, TR06.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak 2005, pl. 15(1); see also Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 55.

AV14: Fragment of white spotted dog with furry tail and hunter's leg and green plant, from Palace F; compare with TR06.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 55, fig. 6.

AV15: Fragments showing spotted leopard's hindquarters and aquatic shrub, from Palace F; compare with ZKb07, TH16.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak 2000b, col. pl. A(a); see also Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 60.

AV16: Two fragments of head and partial wing of griffin with spirals on wings, from Palace F; constitute the small griffin; compare with KN15, TH02, TH20, MYb07.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak 2005, 89; 2000b, col. pl. B(b).

AV17: Fragment showing blue and black swirls of griffin wing (?) against green and white aquatic plants, from Palace F; constitutes the "life-size" griffin; compare with KN15, TH20, TR05, TR06, PY09, PY10.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak 2005, 89, pl. 14(2a, b).

AV18: Fragments of red-skinned bull-leaper with white kilt over the arched back of a white and brown spotted bull, from Palace F; possibly associated with AV22 and AV24?; compare with KN07, KN18, ZKb08, MY03, TR03, PY12.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak 1994, 48, pl. 16; see also Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 52, fig. 2.

AV19: Fragment with head of falling toreador below bull's belly, from Palace F; possibly associated with AV21?; compare with KN07, KN18, ZKb08, MY03, VAb01.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak et al. 2000, 79, fig. 1.

AV20: Fragment of stucco relief of lower leg of toreador, from Palace F; associated with AV02; compare with KN07, KN18, ZKb08, MY03, MY06, TR03.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak 1994, 52, pl. 20A.

AV21: Fragment with extended hind legs of bull on maze background, from Palace F; possibly associated with AV19?; compare with KN07, KN18, ZKb08, MY03, PY11.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Seeber 2000, 93, fig. 4.

AV22: Fragment of extended front legs of bull on maze background, from Palace F; possibly associated with AV24?; compare with KN07, KN18, ZKb08, MY03, PY11.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak et al. 2000, 79, fig. 1.

AV23: Fragment with belly of bull and wavy black and white border (horizon?) of maze against red background, from Palace F; associated with AV07; compare with KN04, KN07, KN18, ZKb08, MY03, PY11.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak et al. 2000, 82, fig. 3.

AV24: Fragment of neck of right facing bull against red background; from Palace F, possibly associated with AV22?; compare with KN07, KN18, ZKb08, MY03, PY11.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 53, fig. 4.

AV25: Fragment with red-skinned running man with white garment against architectural background, from Palace F; compare with KNb02, TH10, MY04, MY06.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 57, fig. 11.

AV26: Fragment of life-size face of red-skinned man with black hair and white beard, from Palace F; no direct comparisons, but Aegean in style.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 56, fig. 7.

AV27: Stucco relief of half life-size bull, from Palace F; compare reports with KN17, KN18.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Reported in Bietak 2005, 88.

AV28: Life-size stucco relief of lower male leg and boot, from Palace F; compare reports with KN11, KN19.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Reported Bietak 2005, 89.

AV29: Fragment group depicting imitation ashlar façade with exposed wooden beam-ends, from Palace G; see also AV05; compare reports with KNb02, TH10, MY04, MY06.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Reported Bietak 2005, 89.

AV30: Fragment of red outlined loop and ivy border on yellow (?) ground with red and white framing border, from Palace G, border around the northern entrance or courtyard; compare with AT01, TH12.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 58, fig. 13.

AV31: Fragments showing ankle of white-skinned woman and blue and black anklets with hem of skirt, from Palace G, at entrance to palace; compare with AT02, TH07, TH08, TH22, TH23.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak 2000b, 205, col. pl. B(a).

AV32: Fragments of stucco relief of lower leg and boot / forearm and wristband, from Palace G; compare with KN11, KN19.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Bietak and Marinatos 1995, 54, fig. 5.

AV33: Stucco relief of yellow bull's horn, from Palace G; compare reports with KN17, KN18.

Date: Early Tuthmoside / LM I(A?)

Reported in Bietak 2005, 89.

Tel Kabri

TK01: Section of floor fresco imitating marbled gypsum slabs, from Hall 611, *in situ*;
compare with KN01, PKb01, ZKb01, TH01, MY01, MY02, TR01, TR02, PY01,
PY02, PY03.

Date: MB IIA/B

Kempinski 2002, 255, 260, pl. 10.

TK02: Fragments of floor fresco showing red line and string impression, from Hall 611,
in situ; compare with PKb01, ZKb01, MY02, TR02, PY03.

Date: MB IIA/B

Kempinski 2002, 255, 257, pl. 8.

TK03: Series of fragments of floor fresco over actual stone paving, from Threshold
1444, *in situ*; compare with MYb08.

Date: MB IIA/B

Kempinski 2002, 254, 256, pl. 4.

TK04: Series of fragments comprising imitation stone dados (?), from Hall 611?;
compare with KN01, TH01, MY01, TR01, PY01, PY02.

Date: MB IIA/B

Kempinski 2002, 266, 268, pl. 21.

TK05: Fragment group depicting brown knob-like protuberances (rocky shore?), from
frieze in Hall 611?; compare with KN03, KNb01, ZKb07, TH11.

Date: MB IIA/B

Kempinski 2002, 266, 268, pl. 22.

TK06: Fragment group depicting brown knob-like protuberances (rocky shore?), from frieze in Hall 611?; compare with KN03, KNb01, ZKb07, TH11.

Date: MB IIA/B

Kempinski 2002, 266, 269, pl. 25.

TK07: Fragment group with gray “loops” (ships’ hulls?) on wavy background, from frieze in Hall 611?; compare with TH11.

Date: MB IIA/B

Kempinski 2002, 267, 272, pl. 27.

TK08: Fragments showing red rectilinear lines on gray ground (ashlar masonry?), from frieze in Hall 611?; compare with KNb02, TH10, MY04, MY06.

Date: MB IIA/B

Kempinski 2002, 267, 272, pl. 28.

TK09: Fragments showing gray rectilinear lines and circle on white ground (ashlar masonry and beam-end?), from frieze in Hall 611?; compare with KNb02, TH10, MY04, MY06.

Date: MB IIA/B

Kempinski 2002, 267, 272, pl. 29.

TK10: Section of floor fresco painted with red lily blossom, from Hall 611 floor fresco, *in situ*; compare reports with KN09 – KN11, AT03, TH05, TH06, TH08, TH13, TH24, MYb04.

Date: MB IIA/B

Reported in Kempinski 2002, 259.

TK11: Section of floor fresco showing individual blue iris blossom, from Hall 611 floor fresco, *in situ*; compare with KN09 – KN11, AT03, TH05, TH06, TH08, TH13, TH24, MYb04.

Date: MB IIA/B

Kempinski 2002, 259, 264, pl. 14.

TK12: Section of floor fresco showing chain of blue lilies, from Hall 611 floor fresco, *in situ*; compare with KN09 – KN11, TH05, TH06, TH08, TH13, TH24, MYb04.

Date: MB IIA/B

Niemeier and Niemeier 2000, 773, 775, figs. 7, 8.

TK13: Section of floor fresco with red motif (pomegranate?), from Hall 611 floor fresco, *in situ*; compare with KNb04.

Date: MB IIA/B

Kempinski 2002, 259, 265, pl. 18.

TK14: Fragments depicting green plant stalk with leaves, from frieze in Hall 611?; compare with KN13, KNb07, AT02, TH02, TH16, TH17.

Date: MB IIA/B

Kempinski 2002, 267, 273, pl. 32.

TK15: Fragment showing dark colored swallow (?) on light ground, from frieze in Hall 611?; compare with TH05, TH06.

Date: MB IIA/B

Kempinski 2002, 270, 276, pl. 33.

TK16: Fragment with figure “S” swirl (neck of a miniature griffin?), from frieze in Hall 611?; associated with TK17; compare with TH02, TH20, MYb07.

Date: MB IIA/B

Kempinski 2002, 270, 277, pl. 35.

TK17: Two fragments with parallel lines separating triangles and dots in “notched plume” motif (wing of a miniature griffin?), from frieze in Hall 611?; associated with TK16; compare with KN14, TH02, TH20, MYb07.

Date: MB IIA/B

Kempinski 2002, 270, 277, pl. 35.

TK18: Gray rectilinear lines and red line on white ground (arm of a male figure (?) on ashlar background?), from frieze in Hall 611?; compare with KNb02, TH10, MY04, MY06.

Date: MB IIA/B

Kempinski 2002, 267, 272, pl. 29.

Alalakh (modern Tell Atchana / Tell Atçana)

AL01: Stone orthostates covered in painted plaster resembling marbled stone, from Room 5; compare reports with KN01, TH01, MY01, TR01, PY01, PY02, MYb08.

Date: MB IIB

Reported in Niemeier and Niemeier 2000, 781; see also Niemeier 1991, 192.

AL02: Fragment group with yellow and violet bands and bull's horn on white ground, from "Grand Salon," Outer Chamber; compare with ZKb05, ZKb06, MYb05, MYb06, ARb01.

Date: MB IIB

Niemeier and Niemeier 2000, 781-2, fig. 14.

AL03: Fragment group with light colored knob-like protuberances and greenish bands on red and white ground (hindquarters of a seated griffin?), from "Grand Salon," Inner Chamber; associated with AL04; compare with KN03, KN15, KNb01, ZKb07, PY04, PY09, PY10.

Date: MB IIB

Niemeier and Niemeier 2000, 785, fig. 18.

AL04: Fragment group with light colored knob-like protuberances and ladder motif on red ground (possibly depicts faded wings of seated griffin?), from "Grand Salon," Inner Chamber; associated with AL03; compare with KN03, KN04, KN06, KN07, KN14, KN15, KNb01, ZKb07, TH09, TH20, MY03, MYb01, MYb02, TR03 – TR05, PY04, PY05.

Date: MB IIB

Niemeier and Niemeier 2000, 784-5, fig. 17.

AL05: Fragment group showing white grasses blowing in the wind on red ground, from "Grand Salon," Inner Chamber; compare with KNb08, PHb01, TH18, TH19, THb01, THb02.

Date: MB IIB

Niemeier and Niemeier 2000, 783-4, fig. 16.

Mari (Tell Hariri)

MR01: Investiture Scene of Zimri-Lim with spiral border, from Court 106; compare with KN03, TH04.

Date: Pre-1760 BCE (Ur III / Isin-Larsa – MB IIA/B)

Parrot 1958, 58, fig. 48, col. pl. A.

MR02: Podium with imitation orthostates surrounded by flame and spiral border, from Room 64; compare with KN01, KN03, TH01, TH04, MY01, TR01, PY01, PY02.

Date: Pre-1760 BCE (Ur III / Isin-Larsa – MB IIA/B)

Parrot 1958, 67-8, fig. 64, pl. 15 (1, 2).

Qatna (Tell el-Mishrife)

QT01: Two fragments of imitation black, red and white marbled gypsum orthostates as a dado, from unknown location within site; compare with KN01, TH01, MY01, TR01, PY01, PY02.

Date: MB IIB – LB I

du Mesnil du Buisson 1935, frontispiece.

The Aegean Sites

Knossos

KN01: Fragment group representing imitation stone dado, from Domestic Quarter east of the Hall of the Double Axes; compare with TK01, TK04, AL01, MR02, QT01.

Date: MM III(A?)

Fyfe 1902, 110-2, fig. 13; Immerwahr 1990, 178.

KN02: Fragment of floor fresco with maze motif, from Domestic Quarter; associated with KN01; compare with AV03.

Date: MM III (?)

Evans 1921, 356-8, fig. 256.

KN03: “Dolphin Fresco” with rocky shore, rosette and spiral borders, from Queen’s Megaron; compare rocky border with AV08, TK05, TK06, AL03, AL04; compare spirals with MR01, MR02.

Date: LM IA (?)

Immerwahr 1990, 171, pl. 31; see also Evans 1930, 364-5.

KN04: “Dance Fresco” with walkways, from small room at north end of central court; compare walkways with ladder motif in AL04; compare wavy borders of male and female crowd members with AV06, AV07, AV23.

Date: MM IIIB / LM IA

Immerwahr 1990, 173, pl. 23.

KN05: Scene of blue monkey gathering crocuses in rocky landscape, from area of Early Keep; compare rocky landscape with AV06.

Date: MM IIIB / LM IA (possibly LM II by style)

Immerwahr 1990, 170, pls. 10-11.

KN06: “Grandstand Fresco” with tripartite shrine with half-rosettes and checkerboard, from small room at north end of central court; compare half-rosettes with AV12; compare checkerboard and top ladder motif border with ladder motif in AL04.

Date: MM IIIB / LM IA

Immerwahr 1990, 173, pl. 22.

KN07: Toreador panel fragment group with red and white leapers and ladder motif border on blue ground, from Court of the Stone Spout; compare scene with AV02, AV07, AV18 – AV24; compare ladder motif with AL04.

Date: LM II / LM IIIA

Immerwahr 1990, 175, pl. 41.

KN08: Relief fragment group(s) depicting large yellow and brown half-rosette frieze (?), from western part of the palace; compare with AV12.

Date: Uncertain (generally MM III – LM I/II)

Fyfe 1902, 124-6, figs. 60-1.

KN09: Fragment group of white lilies on red ground, from South-East House; compare with TK10 – TK12.

Date: MM III

Evans 1921, 536-7, col. pl. 6; Cameron and Hood 1967, 37-8, pl. 8, fig. 1.

KN10: Miniature fragment depicting white and blue lilies on red ground, possibly depicting an ornamented dress, from Northwest Fresco Heap; compare with TK10 – TK12.

Date: MM IIIB

Evans 1930, 130-1, fig. 85; Cameron and Hood 1967, 29-30, pl. 4, fig. 12.

KN11: “Lily Prince”/“Priest King” stucco relief fragments, from a basement near east side of North-South Corridor; compare with AV28, AV32; compare lily necklace with TK10 – TK12.

Date: LM I / LM II

Immerwahr 1990, 171, pl. 19.

KN12: Relief fragments depicting red, yellow and gray palm tree (?), from the western part of the palace; compare with AV10, AV11.

Date: Uncertain (generally MM III – LM I/II)

Fyfe 1902, 124-6, fig. 62.

KN13: Fragment group of frieze of partridges and plants in riverine landscape, from the Caravanserai; compare plants with TK14.

Date: LM IB

Immerwahr 1990, 174, pl. 30.

KN14: Miniature fresco griffin with notched plume wings, possibly depicting an ornamented dress, from the fresco heaps above the Northwest Portico; compare with TK17, AL04.

Date: possibly MM IIIB

Evans 1921, 548-9, fig. 400; Cameron and Hood 1967, 31, pl. 4, fig. 16.

KN15: “Life-size” griffins flanking a throne, from the “Throne Room”; compare with AV16, AV17, AL03, AL04.

Date: LM II / LM IIIA

Immerwahr 1990, 176, pls. 47-8.

KN16: Fragment of stucco relief of man’s arm grappling a bull’s horn, from the Deposit of High Reliefs; compare grappling scene with AV11.

Date: MM III – LM I / II

Evans 1930, 215-6, fig. 147.

KN17: Fragment of stucco relief of bull’s head, from the West side of northwest entrance; compare with AV27, AV33.

Date: LM IB / II

Evans 1930, 172-7, fig. 116.

KN18: Fragment of Miniature fresco depicting horn and ear of bull, from the Deposit of Ivories; compare with AV02, AV08, AV18 – AV24, AV27, AV33.

Date: MM IIIB

Evans 1930, 207-8, fig. 142; Cameron and Hood 1967, 24, pl. E, fig. 3b.

KN19: Fragment of stucco relief of lower (female?) leg and anklet, from the west side of northwest entrance; compare with AV28, AV32.

Date: LM IB / II

Evans 1930, 172-7, fig. 120.

Phaistos

PH01: Fragments of brown and white floor meander fresco, from Room LIV of

Protopalatial Palace; compare with AV02, AV03.

Date: Phase III of Old Palace (MM II?)

Immerwahr 1990, 22-3, fig. 6d.

Ayia Triadha

AT01: Cat hunting bird in ivy and hilly landscape, from the Villa, Room 14; compare

rocky landscape with AV06; compare ivy with AV30.

Date: LM IA

Immerwahr 1990, 180, pl. 17.

AT02: Goddess (dancing?) at altar surrounded by plants, from the Villa, Room 14;

compare rocky landscape with AV06; compare plants with TK14; possibly

compare goddess with AV31.

Date: LM IA

Immerwahr 1990, 180, pl.18.

AT03: Adorant with lilies, from the Villa, Room 14; compare lilies with TK10, TK11.

Date: LM IA

Rehak 1997, 167, fig. 4.

Thera (Akrotiri)

TH01: Naturalistic marbled fresco slabs forming imitation stone dado, from the West

House, Room 5; compare with TK01, TK04, AL01, MR02, QT01.

Date: LM IA

Doumas 1992, 50, figs 14-7.

TH02: Griffin in flying gallop in riverine landscape with “easter egg” rocks, from the West House, Room 5, East Wall; compare griffin with AV16, TK16, TK17; compare “easter egg” rocks with AV07, AV08; compare plants with TK14.

Date: LM IA

Doumas 1992, 65, fig. 32

TH03: Geometric staircase decoration fresco with red, white and blue bands, from Xeste 4; compare with AV01.

Date: LM IA

Doumas 1992, 179, figs. 140-1.

TH04: Decorative wall spiral, from Beta Sector, Room Beta 6; compare with MR01, MR02.

Date: LM IA

Doumas 1992, 124, fig. 90.

TH05: Lilies and flying sparrow in rocky landscape, from Sector Delta, Room Delta 2, South Wall; compare lilies with TK10 – TK12; compare sparrow with TK15; compare rocky landscape with AV06.

Date: LM IA

Doumas 1992, 100, fig. 66, 105, fig. 71.

TH06: Flying sparrows in rocky landscape with lilies, from Sector Delta, Room Delta 2, West Wall; compare sparrows with TK15; compare rocky landscape with AV06; compare lilies with TK10 – TK12.

Date: LM IA

Doumas 1992, 101, fig. 67, 107, fig. 76.

TH07: Mature female saffron gatherer with red anklets and blue bracelets, from Xeste 3, Room 3a; compare jewelry with AV31; compare hilly landscape with horizon on AV06.

Date: LM IA

Doumas 1992, 152, fig. 116, 154, fig. 118.

TH08: Young female saffron gatherer with blue anklets and bracelets and chain of flowers as ornament hanging from sleeve, from Xeste 3, Room 3a; compare jewelry with AV31; compare hilly landscape with horizon on AV06; compare flowers with TK10 – TK12.

Date: LM IA

Doumas 1992, 152, fig. 116, 156, fig. 120.

TH09: Pointed rosettes in blue and white quatrefoils below ladder motif border, from Xeste 3, Room 9 (upper floor); compare ladder motif with AL04; contrast rosettes with AV12.

Date: LM IA

Doumas 1992, 174-5, figs. 136-7.

TH10: Ashlar masonry in various colors (Poleis IV and V) with flora, human and animal figures, from the West House, Room 5, South Wall; compare masonry with AV04, AV05, AV25, AV29, TK08, TK09, TK18.

Date: LM IA

Doumas 1992, 84-5, figs. 45, 47-8.

TH11: “Shipwreck Scene” with rocky shore, from the West House, Room 5, North Wall;
compare ships with TK07; compare rocky shore with TK05, TK06.

Date: LM IA

Doumas 1992, 62-3, fig. 29.

TH12: Ivy frieze in blue and red over “Boxing Boys,” from Beta Sector, Room Beta 1;
compare with AV30.

Date: LM IA

Doumas 1992, 111, fig. 78.

TH13: Flower pot imitating (stylized) marbled stone with lilies, from the West House,
Room 4, Window, North Jamb; compare lilies with TK10 – TK12.

Date: LM IA

Doumas 1992, 96, fig. 63.

TH14: Ikria with columns topped by “*waz* lily” floral motif, from the West House, Room
4, South Wall; compare floral caps with *waz* lilies on AV09.

Date: LM IA

Doumas 1992, 91, fig. 56.

TH15: “The African” and blue palm fronds stemming from a horizontally slanting tree,
from the area of Sector Alpha; compare with AV10, AV11.

Date: LM IA

Doumas 1992, 187, fig. 148.

TH16: Lion (or leopard) hunting deer in riverine landscape above city, from the West
House, Room 5, South Wall; compare scene with AV15; compare plants with
TK14; compare long robed human figures with AV04.

Date: LM IA

Doumas 1992, 71, fig. 36.

TH17: Myrtle branches, from Sector Gamma; compare with TK14.

Date: LM IA

Sarpaki 2000, 676, fig. 7(14).

TH18: Reeds/Grasses blowing in wind, from Xeste 3, Room 3b; compare with AL05.

Date: LM IA

Vlachopoulos 2000, 645, fig. 1.

TH19: Ducks and blowing grasses, from Xeste 3, Room 3b; compare grasses with AL05.

Date: LM IA

Doumas 1992, 172-3, fig. 136.

TH20: Griffin with blue and red spiraled and notched plumed wings seated alongside goddess (?), from Xeste 3, Room 3a; compare with AV16, AV17, TK16, TK17, AL04.

Date: LM IA

Doumas 1992, 165, fig. 128.

TH21: Young boy with yellowish skin and bare blue scalp, from Xeste 3, Room 3b;

compare with AV02.

Date: LM IA

Doumas 1992, 146, fig. 109, 148, fig. 112.

TH22: “Boxing Boys” wearing anklets and armbands, from Beta Sector, Room Beta 1;
compare anklet with AV31; compare armband with AV02.

Date: LM IA

Doumas 1992, 112-3, figs. 79-80.

TH23: Young female adorant with large spotted cloak and anklets, from Xeste 3, Room
3a; compare anklet with AV31.

Date: LM IA

Doumas 1992, 144, fig. 107.

TH24: Mature female adorant holding necklace, from Xeste 3, Room 3a; compare worn
necklace with TK10 – TK12.

Date: LM IA

Doumas 1992, 138, fig. 101.

The Mainland Sites

Mycenae

MY01: Imitation stone dado, from the Ramp House; compare reports with TK01, TK04,
AL01, MR02, QT01.

Date: LH II / LH IIIA

Reported in Immerwahr 1990, 190.

MY02: Painted grid on plaster floor, from the Main Courtyard; compare reports with
TK01, TK02.

Date: LH III

Reported in Hirsch 1980, 454-6.

MY03: Collection of toreador fragments with (half?) rosette and ladder motif border, from the Ramp House Deposit; compare bull-leapers with AV02, AV18, AV20; compare spotted bulls with AV02, AV18 – AV24; compare rosette with AV12; compare ladder motif with AL04.

Date: LH II / LH IIIA

Immerwahr 1990, 190, col. pl. 16.

MY04: Representation of palace façade with beam ends and falling warrior, from the main room of megaron; compare with AV04, AV05, AV25, AV29, TK08, TK09, TK18.

Date: LH IIIB

Rodenwaldt 1922, pl. 2B, Immerwahr 1990, 192.

MY05: Half-rosette frescoed dado, from the Megaron Court; compare reports with AV12.

Date: LH IIIB

Reported in Immerwahr 1990, 144, 194.

MY06: Fragment depicting architecture with partial leg and boot, from northwest of the megaron; compare leggings with AV10, AV20.

Date: LH III

Rodenwaldt 1922, 28-9, fig. 16.

Tiryns

TR01: Imitation Stone dado, from the Inner Forecourt; compare reports with TK01, TK04, AL01, MR02, QT01.

Date: LH IIIA

Reported in Immerwahr 1990, 204.

TR02: Floor fresco with checkerboard squares and marine motifs, from the megaron floor; compare with TK01, TK02.

Date: LH III

Rodenwaldt 1912, pl. 19; see also Hirsch 1980, 453-4.

TR03: Bull-leaper with white leggings and vaulting over spotted bull under ladder motif border, from the small court to northeast of bathroom; compare leaper with AV18, AV20; compare ladder motif with AL04.

Date: LH IIIB

Rodenwaldt 1912, 162-5, pl. 18.

TR04: “Women’s Frieze” with tricolor ladder motif and rosette border, from the Later Palace, West slope rubbish deposit; compare ladder motif with AL04.

Date: LH IIIB

Immerwahr 1990, 202, pl. 56.

TR05: Wings of large sphinxes/griffins (?), from the West Slope; compare reports with AV17, AL04.

Date: LH IIIB (or earlier?)

Reported in Immerwahr 1990, 203.

TR06: Spotted dogs with furry tails hunting a boar in vegetative landscape, from the Later Palace, West slope rubbish deposit; compare dogs' furry tails to AV14; compare scene to AV13.

Date: LH IIIB

Rodenwaldt 1912, 124, fig. 55; see also Immerwahr 1990, 202.

TR07: Head of life-size bull, no context; possibly compare with AV02, AV07.

Date: Unknown

Reported in Immerwahr 1990, 203.

Pylos

PY01: Imitation stylized stone dado, from Hall 64, Northeast Wall; compare with TK01, TK04, AL01, MR02, QT01.

Date: LH IIIB2

Lang 1969, 169, pl. 140(1 D 64).

PY02: Imitation stylized stone dado with "easter egg" stone, from the plaster dump at the northwest slope; compare imitation stone with TK01, TK04, AL01, MR02, QT01; compare "easter egg" motif with AV07, AV08.

Date: LH IIIB2

Lang 1969, 173, pl. 98(13 D 44b), pl. Q.

PY03: Floor fresco with grid and octopus, from the megaron floor; compare with TK01, TK02.

Date: LH III

Preziosi and Hitchcock 1999, 157, 160, fig. 97.

PY04: Lyre player on red ground with rocky border, from the Throne Room; compare red background and rocky border with AL03, AL04.

Date: LH IIIB2

Lang 1969, 79-80, pl. 27(43 H 6), pl. A; see also Immerwahr 1990, col. pl. 18.

PY05: Head under black and white checkerboard on blue ground, from northeast of the palace; compare checkerboard with ladder motif on AL04.

Date: LH IIIB?

Lang 1969, 78, pl. 25(38 H ne), pl. C.

PY06: Representation of building façade with half-rosettes facing inward under horns of consecration, from Court (3); compare rosettes with AV12.

Date: LH IIIA/B

Lang 1969, 139-40, pl. 78(8 A 3), pl. I; see also Immerwahr 1990, 127, fig. 35c.

PY07: Half-rosettes in frescoed “metopes,” from the plaster dump at the northwest slope; compare with AV12.

Date: LH IIIB

Lang 1969, 156, pl. 90(20 F nws), pl. 139.

PY08: Half-rosettes in frescoed “metopes,” from the plaster dump to the southwest of the southwest building; compare with AV12.

Date: LH IIIB

Lang 1969, 156-7, pl. 91(21 F swsw), pl. 139.

PY09: “Life-size” heraldic (?) griffins and lions, from near the throne in Room 6;
compare reports with AV17, AL03.

Date: LH IIIB2

Reported in Immerwahr 1990, 199.

PY10: Frieze of “life-size” griffins and lions, from Hall 46, Room 43; compare with
AV17, AL03.

Date: LH IIIB2

Immerwahr 1990, 199, pl. 79.

PY11: Fragment of life-size bull, from the Throne Room; compare reports with AV07,
AV21 – AV24.

Date: LH IIIB2

Reported in Immerwahr 1990, 198.

PY12: Toreador in white kilt, from the Wine Magazine (105) in pit below floor level;
compare with AV02, AV18.

Date: LH IIIA (?)

Lang 1969, 77, pl. 24(36 H 105), pl. C; see also Immerwahr 1990, 196, col. pl. 17.

Appendix II: Catalogue of Selected Non-Fresco Comparanda

This catalogue includes only selected objects of a non-fresco nature and is not intended to be comprehensive with regard to either sites represented or objects from those sites that are included. There are undoubtedly numerous additional objects that could be included, but the purpose of those listed below is to support and supplement the primary catalogue in Appendix I. Therefore, there is no need for this catalogue to be exhaustive.

Key

| | | |
|------------|---|--------------|
| ALb | - | Alalakh |
| ARb | - | Argos |
| ATb | - | Ayia Triadha |
| AVb | - | Avaris |
| KNb | - | Knossos |
| MRb | - | Mari |
| MYb | - | Mycenae |
| PHb | - | Phaistos |
| PKb | - | Palaikastro |
| PYb | - | Pylos |
| THb | - | Thera |
| TKb | - | Tel Kabri |
| TRb | - | Tiryns |
| QTb | - | Qatna |
| VAb | - | Vapheio |
| ZKb | - | Zakro |

The Aegean Sites

Knossos

KNb01: Red gypsum imitation of rocky shore, from the Queen's Megaron; compare with

AV08, TK05, TK06, AL03, AL04.

Date: MM III

Evans 1930, 365-6, fig. 243.

KNb02: Faience Town Mosaic, from north of Loomweight Deposit Basement; compare with AV04, AV05, AV25, AV29, TK08, TK09, TK18.

Date: MM IIIA (?)

Immerwahr 1990, 68-70, pl. 24.

KNb03: Limestone half-rosette frieze, from the northwest entrance; compare with AV12.

Date: MM III

Evans 1928, 590-2, fig. 368.

KNb04: Faience fruit (pomegranate?), from the Temple Repositories; possibly compare with TK13.

Date: MM III

Evans 1921, 500, fig. 358.

KNb05: Kamares amphora depicting palms, from the Loomweight Basement; compare palms with AV10.

Date: MM IIB / MM IIIA

Immerwahr 1990, 22, pl. 4.

KNb06: Faience palm tree, from the Temple Repositories; compare with AV10, AV11.

Date: MM III

Evans 1921, 500, fig. 358.

KNb07: Faience “flower pot” with plant with rounded leaves, from the Temple

Repositories; compare with TK14.

Date: MM III

Evans 1930, 277-9, 281, fig. 187A.

KNb08: Floral Style “Flower-pot” showing grass motif, from the area of the East

Staircase; compare with AL05.

Date: LM IA

Evans 1930, 277-9, fig. 187.

KNb09: Sealing showing standing priest with long robe, possibly from the West Quarter

of the Palace; compare robe with AV04.

Date: Unknown

Evans 1935, 404-5, fig. 336.

Phaistos

PHb01: Floral Style jug, from unknown original location; compare with AL05.

Date: LM IB

Vlachopoulos 2000, 650, fig. 17.

Ayia Triadha

ATb01: Ivory Seals with maze pattern, from the Ossuary Tholos; compare with AV03.

Date: EM III

Evans 1921, 121, fig. 90.

ATb02: Scene with fore-facing sacrificial bull bound on altar, from the Ayia Triadha

Sarcophagus; compare with AV02.

Date: LM IIIA (early)

Evans 1930, 39, fig. 24; Immerwahr 1990, 180-1.

Palaiastro

PKb01: Red stucco grid for inlaid floor orthostates, in the palace; compare reports with

TK01, TK02.

Date: Unknown

Reported in Hirsch 1980, 456.

Zakro

ZKb01: Red stucco grid for inlaid floor orthostates, in the palace; compare reports with

TK01, TK02.

Date: Unknown

Reported in Hirsch 1980, 456.

ZKb02: Sealing depicting spiraled cross pattern, from unknown original location;

compare spiral with maze on AV03.

Date: Unknown

Hogarth 1902, 88-9, pl. 10(134).

ZKb03: Sealing depicting geometric meander pattern, from unknown original location;

compare meander with maze on AV03.

Date: Unknown

Hogarth 1902, 88, pl. 10(133).

ZKb04: Sealing depicting gate/shrine flanked by lions with half-rosette (?) frieze, from unknown original location; compare rosettes with AV12.

Date: Unknown

Hogarth 1902, 87, fig. 28, pl. 10(112).

ZKb05: Sealing depicting fore-facing bull head, from unknown original location; compare with AL02.

Date: Unknown

Hogarth 1903, 84-5, pl. 8(81).

ZKb06: Sealing depicting bucranium, from unknown original location; compare with AL02.

Date: Unknown

Hogarth 1902, 84-5, pl. 8(80).

ZKb07: Sealing depicting lion (?) in flying gallop in rocky landscape with palm tree (?), from unknown original location; compare lion with AV15; compare rocky landscape motif with AV13, TK05, TK06, AL03, AL04; compare palm with AV10, AV11.

Date: Unknown

Hogarth 1902, 87, pl. 9(105).

ZKb08: Sealing depicting bull (in side view) turning head (fore facing) with leaper over back, from unknown original location; compare bull's turned head with AV02; compare bull-leaping scene with AV02, AV18 – AV24.

Date: Unknown

Hogarth 1902, 86, pl. 9(96).

Thera (Akrotiri)

THb01: Light on Dark jug depicting blowing reeds/grasses, from unknown original location; compare motif with AL05.

Date: LC I

Vlachopoulos 2000, 647-8, fig. 14.

THb02: Dark on Light jug depicting static grasses capped by seed tufts, from unknown location; compare grasses and seed tufts with AL05.

Date: LC I

National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Thera Room.

The Mainland Sites

Mycenae

MYb01: Stucco Tablet with Warrior Goddess and yellow and blue ladder motif border, from Tsountas' House; compare ladder motif with AL04.

Date: LH IIIB

Immerwahr 1990, 191-2, pl. 62.

MYb02: Porphyry row of half-rosettes and “denticles,” from the Citadel; compare half-rosettes with AV12; compare Schliemann’s “denticles.” with ladder motif on AL04

Date: Unknown

Schliemann 1880, 96-7, fig. 151.

MYb03: Golden tripartite shrine ornament (?) with half-rosette frieze and masonry base, from Grave Circle A, Shaft Grave 3; compare half-rosettes with AV12.

Date: LH I

Schliemann 1880, 267, fig. 423.

MYb04: Bronze dagger with inlaid lilies, from Grave Circle A, Shaft Grave 5; compare with TK10 – TK12.

Date: LH I

Evans 1930, 130-1, fig. 86; see also Demakopoulou 1990, 314, 269.

MYb05: Silver and gilt bull’s head rhyton with gold rosette on forehead, from Grave Circle A, Shaft Grave 3; compare rosette with AV12; possibly compare bull head and rosette with AL02?

Date: LH I

Schliemann 1880, 216-8, figs. 327-8.

MYb06: Gold bull’s head ornaments with double axes between horns, from Grave Circle A, Shaft Grave 3; possibly compare with AL02?

Date: LH I

Schliemann 1880, 218, figs. 329-30.

MYb07: Gold griffin ornament with spiraled wings in flying gallop, from Grave Circle A, Shaft Grave 3; compare with TK16, TK17, possibly with AV16?

Date: LH I

Schliemann 1880, 182, fig. 272.

MYb08: Reused sandstone grave stele covered with layer of painted plaster, from chamber tomb in lower city; compare process of painting on plastered stone with TK03, AL01.

Date: LH IIIC

Immerwahr 1990, 194, pl. 84.

Vapheio

VAb01: “Violent” Vapheio cup with charging fore-facing bull and two falling humans, from LH IIA tholos; compare fore-facing charging bull with AV02; compare falling figures with AV19.

Date: LH IIA

Davis 1974, 479-80, fig. 17.

Argos

ARb01: Sealing depicted fore-facing bull head with upside-down double axe between horns, from unknown original location; compare with AL02.

Date: Late Helladic?

Evans 1921, 435, fig. 312c.

Appendix III: Shared Motifs between the Eastern Mediterranean Sites and the Aegean and Greek Mainland: The Frescoes (Appendix I)

| | KN | PH | AT | PK | ZK | TH | MY | TR | PY | VA | AR |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| AV01 | | | | | | X | | | | | |
| AV02 | X | X | | | | X | X | X | X | | |
| AV03 | X | X | | | | | | | | | |
| AV04 | | | | | | X | X | | | | |
| AV05 | | | | | | X | X | | | | |
| AV06 | X | | X | | | X | | | | | |
| AV07 | X | | | | | X | | X | X | | |
| AV08 | X | | | | | X | | | X | | |
| AV09 | | | | | | X | | | | | |
| AV10 | X | | | | | X | X | | | | |
| AV11 | X | | | | | X | | | | | |
| AV12 | X | | | | | | X | | X | | |
| AV13 | | | | | | | | X | | | |
| AV14 | | | | | | | | X | | | |
| AV15 | | | | | | X | | | | | |
| AV16 | X | | | | | X | | | | | |
| AV17 | X | | | | | X | | X | X | | |
| AV18 | X | | | | | | X | X | X | | |
| AV19 | X | | | | | | X | | | | |
| AV20 | X | | | | | | X | X | | | |
| AV21 | X | | | | | | X | | X | | |
| AV22 | X | | | | | | X | | X | | |
| AV23 | X | | | | | | X | | X | | |
| AV24 | X | | | | | | X | | X | | |
| AV25 | | | | | | X | X | | | | |
| AV26 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| AV27 | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| AV28 | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| AV29 | | | | | | X | X | | | | |
| AV30 | | | X | | | X | | | | | |
| AV31 | | | X | | | X | | | | | |
| AV32 | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| AV33 | X | | | | | | | | | | |

| | KN | PH | AT | PK | ZK | TH | MY | TR | PY | VA | AR |
|-------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| TK01 | X | | | | | X | X | X | X | | |
| TK02 | | | | | | | X | X | X | | |
| TK03 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TK04 | X | | | | | X | X | X | X | | |
| TK05 | X | | | | | X | | | | | |
| TK06 | X | | | | | X | | | | | |
| TK07 | | | | | | X | | | | | |
| TK08 | | | | | | X | X | | | | |
| TK09 | | | | | | X | X | | | | |
| TK10 | X | | X | | | X | | | | | |
| TK11 | X | | X | | | X | | | | | |
| TK12 | X | | | | | X | | | | | |
| TK13 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TK14 | X | | X | | | X | | | | | |
| TK15 | | | | | | X | | | | | |
| TK16 | | | | | | X | | | | | |
| TK17 | X | | | | | X | | | | | |
| TK18 | | | | | | X | X | | | | |
| AL01 | X | | | | | X | X | X | X | | |
| AL02 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| AL03 | X | | | | | | | | X | | |
| AL04 | X | | | | | X | X | X | X | | |
| AL05 | | | | | | X | | | | | |
| MR01 | X | | | | | X | | | | | |
| MR02 | X | | | | | X | X | X | X | | |
| QT01 | X | | | | | X | X | X | X | | |

Appendix IV: Shared Motifs Between the Eastern Mediterranean Sites and the Aegean and Greek Mainland: Non-Fresco Comparanda (Appendix II)

| | KN | PH | AT | PK | ZK | TH | MY | TR | PY | VA | AR |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| AV01 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| AV02 | | | X | | X | | | | | X | |
| AV03 | | | X | | X | | | | | | |
| AV04 | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| AV05 | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| AV06 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| AV07 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| AV08 | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| AV09 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| AV10 | X | | | | X | | | | | | |
| AV11 | X | | | | X | | | | | | |
| AV12 | X | | | | X | | X | | | | |
| AV13 | | | | | X | | | | | | |
| AV14 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| AV15 | | | | | X | | | | | | |
| AV16 | | | | | | | X | | | | |
| AV17 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| AV18 | | | | | X | | | | | | |
| AV19 | | | | | X | | | | | X | |
| AV20 | | | | | X | | | | | | |
| AV21 | | | | | X | | | | | | |
| AV22 | | | | | X | | | | | | |
| AV23 | | | | | X | | | | | | |
| AV24 | | | | | X | | | | | | |
| AV25 | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| AV26 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| AV27 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| AV28 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| AV29 | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| AV30 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| AV31 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| AV32 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| AV33 | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | KN | PH | AT | PK | ZK | TH | MY | TR | PY | VA | AR |
|-------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| TK01 | | | | X | X | | | | | | |
| TK02 | | | | X | X | | | | | | |
| TK03 | | | | | | | X | | | | |
| TK04 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TK05 | X | | | | X | | | | | | |
| TK06 | X | | | | X | | | | | | |
| TK07 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TK08 | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| TK09 | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| TK10 | | | | | | | X | | | | |
| TK11 | | | | | | | X | | | | |
| TK12 | | | | | | | X | | | | |
| TK13 | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| TK14 | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| TK15 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TK16 | | | | | | | X | | | | |
| TK17 | | | | | | | X | | | | |
| TK18 | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| AL01 | | | | | | | X | | | | |
| AL02 | | | | | X | | X | | | | X |
| AL03 | X | | | | X | | | | | | |
| AL04 | X | | | | X | | X | | | | |
| AL05 | X | X | | | | X | | | | | |
| MR01 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MR02 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| QT01 | | | | | | | | | | | |

Appendix V: Motifs in the Eastern Mediterranean Major and Minor Sites

| | | AV | TK | AL | MR | QT |
|----------------------------|--|----|----|----|----|----|
| Non-Figural Motifs | Imitation Stone Dado/Orthostates | | X | X | X | X |
| | Grid Lines | | X | | | |
| | Maze | X | | | | |
| | Ladder Motif Border | | | X | | |
| | Spirals | | | | X | |
| | Ashlar/Beam-End Architecture | X | X | | | |
| | Imitation Ashlar Façade | X | | | | |
| | Hilly Horizon | X | | | | |
| | Riverine Landscape | X | X | | | |
| | Easter-Egg Rocks | X | | | | |
| | Rocky Shore/Landscape | X | X | X | | |
| Boats | | X | | | | |
| Floral Motifs | Waz Lilies | X | | | | |
| | Red/Blue Lilies (Single/Chain) | | X | | | |
| | Pomegranate | | X | | | |
| | Ivy | X | | | | |
| | Palm Tree | X | | | | |
| | Acquatic Plants | | X | | | |
| | Grasses | | | X | | |
| | Half-Rosette Frieze | X | | | | |
| Animal Motifs | Hunters and/or Hunting Dogs | X | | | | |
| | Hunting Felines | X | | | | |
| | Swallows | | X | | | |
| | Bucranium | | | X | | |
| | Griffins in a Landscape | X | X | | | |
| | Heraldic Griffins | X | | X | | |
| Athletic Motifs | Bull Sports | X | | | | |
| | Acrobats | X | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| Other Human Figures | Figures in Long Robes | X | | | | |
| | Bearded Figures | X | | | | |
| | Females with Flounced Skirt/Anklets | X | | | | |
| Stucco Reliefs | Humans | X | | | | |
| | Bulls | X | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

Appendix VI: Comparative Chronologies

The chronologies of the Late Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean present numerous problems, as has already been apparent in this study. Within each region there are several proposals for absolute chronologies and so attempting to compare dates from one site to the next can often result in considerable complications, only to be compounded when trying to compare sites on either side of the Aegean. For example, the miniature frescoes at Tel Kabri are dated to MB IIA/B. If the wall-paintings are to be considered Aegean, then they must have been painted after the beginning of the MM III period, since that marks the appearance of figural wall-painting in the Aegean. The problem arises when considering that a low Aegean chronology places the start of MM III at around 1650 BCE, roughly the same date as the end of the Levantine MB IIB under a high chronology. If following a high Near Eastern and low Aegean chronology, this would suggest that the Aegean miniature frescoes at Tel Kabri were painted in a style that did not then exist in the Aegean: an impossible scenario. These two chronologies are therefore incompatible, and likely at least one of them is incorrect.

Many of the chronologies throughout the Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean are based on knowledge of Egyptian king-lists. For this reason, the crux of the matter largely lies with how confidently scholars can date certain Egyptian kings and the number of regnal years therein. Scholars such as Kenneth Kitchen have put forth very convincing arguments based on king lists and contemporary papyri, such as the Papyrus Ebers

concerning the rising of Sothis.³³⁸ Working backwards from the Iron Age kings through the New Kingdom Kitchen favors low datings of the crucial accessions of Ramses II (1279 BCE) and Tuthmose III (1479 BCE), placing the beginning of the 18th Dynasty at 1550 BCE. Earlier proposed dates for each event, 1290/1490 BCE and 1304/1504 BCE respectively, are deemed unlikely in the first case, or flat out impossible in the case of the earlier dates. Kitchen's proposals have gained widespread acceptance, although even lower dating systems have been proposed, Kitchen's chronology is often referred to as the "high" chronology.³³⁹ Such rejected high chronologies can be found, for example, in the Cambridge Ancient History where the 18th Dynasty begins in 1570 BCE and Tuthmose III takes the throne in 1504 BCE.³⁴⁰ A gap of around 30 years in the grand scheme of things is not insurmountable, and has likely caused more scholastic debate than it warrants. Nevertheless a modified version of Kitchen's chronology, called the "Conventional" chronology, raises some of Kitchen's crucial dates.³⁴¹ Some of Kitchen's dates established exclusively by counting the recorded regnal years must at the very least be taken cautiously and the possibility of higher dates should not be discounted so definitively. I prefer the higher Egyptian chronologies for reasons that will be explained later.

The Near Eastern chronologies are largely based on those of Egypt with significant kings, such as Hammurabi, occupying a similarly crucial role as Ramses II or Tuthmose III. The middle chronology is widely accepted, although ultra-high, high, low

³³⁸ Kitchen 1987, 37-42.

³³⁹ Ward 1992, 63.

³⁴⁰ CAH 1971.

³⁴¹ Kuhrt 1995, 186, 194, 205, tables 15-17.

and ultra-low chronologies also exist with dates ranging by over 100 years.³⁴² A middle chronology as preferred by James Weinstein fits comfortably with most Egyptian and Aegean chronologies and so it is understandably the most favored, although the low chronology favored by Bietak at Avaris should be noted because of the relevance to this investigation. Whereas the low chronology does fit the Aegean evidence, the favored higher Egyptian dates match better with the middle chronology. The middle is what is employed here.

The Aegean is where the evidence of all of these chronologies comes together, at least for these purposes. Based on calibrated radiocarbon dates and Egyptian synchronisms, Warren and Hankey developed what is now called the low Aegean chronology.³⁴³ Placing the beginning of the LM IA at 1600 BCE and the beginning of the MM III New Palaces at around 1700 BCE, this dating system fits better with the low Egyptian chronologies than with Near Eastern evidence or even some discoveries on Crete. For example, the short 35 year LM II matches well with Evans' original dating from Knossos attributing to it no more a 50 year span.³⁴⁴ However, newer evidence from Chania, Myrtos-Pyrgos, Mochlos, Knossos and Kommos all suggest that the period in fact lasted up to 100 years.³⁴⁵ There is also good evidence that the LM IB lasted longer than originally thought as well. Such enhancements of Late Minoan chronology necessitate a reevaluation of the entire dating scheme.

Whatever dating system is established for the Aegean, it must match the archaeological and scientific evidence from Egypt and the Near East. Betancourt notes

³⁴² Weinstein 1992, 29, table 1. See also Dever 1992.

³⁴³ Warren and Hankey 1989, 169, table 3.1.

³⁴⁴ Betancourt 1998, 293.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*; see also Manning 1999, 330, 337.

that the vessels depicted in the Tomb of Rekhmire can be linked to late LM II or LM IIIA:1 examples found by Watrous at Kommos.³⁴⁶ Since Rekhmire dates to the reign of Tuthmose III, the low Aegean chronology proposed by Warren and Hankey is incompatible with Egyptian evidence. Betancourt also notes that the LM IA may have begun as early as 1700 BCE, a full century before Warren and Hankey's dating.³⁴⁷ The best and most comprehensive source on this redating is Sturt Manning's *A Test of Time*, in which he thoroughly examines a broad range of Aegean and Egyptian archaeological and scientific evidence. Manning notes that based on shared artistic motifs and pottery styles the LM IA in the Aegean is contemporary with the late Hyksos period in Egypt and the LC IA in Cyprus.³⁴⁸ The LC IA has been linked with the MB IIC/ III in the Levant and so the LM IA may be associated with the pre-Bichrome phase of those periods. Since the appearance of Bichrome pottery is dated to 1600 BCE by middle and low Near Eastern chronologies, a firm date is provided for the end of the period. He places the beginning of the LM IA at 1675 BCE, pushing the beginning of the New Palaces and the MM III into the 18th century BCE. Since the LM IA period is so crucial to the purposes of this investigation, a firm date is helpful.

Manning also notes that the LM IB ends around 1525 or 1490 BCE and that this period is roughly contemporary with the beginning of the reign of Tuthmose III; therefore, the LM IIIA:1 is contemporary with the mid to late reign of the Egyptian king.³⁴⁹ This dating renders Kitchen's low Egyptian chronology incompatible, although the older, higher chronologies are compatible; the "Conventional" chronology just fits.

³⁴⁶ Betancourt 1998, 293.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 291

³⁴⁸ Manning 1999, 322

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 337-8.

Based on Manning's arguments, I employ the Aegean high chronology. The middle Near Eastern chronology fits with the Aegean high and I see no reason to question its popularity. The Conventional Egyptian chronology is just compatible and so I employ it here, although a higher chronology would be preferred.

| | Aegean | | | | | | |
|------|---------------|--------|--------|----------------|------------------|--------|------|
| | Crete/Islands | | | | | | |
| | High | CAH | Low | | | | |
| 1900 | MM I | MM I | MM IB | | | | 1900 |
| | MM II | | | | | | |
| 1800 | | MM II | MM II | | | MH II | 1800 |
| | MM III | | | | | | |
| 1700 | | MM III | | | | | 1700 |
| | LM IA | | MM III | | | | |
| 1600 | | LM IA | | Neo-Palatial | | LH I | 1600 |
| | LM IB | | LM IA | | | | |
| 1500 | LM II | LM IB | | Final Palatial | | LH II | 1500 |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | LM II | LM II | | | | |
| 1400 | LM III | LM III | | Final Palatial | | | 1400 |
| | | | | | | | |
| 1300 | | | | Post Palatial | Mycenaean Period | LH III | 1300 |
| 1200 | | | | | | | 1200 |

| Egyptian | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|
| | CAH | Conventional | | Low |
| 1900 | 12th Dynasty | 12th Dynasty | | 12 th Dynasty |
| 1800 | | | | Second Intermediate Period |
| 1700 | Second Intermediate Period | Second Intermediate Period | Khyan Apophis | 1700 |
| 1600 | | | | 1600 |
| | | | Ahmose | Ahmose |
| | | | | |
| 1500 | Avaris | Avaris | Hatshepsut Tuthmose III Amenhotep II | Hatshepsut Tuthmose III Amenhotep II |
| | 18th | | Tuthmose IV Amenhotep III Amenhotep IV | Tuthmose IV Amenhotep III Amenhotep IV |
| 1400 | Dynasty | 18th Dynasty | | 1400 |
| 1300 | 19th Dynasty | 19th Dynasty | | 1300 |
| 1200 | | | | 1200 |

| | | Near Eastern | | |
|------|-------------------|--------------|--|--------------------------|
| | | High | Middle | Low |
| 1900 | MB IIA | | MB IIA | |
| 1800 | | | Hammurabi | MB IIA |
| | | | | |
| 1700 | MB IIB | | | |
| | | | | |
| 1700 | Tel Kabri Alalakh | MB IIB | Tel Kabri Alalakh | Tel MB IIB Kabri Alalakh |
| | | | | |
| 1600 | MB III | | | |
| | | | | MB IIC |
| 1500 | | LB I | | |
| | LB I | | | LB I |
| 1400 | | | Arnuwanda I | |
| | | | Kadašman-Enlil I Burna-Buriyaš II | |
| 1300 | LB II | LB II | Kadašman-Turgu Kadašman-Enlil II Hattušili III Tudhaliya IV | LB II |
| 1200 | | | | |



Figure 1. Map of selected sites mentioned in the study.

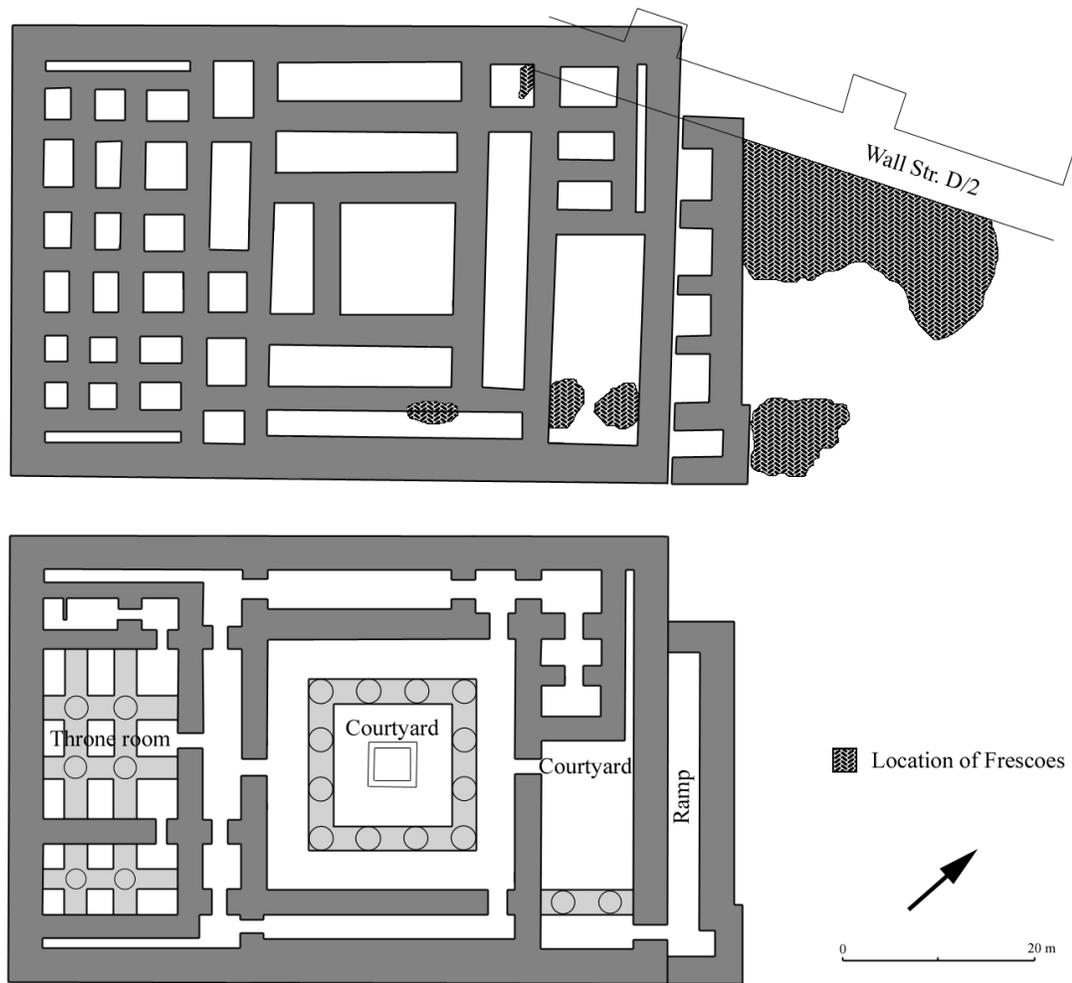


Figure 2. Avaris, plan of Palace F and findspots of frescoes.

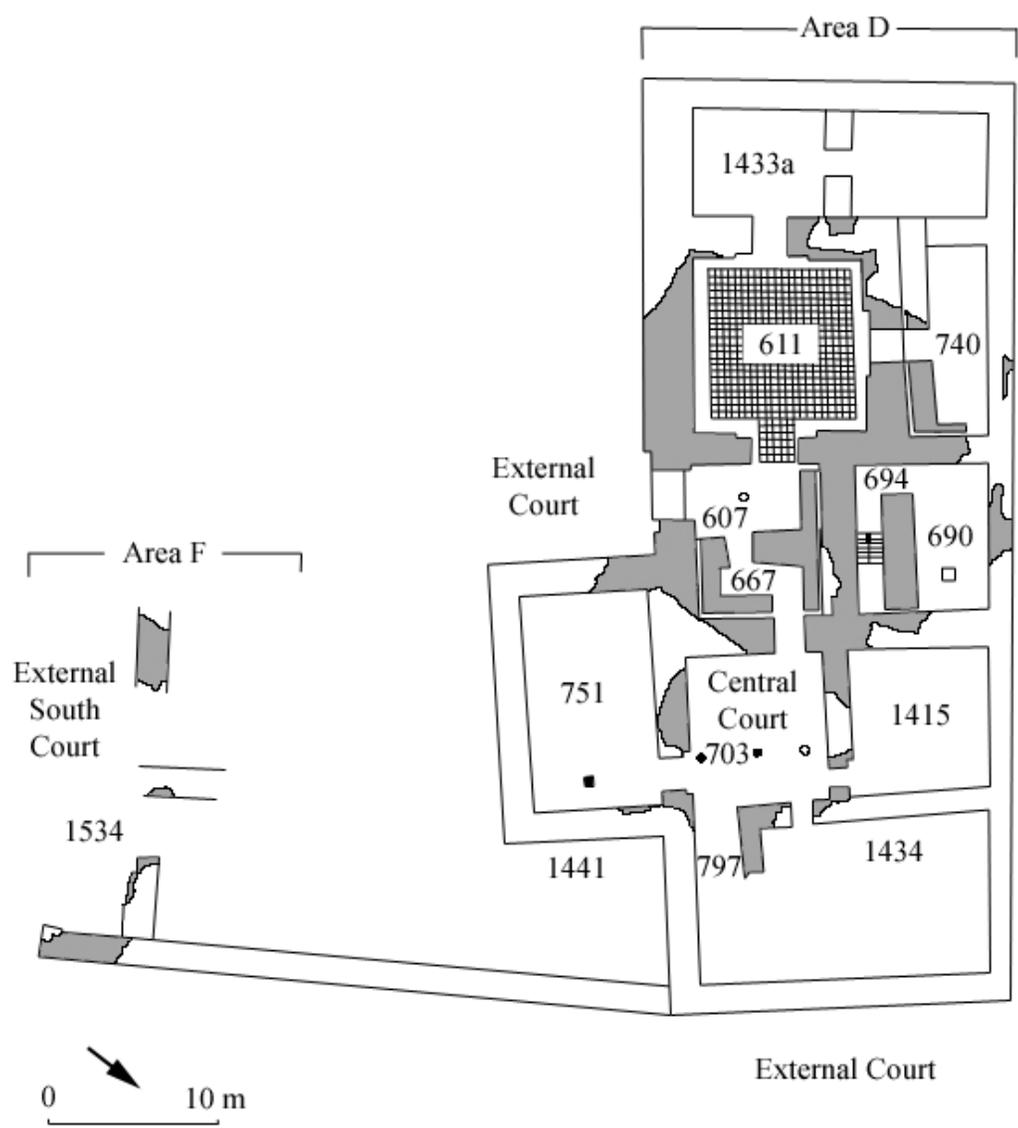


Figure 3. Plan of Tel Kabri.

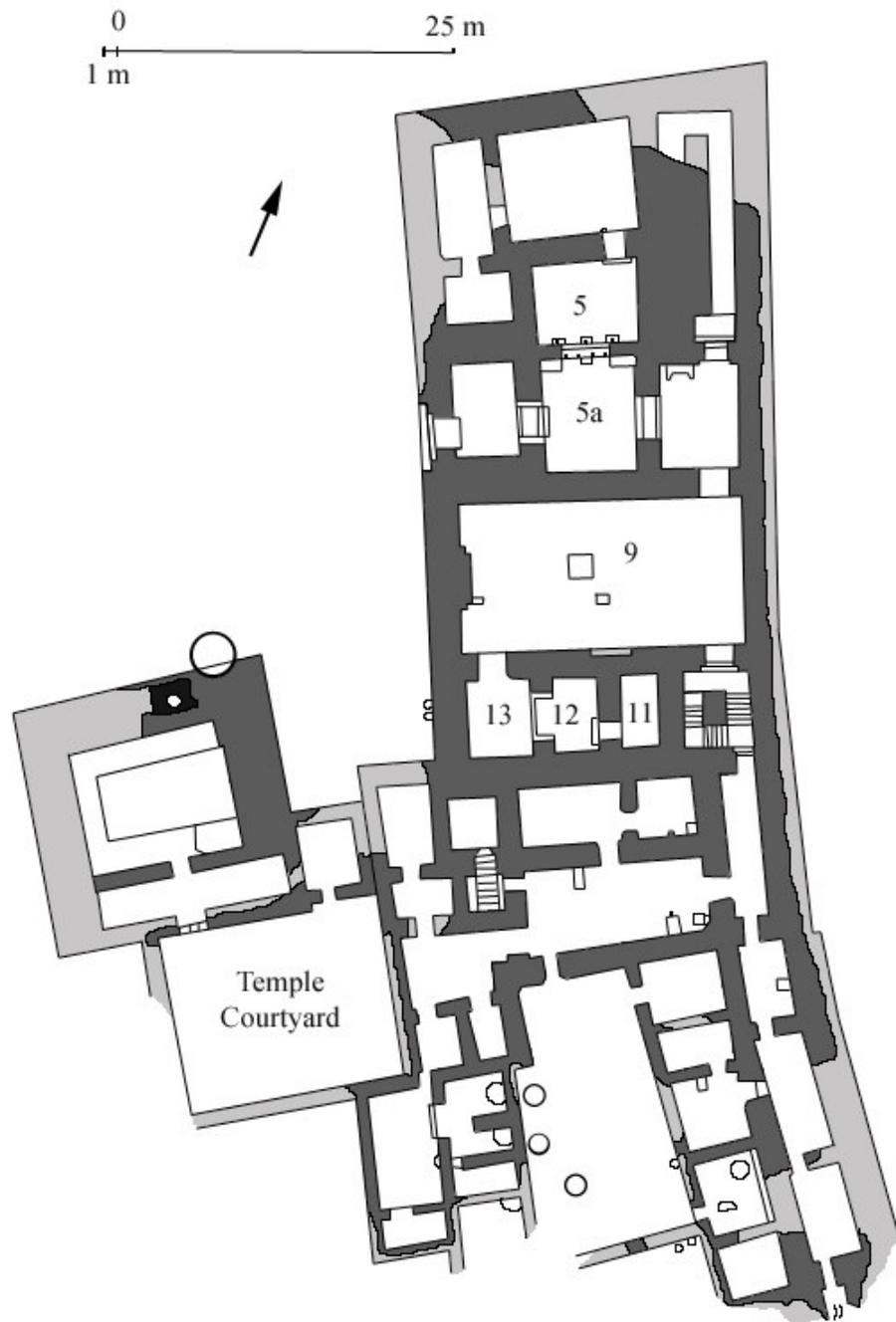


Figure 4. Plan of Alalakh Level VII.

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