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Bull Leaping Frescoes at Knossos and their Influence on the Tell el-Dab‘a Murals

By

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Dedicated to Machteild Mellink* 

Introduction

Excavations by Manfred Bietak at Tell el-Dab‘a in the Eastern Delta in Egypt have recently yielded wall paintings with Aegean affinities – important new evidence for our further understanding of interconnections in the Eastern Mediterranean during the 16th century.¹ Tell el-Dab‘a has been identified by M. Bietak as ancient Avaris, the capital of the Hyksos, a foreign dynasty that ruled in Lower Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period. The Aegean character of the paintings is especially evident from the types of themes represented and from the fresco technique, for it is clear that the pigments were applied when the plaster was still wet. True fresco, in combination with fresco a secco, was typically used in Aegean murals, but not in Egypt where paintings were executed in tempera using gypsum, rather than lime plaster, as a base.

The Tell el-Dab‘a paintings were found in dumps, in fragments scattered in a stratum in an area within a fortified citadel earlier used as a garden, and next to a huge platform of mud-brick, the foundation, as M. Bietak suggested, of a large Hyksos building, possibly a palace. According to Bietak, the wall paintings were destroyed and discarded after the defeat and expulsion of the Hyksos at the start of the New Kingdom. A terminus ante quem for the date of the murals is provided by the upper stratum which contains scarabs of Ahmose and Amenhotep II of the early 18th dynasty. Theoretically, and depending on one’s estimate of the possible life span for the paintings, they could have been made in the Late Second Intermediate Period, as suggested by the excavator, probably during the earlier part of the Late Minoan IA Period², or somewhat earlier.

This paper attempts to locate possible pictorial models specifically for the bull leaping theme among the Tell el-Dab‘a murals and to explore implications about the artists involved and the reasons for the artistic exchange itself. An investigation of the possible role of bulls and acrobatics in Near Eastern cult and religion, a matter that has been and can be investigated more efficiently by others, lies beyond the scope of this study. Parts of the scenes discussed were displayed in the Cairo Archaeological Museum in the summer of 1992 and were directly examined by the author. Other details were seen in slides kindly provided by M. Bietak. Since surfaces are too worn to use photographs, only drawings are illus-

¹ At the time of the writing only one publication was available to me: M. Bietak, Minoan Wall-Paintings Unearthed at Ancient Avaris, Egyptian Archaeology: The Bulletin of the Egypt Exploration Society, No. 2 (1992) 28-28. I am grateful to M. Bietak for providing me with his mss. of two forthcoming articles: Die Wandmalereien aus Tell El-Dab‘a/Esbet Helmi: Erste Eindrücke, in volume IV (1994) of A&L (which has just appeared) and Connections Between Egypt and the Minoan World: New Results from Tell El-Dab‘a/Avaris, Nile Delta, to be published in the Proceedings of a Colloquium held in the British Museum in London in July 1992. Needless to say, I have also profited from M. Bietak’s insights and information, on attending some of his public lectures, unfortunately too late for me to benefit from it, was the important conference at Oxford (April 15–17, 1994), held in honour of Sinclair Hood, in which the paintings from Avaris were extensively discussed.

² Here I use criteria based on traditional chronology. While the ascension of Ahmose to power and the beginning of the 18th Dynasty have been dated to ca. 1550 B.C., the start of the LM IA period is dated to 1600/1580 B.C. Cf. P. Warren and V. Hankey, Aegean Bronze Age Chronology, Bristol 1989, 138 and 169.
trated here, made meticulously by the excavation artist, LYLA PINCH BROCK (Pls. 1–2).

I am aware of two compositions in straight painting that seem to involve bulls (apparently, there are also bulls in relief on a large scale). In one of the former compositions, a bull leaping scene unfolds against a plain red background (Pl. 2), a typical colour for backgrounds in Minoan frescoes. Here, the leaper also displays the sense of abandon in the rendering of the body characteristic of leapers in Minoan depictions, even if the movement does not show the same degree of fluency and grace. I am referring to the acute flexing of one of the legs of the leaper which makes the posture look somewhat awkward. This schema is repeated in the case of tumblers, another favourite theme in the paintings from Tell el-Dab\textsuperscript{2}a.\textsuperscript{3}

In another fragment, probably from the same bull leaping composition, a man appears in front of an exhausted looking bull whose tongue hangs out.\textsuperscript{4} Perhaps the man is about to grab the horns of the bull, as participants in the game are shown to do in Minoan paintings (Pl. 3). The artist of this composition seems quite aware of the conventional iconography of such scenes in Minoan frescoes.

The second composition forms the core of this study, for it is both more unusual and challenging...
than the ones just described. For easy reference, I nickname it the "Bull and Maze Fresco" on the basis of one of the most interesting fragments, in which a bull leaping scene unfolds against a maze-like pattern (Pl. 1). The maze reappears in several other fragments where it is associated with a half-rosette frieze which M. Biétak interprets as a border for this composition, and with a landscape, of which the publication is awaited with great interest.

In order to explore sources of inspiration for this composition, the crucial fact we should take into consideration is that the only place in the Aegean that has produced frescoes that depict bull leaping during the period concerned is the Palace of Knossos. It is reasonable, therefore, to suspect that this Minoan site is the ultimate source of inspiration. This hypothesis, the nature of the borrowing, and the possible channels of transference, however, are

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5 This view upheld by myself from the very first time I heard M. Biétak lecture about the paintings (the Aegean Prehistory Colloquium in New York, February 11, 1992) was also considered independently by L. Morgan in the British Museum Colloquium (supra note 1, 1992), as I learned later.
complex matters whose definition can be undertaken only after a close scrutiny of the evidence.

Because bull grappling and leaping scenes appear in great numbers in various minor media, aspects of the iconography and other issues related to this type of scene will be introduced below with reference to such media. Frescoes, however, must constitute the main area of research, and provide the criteria upon which to judge the possible "ethnic" identity of the Tell el-Dab'a painters. My impression, judging only in terms of the bull leaping composition and not of the entire range of scenes at Tell el-Dab'a is that the artists of these works were not Minoans, unless Egyptianized Minoans. Nor, however, were they amateurs. Rather they appear to have been professional artists whose work reflects an intimate knowledge both of the themes and of the technique used in the Aegean. Comparative analysis of frescoes in all areas of the Aegean makes me believe that the painters were trained at Knossos.

A. Bull Leaping Scenes in the Minor Media in the Aegean

Minor media with bull scenes are mostly in glyptic techniques. They include seals and signet rings, and carved stone, ivory, and metal vessels decorated in repoussé. To these must be added rather rare representations in small scale sculpture in clay, bronze, and ivory, and the unique bull catching scene painted on a crystal plaque found in the Throne Room in the Palace of Knossos. The find-spot of the plaque is marked by a cross (+) in the plan of the palace (Fig. 8).

Such depictions have the advantage over frescoes of being generally fully preserved and, in the case of the seals, more numerous. I shall only highlight aspects of interest to the present study, since the character of the game in seals and other media has been extensively examined by others, as

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6 The main publication on seals is the CMS.
8 S. Hood, Chapter 5, and pp. 121–122 specifically for the Katsamba pyxis.
9 S. Hood, Chapters 7 and 8.
10 Reference here is made to MM I rhyta from the Mesara area in the form of small hollow clay bulls with human figures clinging to their horns (PM I, 188–190, Figs. 137 and 137 d); the ivory leapers from the Palace of Knossos (PM III, 428–435); and a bronze group of bull and leaper found near Rethymnon (PM III, 220–222, Fig. 155).
11 PM III, 108-111, Pl. XIX.
becomes evident from the bibliographical references noted throughout this article.

The actual manner in which bull leaping was carried out is a subject that has concerned many scholars. The bewildering variety of postures depicted in glyptic art probably reflects both actual diversity in the manoeuvres used, and a degree of artistic license. Certain authors have pointed to diachronic representational changes that help establish at least a broad chronological sequence for images of bull leaping. A. Sakellaridou and J. Younger in particular have looked extensively into this matter.

J. Younger, who summarized and extended A. Sakellaridou’s earlier study, advanced the idea that there are three distinct bull leaping schemata. In “Evans’s Schema”, the leaper gained access to the back of the bull by grabbing the horns and being flung backwards (Fig. 1). In the “Diving Leaper Schema” the bull was mounted not from the ground but from an elevated position (Fig. 2). In the “Floating Leaper Schema”, the leaper is shown as holding the horns while floating over the bull’s back. According to J. Younger, the first type is limited to Crete and has an LM I floruit, the second one covers the entire LM period before LM IIIB, and the third is strictly Mycenaean, starting in LH IIIA. Interestingly, the Mycenaean, or third schema, is also known from Egypt by a unique scene carved on a wooden toilet box from Kahun (Fig. 3) dating to the later New Kingdom. While the leaper floats like a Chagall figure over the bull, a less fortunate

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12 See PM III, 222–23, Fig. 156, for Evans’s views. The literature on Minoan bull leaping is immense. Extensive references to studies on the subject can be found in two important articles by J. Younger: Bronze Age Representations of Aegean Bull-Leaping, AIA 80 (1976) 125–137, and A New Look at Aegean Bull-Leaping, Muse 17 (1983) 72–80. See also N. Marinatos, Minoan Religion, Columbia 1993, 219–220.
14 J. Younger (supra note 12).
15 PM III, 222–23.
16 In his 1983 article J. Younger redated the beginning of the third schema to ca. 1410–1380 B.C. (supra note 12, 78), rather than later, as he had suggested in 1974 (supra note 12, 133). In my view, this schema is so unreal as to suggest that the artists had not actually witnessed a bull game.
17 W. S. Smith, Interconnections in the Ancient Near East: a Study of the Relationships between the Arts of Egypt, the Aegean, and Western Asia, London 1965, 140, Fig. 139.
companion who has not been graced with similar powers of levitation, lies on the ground and is about to be trampled. Accidents must have been all too real in the game.

Sphragistic depictions have to be rendered in a limited field and they consequently display distilled pictorial versions of the sport. This does not help with a crucial question: the physical setting. Leaping scenes in seals are typically shown carried out against an essentially vacant background. The rare depiction of a bull-catching scene, identified in one case by the net in which the bull is trapped, shows

It has even been suggested that bull leaping must have usually led to the goring of the leaper, whose death may have been intentional. See J. PIGGENT, Bull-Leaping, in O. KEZYSZKOWSKA and L. NIXON, eds., Minoan Society (Proceedings of the Cambridge Colloquium 1981), Bristol 1983, 259–269.

There are rare exceptions: a seal in the Ashmolean from Priene, which shows the bull next to a square structure from which the leaper gains access to the bull's back (J. BOARDMAN, Greek Gems and Finger Rings, London 1970, Pls. 58, 49.5, and PM III: 183–6, Fig. 129); a seal from Prítsos which shows a couchant bull with a leaper on top and with some plants in the background (J. BOARDMAN, op. cit., Pl. 92). This aberrant depiction seems to be eclectic, transferring plants and geometric patterns, occasionally seen behind couchant bulls (as in CMS II, 3, No. 238, a seal from Gournia), to an already unrealistic bull leaping scene, since the bull is couchant.

The setting to be a landscape (Fig. 4). Friezes with symbolic or decorative patterns occasionally appear in the exergues of the seals and have clear associations with mural depictions that they probably emulate. Among them are represented a row of beam ends, sometimes alongside an architectural cornice (Fig. 5), a running spiral border (Fig. 6), and a frieze of half-rosettes, this in what looks like a Mycenaean gold ring in the Larissa Museum (Fig. 7). This pattern would provide a close parallel for the use of the half-rosette frieze in the Bull and Maze Fresco if the ring is to be trusted as genuine. Half-rosette friezes constituted architectural adornment, as is known from examples carved in stone slabs and in fresco depictions of architecture found in palaces, at Knossos and on the Greek mainland. The carved

See the gold ring from Rutsi, Pylos (CMS I, No. 274).

See, for example, a sealing from the Palace of Pylos (CMS I, No. 370). A similar and probably earlier example is known from a sealing from Zakros (PM III, Fig. 151 and CMS I, No. 517).

Illustrated in J. H. BEELE New Light on Minoan Bureaucracy: A Re-examination of some Cretan Seals, Kadmos VI (1967) 14–40, Fig. 12a.

The seal belonged previously to a private collection (CMS II, 3, No. 517).

For Knossos, see PM II, 163, 368–370, 436, 591, 694; PM IV, 222 ff. For the occurrence at other sites (including those in fresco) see S. A. IMMERWAHR, 144.
Fig. 8. Plan of distribution of Bull-Related murals in the Palace of Knossos. Numbers stand for stucco reliefs, letters for straight frescoes. The "meander" symbol indicates the approximate positions of the Labyrinth Fresco in the East Wing. Stone slabs carved with half-rosette friezes are indicated in the West Wing, where the cross next to D shows the findspot of the glass plaque painted with a bull scene.
stone slabs at Knossos are located in the West Wing (see oval symbol in the plan, Fig. 8). None of these friezes and other borders just discussed, however, tells us much about the scenic setting.

Reliefs in stone, ivory and metal vessels leave such matters vague, but they are somewhat more expansive iconographically when compared with spragistic devices. They reinforce the impression that bull-catching was shown as taking place in the countryside, but once again they provide little information about the setting of bull leaping, which in its rare depiction in these media is seen unfolding against a vacant background.

Does this negative information necessarily imply that bull leaping did not take place in the open, since trees are absent, or is the vacuum to be attributed to some artistic convention intended to differentiate between the visually similar themes of bull catching and bull leaping?

B. Bull Leaping or Bull Catching in Aegean Murals

Putting aside for the time being the occurrence of Mycenaean bull leaping frescoes, for these are too late in date to have inspired the much earlier Tell ed-Dab’a paintings, we turn to Knossos, our only known source of frescoes with such a theme. Here, it is important to note that not one scrap of painting with this theme has been found either in the other Minoan palaces or in any houses in Crete. Sfar, the rich excavations at the Later Cycladic I settlement of Akrotiri in Thera, known to have been within the Minoan sphere of influence, have not yielded a single such example either, even when masses of frescoes were found.25

It is theoretically possible that this is an accident of preservation and that bull leaping frescoes may be found in Thera in the future. Given our present state of knowledge, however, Knossian frescoes remain our basic frame of reference. A potentially instructive line of investigation would be to follow the patterns of distribution of the known occurrences and to examine their possible implications.

Bulls appear in mural decoration in the Palace of Knossos both in painted stucco relief and in straight wall painting. Findspots of the pertinent compositions or deposits of plasterers are noted in a plan of the palace, using arabic numerals as labels of the reliefs and letters for the straight paintings (Fig. 8). Factual information and bibliographical references are given in a selectively annotated catalogue relegated to Appendix 1, thus allowing the text to concentrate on discussion. Mycenaean bull leaping frescoes are listed in Appendix 2 and discussed later.

1. The painted Stucco Reliefs

Of the two media used for murals, place of honour in this survey goes to the stucco reliefs. They must have been particularly important to the Minoans to judge by their usually monumental scale and their powerful modelling, both of which must have created the impression of real life. Since the reliefs are too fragmentary to decide if scenes are strictly speaking bull leaping or bull catching, I have included in Appendix 1 all examples that involve bulls. I have also assumed that generally bulls are unlikely to have occurred in other types of scenes – an impression reinforced by the better preserved compositions. Indeed, hunt and “sport”, the two main contexts in which Minoans were shown dealing with bulls, are integrally interrelated, and are very similar iconographically.

It is interesting that few other animals were portrayed aside from bulls. Griffins play a role in special cases, most probably either accompanying or representing a Minoan goddess, an association that is clear from the paintings from Xeste 3 in Thera and the Throne Room at Knossos.26 The other major themes rendered in relief at Knossos seem to be processions of people and agonistic games, the latter including bull leaping. Stucco relief outside Knossos, both in Crete and on the mainland of Greece, seems to be limited to icon-like images of women (goddesses or priestesses?), like the well known Ladies from Pseira, while at Thera there is limited use of relief in a purely ornamental composition.27

25 For a recent discussion of the bull reliefs, see S. A. Immernahr, 85–88, 162, 164.
27 For the Theran fresco, see N. Marinatos (supra note 12) 147 ff. For the Knossian mural see M. C. Shaw, The Aegean Garden, AJA 97 (1993), 661–685.
28 Many of these figures are illustrated and discussed by B. Kairis, 299–302, 393, PIs. 469a–c, 471a right and 473b (from Pseira, Chania and Mycenae or Tymbas, respectively). For stucco relief in Thera, see C. Doumas, 174–175, PIs. 137–138.
reliefs of either male figures or animals have been found outside Knossos.

Despite the wide distribution of plaster relief fragments in the palace, one cannot be certain about the original locations of the compositions. Such ambiguity would create problems, were we concerned primarily with reconstructing decorative programs—a matter beyond the scope of this paper. The difficulty noted does not, however, detract from the basic and crucial conclusion that scenes involving bulls were all pervasive in the mural decoration of the palace and that the bull was the most prominent theme. The great numbers of fragments and their widespread distribution suggest that such scenes occurred in several other locations besides the two we know of: the North Entrance (Appendix 1, No. 1) and Evans's Great East Hall, which he restored in the upper storey over the central part of the east wing of the palace (Appendix 1, No. 13, and possibly No. 15).

In the first case, the painted reliefs decorated the rear walls of the two loggias or porticoes overlooking the entrance from the north leading into the palace. Preservation is minimal in the case of the East Loggia. In the West Loggia, the most famous detail is the magnificent head of a ruddy bull facing right. Rendered in high relief and with powerful modelling, it is one of the masterpieces from the floruit of Minoan art (Pl. 4). There were hooves and body fragments from at least two bulls, and parts of human limbs, both red-brown and white. The white-skinned person, wearing a "silver ankle ring," was facing the bull. Scenic elements included conventional rockwork and a flowering olive tree, suggesting to Evans that the setting was "the river flat immediately below" the palace on the east. Unfortunately, Evans entirely omits the human figure in his restorations and places instead an olive tree immediately in front of the bull, even though the fragments depicting foliage were found at the south part of the portico, that is, well behind the bull.

Evans noted a tripartite structural division on the wall and proposed a corresponding one in the mural composition. Perhaps such divisions provided a model for the use of successive panels in some of the later frescoes, a suitable scheme for conveying action involving multiple participants and stages. The rockwork at the base was later translated into a stylized decorative border in the Taureador Fresco (Pl. 3).

Inspired by the embossed reliefs on the golden cups found at Vapheio on the mainland of Greece, Evans hypothesized that very similar scenes appeared in both loggias, one involving violent action, the other more calm in tone representing the setting of the lure. This almost implies a repetition of one theme: bull catching, and I cannot help but think that the Minoans would have seized the unique opportunity to juxtapose dramatically the two types of scenes connected with bulls: catching and leaping.

The question of how the scenes would have been viewed is important to our understanding of their function. The corridor leading from the North Entrance to the Central Court is rather narrow and the reliefs were set too high and too far back to be visible from below to those entering the palace. This is a rather disappointing realization, since one might think that such magnificent art was meant to confront and impress visitors, unless the purpose of the scenes was one of indirect impact through magic. The reliefs, on the other hand, could be seen by those leaving the palace when standing at the high point of the ramp near the central court or from windows and balconies in upper floors, and, naturally, by those standing within and across from the decorated loggias themselves. When the reliefs were viewed from across, the columns would have enhanced the impression of pictorial space, while the rhythmical glimpses of galloping bulls and human figures would have heightened the sense of unfolding action and dramatic pace. The same device, but in a more sophisticated version, created a similar visual impression two millennia later in the frieze of the Parthenon in Athens, where only glimpses would be caught of galloping horses and fast moving chariots and people in processions between the columns surrounding the temple's cella.

We turn now to the Great East Hall. Unlike Evans, who attributed fragments deriving from the so-called Blocked Corridor (Appendix 1, No. 13) and from the Loomweight Basement (Appendix 1, No. 15) to two different periods of the hall's decoration, S. Hood has suggested that both sets belonged to a single period, even if found at different levels.

See foldout plan, PM III, Fig. 106.

PM III, pp. 204–5.

See PM IV, Fig. 8. Because of the distance of the findspot of the olive tree fragments, S. Hood (p. 73) expresses concern about the inclusion of the tree, or perhaps about the particular spot in which it was inserted in the restoration. A. J. Evans (PM IV, 17) noted border fragments that convinced him that olive trees stood at either end of the composition, but no such information is recorded either in drawing or photographically in his publication.

PM III, 177–185. One cup shows the luring of a bull, by means of a decoy cow, the other a bull's capture. For the cups, see also E. N. Davis, The Vapheio Cups: One Minoan and One Mycenaean?, The Art Bulletin (1974) 472–487.

S. Hood, 73–75.
Hood’s solution is theoretically possible, for collapse or removal of destroyed murals can be staggered, causing fragments to end up at different locations and levels. If we subscribe to Hood’s theory, we must accept the fact that all the reliefs in this area would have to be dated in terms of the earliest context, i.e., that of the Loomweight Basement. The floor of the basement on which the reliefs were found, as Hood points out, was earlier than the floors in use at the time of the final destruction of the palace.

The decoration of the Great East Hall, as just defined, included human figures, mostly men, one of whom holds a bull’s horn (Pl. 8), parts of bulls (such as the hoof, Pl. 5), but also at least one woman (represented by fragments of two bare female breasts), griffins, a spiral ceiling and part of a “lily crown”, apparently similar to the one attributed by Evans to the Priest King. Action scenes, wrestling and bull leaping, could have unfolded in the presence of a goddess (owner of the female breasts?), accompanied by griffins. Like Evans, Hood opts for an arrangement of the scenes in registers, similar to that on the famous “Boxer’s Rhyton” from Hagia Triada.

One last area with a high concentration of reliefs, some clearly involving bulls and possibly leapers, is that just south of the Great East Hall, as indicated by the locations of Nos. 7–12 in the plan. In addition to the reliefs, there are also straight wall paintings, in one case found with ivory figurines of leapers, to be discussed later. Unless just discarded there, all these thematically related finds suggest that representations of bulls dominated the decoration of the entire East Wing of the palace, without this implying that they were rare in the other wings. Bull scenes occurred everywhere.

Caution naturally has to be applied in trying to visualize the palace decoration, since problems of dating make it difficult to ascertain how much or what of such decoration could be seen in any one single phase. It is important, however, to realize that at least some of the reliefs must go back to the beginnings of the later Palace at Knossos, and may thus belong to the MM III period. As a medium, stucco relief may start even earlier, to judge from the discovery of a fragment apparently in a MM IIIB context in Hood’s Royal Road excavations. The use of relief in LM IA is now attested from the recently discovered murals from Thera where it is used in a decorative pattern. LM IA is also the likely date for the stucco relief Ladies from Pseira, found in a LM IB destruction level. Bull leaping scenes on seals, signet rings and sealings found in securely dated MM III, LM IA and LM IB archaeological contexts, often suggest emulation of monumental representations, presupposing a well established tradition in mural decoration. Recently, sealings with bull leaping scenes were found in a LM IB destruction stratum at Chania in West Crete, together with Linear A tablets. Evidence seems to be pointing to LM I, most likely early in LM IA, the time of extensive building activity in Crete, as the prime age of stucco relief decoration. Whether it was already prominent in MM IIIA, as Evans argued, is difficult to say.

2. The Paintings

Wall paintings depicting scenes with bulls and other pertinent subject matter are rendered in three different scales: large, true miniature, and small. An idea of relative sizes can best be obtained through reference to the size of human figures, for animals are rendered more irregularly and they are not as

35 I am fairly convinced by Kaiser’s identification of a griffin among relief fragments found in the Court of the Stone Spout. See B. Kaiser, 276–277, Pl. 441.
36 For the relief found in a corridor leading from the south wing of the palace to the central court, see PM II, 774–795, and Pl. XIV (frontispiece).
38 S. Hood, 71.
39 C. Doumas (supra note 29).
40 As is argued by the present author in a forthcoming volume (vol. II: The Shrine) in the series of publications on the recent excavations in Pseira (P. Betancourt, ed., University Museum, University of Pennsylvania).
41 J. Younger suggests that bull leaping scenes in seals may go back to the MM III period (J. Younger, supra note 12 [1876] 128).
42 Seals with bull leaping scenes found more recently at Chania are also dated to an LM I date. Papapostolou (supra note 27) passim, especially 7–9. Several of the seal depictions in that group may be copying or imitating scenes in frescoes.
43 For the chronology of the reliefs, Kaiser’s and Hood’s respective views are important. B. Kaiser (287–295) starts with the premise that some of the reliefs, like those of the North Entrance and of the Great East Hall, remained on the walls till the final destruction of the palace and concludes that high relief, like that in the North Entrance, is characteristic of a later date, LM III. I would point out, however, that the material from the Loomweight Basement, agreed by Kaiser to be one of the earliest contexts, includes a mixture of high and low, fine and cursory reliefs, a mixture that Kaiser himself observed in his descriptions of the deposits.

As to the relevance of whether murals stayed on the walls till the final destruction, S. Hood (71–74) provides information that throws doubt on the assumption that the reliefs either of the North Entrance or the Great East Hall remained on the walls till then. Hood suggests that they may have been removed after an earlier destruction in which the palace was burnt, at the end of the MM IIIB period.
Pl. 4: Relief of head of bull from the Palace of Knossos (S. Marinatos and M. Hirmer, supra note 37, Pl. XIV)

Pl. 5: Hoof of bull (photo by J. W. Shaw)

Pl. 6: Leg of possible tau-reator, Palace of Knossos (photo by J. W. Shaw)

Pl. 7: Crown of bull or mane of lion, Palace of Knossos (photo by J. W. Shaw)

Pl. 8: Arm clasping bull's horn, Palace of Knossos (photo by J. W. Shaw)
frequently represented in paintings. Large figures are roughly two thirds to almost life-size; miniature ones are at an average 0.06–0.10 m; small ones range from 0.25–0.35 m, as exemplified here in the Taureador Fresco (Pl.3).

Bulls in large scale are known from three paintings only (Appendix 1, Nos. D, E, H). Of these, one was painted in the West Porch of the palace and it apparently replaced an earlier composition, traces of which were found by Evans in an underlying stucco layer. Both the later bull here and the one in the Anteroom to the Throne Room appear to belong to the latest phase of the palace, judging by the odd colouring of the painted dado, as noted by Evans, and the fact that they were found in situ. It is of interest that both bulls are stationary, or else walking, postures more typical, it appears, in Mycenaean representations. The locations of the two paintings might suggest that in this late period the bull functioned as a symbol, rather than as part of an action scene. Perhaps he was the guardian of the two important entrances. The third painting from the East Wing of the palace is preserved in fragments, body parts and a mane, rendered quite naturalistically (Appendix 1, No. H).

Miniature frescoes are the most informative of all types of mural representations, since even tiny fragments can preserve pictorial details. Four separate deposits have been noted (Appendix 1 Nos. B, C, F, G). Of these, Nos. B and G, from under the kellas of the 13th Magazine and the so-called Ivory Deposit, respectively, convey the important information that bulls were likely shown as if against a "backdrop" of architectural façades and that crowds of spectators watched this sport and other special activities, probably during festivals. The façades are decorated with symbols clearly connected with bulls, such as horns of consecration and double axes, the latter possibly used for stunning the bull during ritual sacrifice. In the Ivory Deposit, there are two bulls, if Evans was right in suggesting that, in addition to the fragment with the horn and ear of a bull, the diagonal form that overlaps a building in another fragment is the back of a bull also (Fig. 9).

44 I estimate the height of the ladies in stucco relief from Pseira to be ca. 1.40–1.50 m. For an illustration of one of these women, see S. Hood 1978, 53; Fig. 35B. The figures in the Theran frescoes, which are often complete, also fall within this range, with children shown in smaller sizes. See C. Tselevantou 'Ἡ ἀπόδοσις τῆς ἀνθρώπινης μορφῆς στὶς θηραϊκὲς τοιχογραφίες, Archaeologiki Ephemeris (1988) 135–166 (especially 150–151).

45 For the Knossian examples, see PM III, 210. For Thera and other Aegean sites Tselevantou provides detailed information (supra note 44, 149–150).

46 For those of the Taureador fresco, see PM III, 210. S. Hood (59–60) suggests a LM II date for this fresco. The figures from the bull leaping scene from Mycenae (Pl. 9), fall in between the large and small categories; they are about 0.10–0.12 m high.

47 Interesting is the juxtaposition of bulls, one walking or standing, the other in flying gallop in the carved stone reliefs of the façade of so-called "Tomb of Atreus" at Mycenae (Appendix 2, No. 5). See restored drawing in J. Younger, The Elgin Plaques from the Treasury of Atreus: Evidence for a new Reconstruction of the Façade, Kolloquium zur ägäischen Vorgeschichte (Mannheim 1987) 138–150.

48 The idea of a "backdrop" is rarely conveyed through overlapping forms in Aegean representations. Usually, subject matter is arranged in informal successive zones or layers with the main action shown at the base or foreground. See, for instance, the Sacred Grove fresco from Knossos (PM III, Pl. XVIII, opp. p. 67) or the scene with drowning men in the miniature painting from Thera (C. Doumas, 58, Pl. 26).
bull in flying gallop, with only the flying hair of a leaper preserved just above him. The plaque was found in an undatable upper stratum in the area of the Throne Room, but the beautifully naturalistic style suggests an early date.49

The other example is an ivory group of human figurines in plunging and other active poses, with kilts in gold foil, rightly taken by Evans to represent leapers.50 Apparently belonging with these figures, found with the fragments of the miniature fresco No. F, was the head of a miniature bull made of faience, with gold tubes for the insertion of horns in another material, and with blue glass eyes.51 It is conceivable that both the precious chryselephantine sculptures and the miniature painting with bulls and a façade originated from a single room – a veritable gallery in which the sport was displayed both pictorially in murals and three-dimensionally by the sculptural group probably set over some elevated platform.

The depiction of the sport in painting changes over time. Interesting is the Taureador fresco (Pl. 3), which must date to the LM II–III period and which shares many characteristics with Mycenaean bull leaping frescoes (such as Pl. 9). Interpreted earlier by Sir Arthur Evans as a series of adjoining panels arranged in a frieze, the composition was later restored in toto by Mark Cameron in his dissertation.52 One of the panels is reproduced here for the first time in colour (Pl. 3). Action in the Taureador Fresco takes place without a scenic setting, but, because of its repetitive character and relatively good preservation, the painting offers the most information about the manner of the game and the roles of the human participants. Typical is the disproportionately large bull with dappled skin shown in flying gallop and the participation of leapers and helpers who can be white- or red-skinned. The two colours have generally been taken as conventions in Minoan art signifying female and male figures, as they generally did in Egypt, but scholars over the years have shown concern about the validity of colour differentiation as a criterion of gender. Recently, two authors have addressed the issue once again in reference to bull leaping and the sex of the leapers and have come to the conclusion that the leapers were all male.53

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50 PM III, 423–435.
51 PM III, 434, Fig. 302.
52 M.A.S. Cameron, slides 46–52.
53 S. Damiani Indelicato, Were Cretan Girls playing at bull-leaping? Cretan Studies 1 (1988) 39–47 and N. Marinatos (supra note 27) passim. I do not believe that colour distinction among leapers was intended to denote temporal phases in the act of leaping, as suggested by Damiani Indelicato, 53.
panels probably show a game involving several human participants and bulls. That there are several bulls is clear from the fact that the bulls are differently coloured and patterned in each panel.

Interesting is the outfit of the figures; the codpiece and girdle, stockings, and soft pointed shoes, armlets, bracelets, necklaces, headbands and some times straps around the hands (the cestus, according to Evans, apparently used to give the hands extra strength). Helpers, mostly white-skinned, hold the bull's horns to immobilize him momentarily, to allow the leaper to gain access to the bull, probably by jumping from the side. The somersault over the bull's back is rendered in a torsional compositional pattern and the body straightens itself as the leaper alights on the ground, long hairlocks flying in the air reflecting the motion. As for the social status of the leapers, I tend to agree with Evans that these were from the higher echelons of the society.

C. Bull Leaping in Mycenaean Frescoes

Although the Mycenaean frescoes are too late in date for a strict comparative analysis with the Tell el-Dab'a paintings, they nevertheless merit a short consideration, both to round out the history of the mural depiction of the theme in the Aegean and because, being largely derivative, these frescoes may reflect aspects of the iconography of their prototypes. Bibliographical references and short discussions for the Mycenaean depictions are provided in Appendix 2.

Bull leaping frescoes were found on the Acropolis of Mycenae and in the palaces of Pylos and Tiryns. Of these, the one from Tiryns is rendered in a debased style and is clearly the latest (Appendix 2, No. 4). H. Bulle, the excavator of the Mycenaean palace at Orchomenos, also thought that some figures shown with both arms stretched out in fragments of fresco paintings he found might be leapers, but the pictorial evidence is far from certain (Appendix 2, No. 3).

54 Cf. PM III, 212, for views about methods of bull leaping provided by a rodeo veteran that Evans consulted. M. Bietak has proposed in his lectures that the horns were held in order to immobilize the bull.
55 A. J. Evans refers to Minoan leapers as being aristocrats, quoting the similar status of other rodeo performers, such as Moorish princes in Spain (PM III, 227 ff). Perhaps the LM IA gold pommel of a sword with an acrobat rendered in repoussé, found in the Palace of Malia, belonged to a princely Master of Ceremonies—a titulary head, or even a true gymnast who took part in bull leaping and other acrobatic games (here, Fig. 11).

Of the above frescoes, the most informative is that found in fragments under the Ramp House at Mycenae in two separate excavations, respectively by H. Schliemann in the late 19th century and by the British excavators under the direction of A. Wace, some two decades later (Appendix 2, No. 1). They have been dated to LH II/III, partly by analogy with the Knossian Taureauador Frescoes. Here too, there were panels painted alternately ochre and blue, depicting incidents from the bull games, executed in a similar style. Part of the scene was an architectural façade with windows and women looking out, apparently watching the game. In another panel there is a stationary or walking bull.

My restoration of the entire composition is still in progress, but I illustrate here one of the panels with a leaping scene (Pl. 9). Preserved are three individuals: a red-skinned leaper, of whom only the hand over a bull's back is preserved, and two other participants standing at slightly different levels. These are represented in a fragment preserving their overlapping legs. In the restoration, I interpret one as the helper who steadies the bull momentarily by holding the horns down, the other as the acrobat about to leap. In the real game there may have been successive leapers taking turns. In a miniature fresco from the palace of Pylos, there are also two leapers, one completely preserved and shown as just alighting, the other in front of him represented only by strands of hair (Appendix 2, No. 3). In the fresco from Mycenae, the bull in each panel was rendered differently, and, unless each panel indicated a separate occasion with a different bull, the conclusion would be that suggested as well for the Taureauador Fresco: that the games involved many bulls. If this was common practice, a place outdoors would have made a better arena than the central courts of the palaces, the latter a theory supported by J. W. Graham.

D. Conclusions about the Distribution of Bull Scenes in Aegean Fresco

From the above survey a number of conclusions can be drawn, important perhaps both for their socio-political implications within the Aegean itself, and also for our attempt to narrow down the area with which Tell el-Dab'a was in close contact when the murals under consideration were made.

For the earlier period, in LM IA-IB, the impression one gets is that Knossos was the only place.

E. Content and Style in the Bull and Maze Painting: A Comparative Analysis

The Minoan, indeed Knossian, character of the theme needs no further stressing in the light of the preceding discussions. Other characteristics also lead to the impression that the artists were quite familiar with the particular manner of depiction and with Minoan artistic conventions. We note, for instance, the similarities with the two-colour scheme (white and red), the armlets, bracelets and short kilts worn by the leapers, and even perhaps the episodic detail of accidents, all common in Minoan depiction. I suspect that the leaper in the Bull and Maze scene was depicted as having an accident: his arms are shown slipping down the sides of the neck of the bull, thus losing control, and his hair hangs down instead of flying in the air buoyantly like the hair of more successful leapers. Moreover, the missing upper part of his body must have been directly in line with the bull's horns. Even more crucial for the claim that the artists were trained in the Aegean is their use of fresco, rather than tempera. This is the first time that fresco technique is attested in Egypt.

In contrast to the above, however, other characteristics strike one familiar with Minoan frescoes as being un-Minoan, perhaps even non-Aegean, in the strict sense of the term. For instance, though a frontal face occasionally occurs in LM I or LC I wall paintings and in depictions in the minor arts, bulls' faces are not shown that way until later than the estimated date of the Tell el-Dab'a frescoes. The earliest known Minoan example of a bull with a frontal face is one in a sealing from Sklavokampos (Fig. 6), a site not far from Knossos, destroyed in LM IB, around 1450 B.C. Another example is that of a bull rendered in repoussé on one of the two gold cups from Vaphio in the Greek mainland, roughly of the same date. Also unusual in the Tell el-Dab'a fresco is the choice of yellow, instead of white, for a leaper. Unexpected too is the scale ("small" rather than "true miniature") at which the figures in the Bull and Maze scene, as well as those in other bull leaping scenes, have been rendered in terms of the date proposed for the Tell el-Dab'a material.

Such characteristics seem late in terms of Aegean artistic conventions, but another explanation has to be found, given the date proposed for them by the

57 Though this is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss, it has been my feeling for some time now that the Palace of Knossos retained the privilege among Minoan Palaces to depict figurative frescoes. Minoan houses, by contrast, use figurative frescoes with the approval of the Palace of Knossos with which they may have had a special relationship. This could have been hieratic or religious in nature, like the relationship of all Catholics with the Vatican. Most likely, the appearance of figurative paintings in Mycenaean palaces and houses signifies the termination of such a Knossian prerogative.

58 J. Betts (supra note 22, especially 22, 26–27). A comparable suggestion was made about Horns of Consecration. Those made of stone and used as architectural decoration were most prominently used in the Palace of Knossos, and may represent "a symbol controlled by the Palace". See, A. C. D'AGATA, Late Minoan Crete and Horns of Consecration: a Symbol in Action, Eikon: Aegean Bronze Age Iconography: Shaping a Methodology (Aegaeum 8) Liège 1992, 247–255 (especially 252).

59 Two further examples of frontal faces can be noted, one in the famous monkey fresco from Thera (S. DOUMAS, 121, Pl. 80), the other belonging to one of the agrimia shown sitting on top of the tripartite shrine in the Shrine Rhyton from the Palace of Zakros. See S. MARINATOS and M. HIRMER (supra note 37) Pl. 109. I thank DAWN CAIN and JOSEPH W. SHAW for bringing these two cases to my attention.

60 J. Betts (supra note 22).

61 P.M III, 179, Fig. 123. S. HOOD suggests a date of about 1450 B.C. for the cup (S. HOOD, 166). For this detail of the frontal face see S. MARINATOS and M. HIRMER (supra note 37, Pl. 207).
excavator. I see them as possible adaptations. Style too, the relatively stiff and awkward rendition of movement among leapers and tumblers, intensifies the impression that we are not dealing with Minoan painters, or, if they are Minoan, they have been abroad long enough to have drifted away artistically from the canonic Minoan methods of representation. They would be second or third generation expatriates.

The matter of composition also has a bearing in this comparative analysis, but comments must be seen as highly provisional since restoration is still in progress. One peculiarity here is that the bull is set against the maze pattern (the meaning of which is considered below) and the scene could contain other elements. The presence of a setting in the Tell el-Dab’a fresco places this mural somewhat closer to earlier Aegean frescoes, like the miniature scenes of towns and people and landscapes from a Theran fresco of Late Cycladic IA date, rather than to the Taureador fresco from the Palace of Knossos, where action takes place against a blank background simply painted in a single solid colour (Pl. 3).

This brings us to the question of the specific character of the setting in the Bull and Maze painting, for the topographical features in it have never been encountered in Minoan frescoes either in bull leaping or in bull hunting scenes.

I refer specifically to the “maze” behind the bull and the leaper (Pl. 1). The maze is best discussed from two different perspectives: purely as a “surface” or “rapport” pattern, and then in its role as a topographical symbol in terms of its narrative context. The two terms in quotes will be used as first defined by Helene Kantor in a pivotal study for interconnections in the geographical area considered here, published in 1947. In it Kantor examined decorative patterns as possible reflections of lost patterned textiles exchanged in trade. Such patterns occur both in Egypt, mostly as decorations of ceilings in tombs, and in the Aegean in paintings depicting people dressed in patterned textiles, on painted ceilings, and as background motifs in figural scenes that appear to portray wall hangings. Traditional Egyptian surface patterns tend to simulate matting, rather than woven textile patterns. The introduction of curvilinear, mostly spiraliform patterns, is first attested in Egyptian wall painting during the Middle Kingdom where such patterns have been interpreted as derived from the Aegean.

Spiraliform patterns could be rendered in rectilinear versions as well. Thus, Kantor explained the Knossian Labyrinth Fresco as a rectilinear version of a curvilinear one consisting of antithetical and interlocked C-Spirals, already common in the Aegean in much earlier times. Her Egyptian comparanda for the Labyrinth fresco consisted of symbols on scarabs, starting with the 12th dynasty, and painted ceilings, all from the later New Kingdom. Representative examples of her comparanda are reproduced here side by side with the Labyrinth from Knossos for comparison with the “Maze” Pattern from Tell el-Dab’a (Pls. 11-14). The pattern on the scarab dated to Thutmose I / Hatshepsut, at the beginning of the 18th dynasty, already shows a complexity that anticipates the more florid versions of the related ceiling patterns.

Scrutiny of the Maze Pattern in the watercolour copy (Pl. 10) isolates the maze from its narrative.

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62 I wonder, for instance, if tumblers were also part of this scene. The style and flexed legs of the one example of a tumbler I know of (M. Birat, supra note 1, 1994, Pl. 2) are also characteristic of the more complete bull leaper (Pl. 2, here), suggesting the possibility that the same artist may have been rendering two kinds of gymnasts in one expansive composition.

63 C. Doumas, 58, Pl. 26.


66 See M. C. Shaw and E. Barber (supra note 65, passim). The use of linen for clothing apparently prohibited the use of dying and therefore of woven patterns in Egypt. Foreigners are often distinguished by their patterned clothes, as for instance in the case of Canaanites shown arriving in Egypt wearing patterned clothes, in a painting from the Middle Kingdom tomb of Chumbotep at Beni Hasan (H. A. Groenenwegen-Frankfort, Arrest and Movement, New York 1972, Pl. XXVII).

67 H. Kantor (supra note 64) 26–27, Pls. IV-V. For the Labyrinth fresco see PM III, 356–58, Fig. 256.

68 H. Kantor (supra note 64) Pl. V, k.
Pl. 10: Maze as a "surface pattern" (watercolour by M. C. Shaw and G. Bianco)

Pl. 11: The Labyrinth Fresco (watercolour by G. Bianco)
context, clarifies its anatomy and shows it to be closely similar to the Knossian Labyrinth pattern (Pl. 11). It consists of a simple motif resembling a Capital Letter I, painted red and repeated in rows in which successive Is are placed alternatively in higher and lower levels. A network of black lines, partly outlines the individual Is, and partly interconnects them, thus creating an intricate, maze-like pattern.

The Labyrinth Fresco also features a unit not unlike a Capital Letter I, now defined by multiple red lines which bend at right angles at the ends to create a spiriliform-like pattern (Pl. 11). It is the interlocking of the outer lines that here create again a complex maze-like pattern, but now monochromatic. Maze and labyrinth are not identical, but they involve similar modular motifs and syntax. Importantly, of all examples of “interlocked C-Spirals” from Egypt and the Aegean shown by Kantor, these two are also the only rectilinear versions. The Maze Pattern from Avaris, at any rate, now fills the chronological gap that existed between the scarabs and the ceilings. However, its chronological relationship with the Knossian Labyrinth Fresco, the fragments of which were found in undatable contexts, would be difficult to ascertain.

The meaning of the maze in its narrative context is a more problematic issue. Pictorially, the maze should be understood as a horizontal plane, as if an area seen from above, in cavalier perspective, and not as a vertical backdrop. Both Egyptian and Aegean art, but especially the former, combine profiles with bird’s eye views in one and the same scene. My impression is that this motif represents a pattern-painted stuccoed floor, not unlike other Minoan floors with decorative patterns known already from the First Palace Period, mostly from the Palace of Phaistos (Pls. 15–16) 69.

Minoan floors that are decorated with such abstract patterns are executed in one of two techniques: “incavo”, in which the pigment is inlaid in grooves cut into the surface of the plaster, or by using moulded plaster strips with a rectangular section which are set in the floor where they outline square and rectangular spaces, sometimes forming mander-like designs. The best known examples are those in large official rooms in the west wing of the Palace of Zakros.70 The question of what the empty spaces contained—whether pieces of carpets, wooden planks, or other matter—remains a moot question.

Interestingly, all these floor patterns, whether inlaid or in strips, are often painted red. This is also the colour of the Labyrinth Fresco in which, moreover, the pigment was inlaid within grooves. In view of the examples of floors discussed above, it seems to me that the Labyrinth Fresco is not part of a dado or a mural as Evans thought 71, but rather another of these typical Minoan floors.

Having suggested that the maze in the Tell el-Dab’a painting depicts a floor, I rush to add that we should not see it as a literal depiction of the kind of surface upon which bull leaping was actually performed. Such a floor would have been most impractical: treacherously slippery and fragile. Rather, I believe that the image was used metaphorically. It may have alluded to a type of luxurious building denoted by its intricately painted floors. Similarly, it should not be taken literally that such a delicate pavement would have been used in a court—for a court, or an open area adjacent to a building, is apparently implied as the setting of the bull leaping scene in the painting.

Whether the maze also served more specifically as a pictorial toponym for the Palace of Knossos, to which so much of the evidence surveyed above points, we cannot be certain. If it did, the painting from Tell el-Dab’a would bring us one step closer to a Bronze Age pictorial model for the later Greek myth of Theseus, the Labyrinth and the Minotaur 72.

be discussed in a future publication, consisted of strips of plaster, painted red, found collapsed from an upper storey of a LM I house.

71 For discussions by Evans of the Labyrinth Fresco see PM (supra note 67). There is only one case of a Minoan mural using the “incavo” technique: the Lily Fresco from Amnisos (S. Marinatos and M. Hamer, supra note 37, Pl. XXIII). The reason for this technique here may be a practical one: the lilies are white, the background red. Red was applied over a large area first, for it would have been difficult to paint around stems, leaves and buds. If the lilies had been added in a thick white paste over the red, i.e., using the “impasto” technique, they would have disappeared, for such paste flakes off. This is known from numerous miniature frescoes, where impasto was used for details like the eyes, hair and necklaces added in black and white.

M. Bietak refers to triple incised guidelines in the Maze fragment at Avaris (M. Bietak, supra note 1, 1994, Pl. 15B) and sees this technical detail as bringing the maze closer to the Labyrinth fresco (Written communication April 10, 1994).

72 For discussions on the labyrinth in Greek myth (with excursions to the Bronze Age) see PM I: 358–359, 447, and, more recently, S. P. Morris, Daidalos and the Origins of Greek Art, Princeton 1992, 186–190, 196–197. Note that the name Theseus occurs (as “te-se-u”) in a Pylian Linear B tablet and

69 S. A. Immerwahr, 22–23, Fig. 6 c and d (after D. Levi, Festos e la civiltà minoica I (Incunabula Grecia 60), Rome 1976, 85, Pl. XIV and LXXXV a and b).

70 For such floors, see J. W. Shaw, Minoan Architecture: Materials and Techniques, Rome 1973, 18, Fig. 5 and 217–218. To these examples must now be added one I identified in P. Betancourt’s recent excavations at Pseira. The evidence, to
Pl. 13: Painted Egyptian ceiling of the later New Kingdom (computer generated pattern, made by M. Nelson, after P. Fortova-Samalova, L’Ornament Egyptien (Prague 1963) 55, Pl. 169)

Pl. 14: Painted Egyptian ceiling of the later New Kingdom (computer generated pattern, made by M. Nelson, after P. Fortova-Samalova, L’Ornament Egyptien (Prague 1963) 41, Pl. 134)
If it did not, we would have to assume further local adaptation and a syncretism that also took into account old cultic traditions involving bulls prevalent in various periods in Egypt and other areas in the Near East.

Regarding the possible allusion to the Palace of Knossos, we should note that Evans compared the Labyrinth Fresco with Egyptian signs for a palace and associated the fresco with another of white marbling patterns, of which fragments were found nearby. According to Evans, fragments of both were found somewhat east of the Hall of the Double Axes — information which is now being questioned by others. Whether from the East Wing or not, it is that a hero killing a Minotaur appears in Greek reliefs, metal and stone, already in the Archaic period (see J. Neils, The Youthful Deeds of Theseus, Rome 1987). Interesting are also a labyrinthine pattern engraved on a Linear B tablet from the palace of Pylos, and the reference in a Linear B tablet from the Palace of Knossos to the "Mistress of the Labyrinth" (both discussed in T. Palaima, Mycenaean Scribal Aesthetics, Akten: Aeggaeanae Bronzne Iconography: Shaping a Methodology (Aegaeum 8), Liège 1992, 65–75). A Minotaur-like creature appears in Bronze Age seals (N. Schläger, Minotavros in der ägyptischen Glyptik?, in CMS, Beihäft 3: Fragen und Probleme der Bronzzeitenlichen ägyptischen Glyptik, Berlin 1989, 225–239) and if these survive in Greek times, they may have played a role in the formulation of the Greek myth.

I briefly reviewed such evidence for a possible Bronze Age background for the myth of Theseus in a lecture given in the Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America, held in December 1993, in Washington.

Such traditions are best discussed by experts in these areas. My concern is to what extent such bull cults were still alive at the time of the Avaris paintings. For views on this matter see M. Bernal, Black Athena: the Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization, vol. I, New Brunswick and New Jersey, 1997, 174), where the suggestion is made that bull and maze were associated notions in Egyptian writing in the Old Kingdom. Unlike the case with paintings from Crete and Avaris, however, Egyptian depictions and literary references imply fights between the bulls themselves and do not involve bull leaping games or confrontations between bull and man. See: A. B. Lloyd, Strabo and the Memphite Tauromachy, Hommages à Maarten J. Vermaseren, eds. M. B. de Boer and T. A. Eriugode, vol. II (Études préliminaires aux Religions Orientales dans l'Empire Romain 8), Leiden, 1978. Though concentrating on the Roman period, the author discusses earlier evidence of tauramachies as well. I thank M. Bernal for bringing this article to my attention.

For the presence of bull games in Syria see now: D. Collon, Bull Leaping in Syria, A&L IV, 81–88. This reference was provided by Charles E. Jones through AegeanNet internet, for the volume had not arrived in Toronto at the time I submitted any article.

The labels in the museum storerooms also give the location as "East of the Hall of the Double Axes," as reported by M.A.S. Cameron, I, 114–115; III, 125 and 139 (Fragments 146 A-B, 146 G and 168B, no. 3). In these labels the labyrinth is referred to as a dado. That the find-spots may not be those stated by Evans was brought to my attention by Sinclair Hood, who referred me to Vasso Fotou, who is working presently on the Knossos Archives. She informs me that the ambiguity exists and at least the marbled pattern fragments seem to have been found northeast of the East Wing of the palace (April 21, 1994).

Similar concerns about the frescoes at Avaris were apparently voiced in the Colloquium of the British Museum (supra note 1). See V. Hankey, Egypt, the Aegean and the Levant, Egyptian Archaeology: The Bulletin of the Egypt Exploration Society, No. 3 (1999) 27–29. I prefer to limit my own comments to the bull leaping scenes, as I am not familiar enough with the entire range of paintings from Tell el-Dab'a. It is conceivable that artists came from various parts of the Aegean.
Pl. 15: Painted floor from the Old Palace at Phaistos
(watercolour by G. Bianco, after Levi, supra note 69,
Pls. XIV and LXXXV a)

Pl. 16: Painted floor from the Old Palace at Phaistos
(watercolour by G. Bianco, after Levi, supra note 69,
Pl. LXXXV b)
Another possibility is that the Hyksos rulers hired itinerant artists. These could be Minoan painters who had been trained in Crete and the Aegean and who had moved over the years from place to place abroad selling their trade. One would expect, in that case, a degree of acculturation in the process, depending how long these artists lived abroad. Acculturation would have been more radical if the artists hired were second generation Minoans, trained by their fathers, or even Canaanite apprentices. In either case, their art would display the hybrid character of their diverse cultural backgrounds.

Evidence is now growing that itinerant artists painted murals in Near Eastern, and even Mesopotamian sites. In my view, their murals and painted floors range in character from almost pure Minoan to Minoanizing. To sites with such murals known from a long time ago, such as Alalakh and Mari, can now be added the more recently excavated site at El Kabri. The Hyksos rulers may have imported such professional painters working in the Levant, if they did not have equally qualified artists living at Avaris.

Whatever the case among the possibilities listed above, it is clear that the execution of the particular paintings at Avaris is divorced from the initial training experience at Knossos. The distance created could be due to passage of time, the cultural identity of the artists, or both. Theme, representational conventions and technique could still be basically Minoan, but the stylistic intracacies of pure Minoan or Knossian work were not mastered. Just as few are able to adopt a new language completely without accent to the ear of a native speaker, so too in the visual arts differences of style are obvious to the trained eye.

My last comments have to do with the question of how much of this cultural exchange is rooted in the Middle Kingdom—a complex issue that I can only touch upon. As noted earlier, in addition to bull leaping, there were scenes depicting tumblers at Tell el-Dab'a, a theme also known from a few Aegean seals. These coincidences make one wonder whether games were also part of the exchange. Gymnasts, acrobats, dancers and leapers may have travelled back and forth between Avaris or other parts of Egypt and the Aegean and the Near East. Egyptian depictions of such performers are known already from the Old Kingdom and they eloquently demonstrate that, as in the Aegean, in Egypt too there had been an interest in the pictorial display of youthful stamina, agility and grace. Indeed, a rather sophisticated pictorial vocabulary was already developed to express these states. Among the many depictions in Egypt, I illustrate only one example, a Middle Kingdom tomb relief from Qau El Kebir (Fig. 10), with tumblers depicted in a posture that is remarkably similar to that of a Minoan acrobat.

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77 Eric Cline, who is presently writing on itinerant craftsmen during the Bronze Age, has kindly provided me with the following reference: C. Saccagnini, Patterns of Mobility among Ancient Near Eastern Craftsmen, JNES 42 (1983), 245–264.

78 For Alalakh see: W. S. Smith (supra note 17) 19, 20, 49, 75, 102–104 and Figs. 136–137. For Mari see: W. S. Smith (supra note 17) 18, 20, 49, 96, 98–103 and Figs. 126–135 (including comparanda from other areas).


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80 Here I would like to mention an important theory by Sinclair Hood, which unfortunately came too late to my knowledge for me to be able to give it the attention it deserves. I read about it in a copy he sent me of his ms. to be published in the proceedings of the British Museum Colloquium (supra note 1 and V. Hankey, supra note 75). Put simplistically, because of lack of space, his view is that fresco painting originated in the Levant, whence it was transferred to Crete. The Avaris paintings are local products made by the Hyksos, themselves originally Levantines. As they ante date any Minoan figurative frescoes, the Hyksos paintings must have served as models for the Minoans.

Despite my view that the Avaris paintings show some hybridization, I also believe that they use Minoan prototypes, which may well have already existed by the beginning of the earlier part of the Late Minoan IA period. Bull leaping scenes seem to be much more at home in the iconography of the Aegean and they show the rich range of rendition more typical of creative rather than derivative art.

81 For tumblers in Aegean seals, see PM IV, 501ff. S. Hood dates the sealing found in the area of Knossos to the MM IIIIB: 1600–1550, and the sealing from a lentoid seal from Mycenae to LH III, before 1200 B.C. (S. Hood, 228). N. Marinatos has recently suggested that a Theran painting also shows a tumbler (see article in this volume).


83 W. S. Smith, The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt (revised with additions by W. K. Simpson) Harmondsworth 1981, 191, Fig. 85 shows the mural as preserved. My restoration in Fig. 10 simply completes the lines and must approximate the original, although the particular gesture of the hands is not certain.
rendered in repoussé on the base of a sword pommel (ca. 1550–1500 B.C.) from the Palace of Mallia in Crete (Fig. 11).

Such affinities remind us that the importation in Avaris of foreign art must be seen in the context of an already ongoing cultural exchange between Egyptians, Minoans and others, especially during the Middle Kingdom. Paradoxically, and despite this realization, there are only a few close and obvious affinities between Minoan and Egyptian wall paintings one can claim for this or the succeeding LM I period. The reason perhaps is that while Minoans and true Egyptians were too steeped in their respective and well established wall painting traditions to engage in explicit copying, the Hyksos may not have had a similar tradition of their own. In this case, we have them to thank for revealing to us such evidence of contact and exchange, through the unabashed and enthusiastic adoption of a foreign art they so admired, and which, for a short while at least, they made their own.

APPENDIX I

Painted Stucco Reliefs and Wall Paintings with Bull Leaping and Related Scenes from the Palace of Knossos

As noted in the main part of the article above, the findspots of the murals are marked in a map of the palace (Fig. 8) by Arabic numerals (the reliefs), and capital letters (the paintings). A selectively annotated catalogue below lists the examples in the same topographical order.

Due to fragmentary preservation, the identification of bull related scenes occasionally remains tentative. Ambiguous examples below are indicated by the question mark(s) (? / ?) following the appropriate catalogue title. Double question marks indicate cases where no bull parts occur, but parts of human figures may have belonged to leapers, as described below. In the case of the published examples of murals listed below, further bibliographical references can be found in S. A. Immerwahr, 170–179.

A. The Painted Stucco Reliefs

Since there is not a single truly complete published record of the reliefs from Knossos, the information below is compiled from three main sources, in addition to old personal notes from my partial examination of the material in the storerooms of the Herakleion Museum. In the case of the former, Evans limited publication in the PM vo-

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44 For a detailed record of evidence for interconnections see P. Warren and V. Hankey (supra note 2), passim.

45 For a recent discussion of affinities between wall paintings in Egypt and the Aegean, see S. A. Immerwahr, passim. Recently published frescoes from Thera show monkeys mimicking humans by playing musical instruments and by wielding swords (S. Doumas, 134, Pls. 95–96), both actions typically shown in scenes acted out by various animals in Egyptian satirical papyri. These, however, are later than the Theraan paintings, and so we cannot be certain about the direction of transference of such themes. For examples of such papyri, see S. Curto, La Satira nell'Antico Egitto, Turin 1965, Figs. 5, 6, 9.

46 Because of their very fragmented state, few reliefs are on display. With the kind permission of the British School of Archaeology in Athens, I had a chance to look at the reliefs in
lumes to impressive pieces only, while M.A.S. CAMERON’s and B. KAISER’s premature deaths led respectively to failure to publish a brilliant dissertation on Knossian frescoes and to a posthumous and somewhat incomplete (at least in the illustrations) publication, also of a doctoral thesis.

In comparing these sources, it emerges that the provenance of certain deposits is not always certain. This is partly because of the confusing use of multiple nicknames assigned by Evans to rooms and other locations in the palace, partly because some of the fragments seem to have been transferred accidentally from one storage container to another. Fortunately, some of the fragments had their labels still attached, but ambiguities remain and are individually pointed out below. Because of this problem, I have generally included several alternative place names, as used by the investigators from whom I derive my information. Much help in this difficult decoding task was derived from references to finds spots for all murals in S. Hood’s and Taylor’s survey of the palace.

In the following list of reliefs, references to M.A.S. CAMERON are to the catalogue numbers in his dissertation. B. KAISER has covered as much and additional material, but he omits a few examples related to human figures that CAMERON thought might belong to bull leapers (in No. 2), since only limited areas or details were rendered in relief, the storerooms in 1965, when I was doing research for my doctoral dissertation. Some photos were taken then for study purposes and a few are reproduced here. Some thirty years later, I would like to once again thank my husband for taking the photos and for the heavy crates he helped carry, rather often during what was intended to be our honeymoon vacation in Crete.

See M.A.S. CAMERON in the Abbreviations above. In the past I have avoided capitalizing on CAMERON’s theories, by avoiding reading parts of his dissertation relating to my particular queries when doing research for publication. It is important, however, that the corpus provided here is as factually informed and complete and CAMERON remains one of our most important sources.

See B. KAISER in the Abbreviations above.

I have not, however, always repeated all of KAISER’s place names, as they are too long and cumbersome for use here.


CAMERON’s dissertation consists of three volumes: I (with two parts) contains the text; II contains the plates and III, the catalogue to the plates. References in this Appendix are limited to his catalogue numbers, since the same numbers are used also for the illustrations. See also his plan with the finds spots of major stucco reliefs (Vol. I, Part 1, p. 119, Fig. 14B).

main composition being just in flat painting. KAISER’s illustrations are incomplete and often out of order, but they still include material that has not been illustrated elsewhere. Since the labels in KAISER’s Catalogue are often too long and cumbersome, references are only to text pages and photographic plates.

1. North Entrance

PM III, 158–191; PM IV, 8–18; M.A.S. CAMERON, Nos. 76, 42F, 69A, 79B, 116B; B. KAISER, 271–273, Pls. 418a, 419–424, 430, 455. Of these, Pl. 420 left is a bull’s horn (= CAMERON, No. 77B, and according to him of unknown provenance). Pl. 430 is a red hoof (= CAMERON, No. 79A5, and according to him of unknown provenance). Pl. 455 is of a piece found with the North Entrance material, but thought by KAISER to belong stylistically and technically to our location 13). Some pieces are also illustrated here (Pls. 4, 6).

2. a) Northwest Fresco Dump / North Threshing Floor; b) North Threshing Floor / Area of the Man in High Relief.

PM III, 37–42; M.A.S. CAMERON, Nos. 17C, 41C, 42 B,D, 163 A2; B. KAISER, 267–270.

Two sets of containers, a and b, are described here. For a, the alternatives given in the label above refer to the same locations, but in the case of b the second part of the label refers to a location in the East Wing of the palace (our location 13). The provenance of the fragments in b is, therefore, problematic. a and b are discussed separately here.

In the first group, the label on the storage boxes mentions “fresco” only, but in fact the deposit contained several fragments of stucco relief. Some depicted costume patterns, also published by A. J. EVANS: a woman’s skirt (PM III, 45, fig. 27; M.A.S. CAMERON, No. 41C and B. KAISER, 268 [his pl. 414 is missing]) – what CAMERON attributed to “kilt” of female taureadors, on account of fragments preserving part of white upper legs with part of the kilt (blue background with decoration in white dots (M.A.S. CAMERON, Nos. 42B, 42D) and a man’s fist (B. KAISER, Pl. 412, top left and M.A.S. CAMERON, No. 17C). B. KAISER mentions a number of animal parts, possibly bulls and rockwork patterns.

CAMERON’s attribution of the “kilt” to female taureadors colored his view as to the identity of fragmentary figures with similar textile decoration from other locations in the palace. The dots are

For an unknown reason, CAMERON assigns this piece to the NW Portico, when the label refers to the North Threshing Floor, as he himself notes.
usually painted in thick white paint ("impasto") added over vivid background colours: blue, yellow, red. It is of interest that among the fragments which seem to belong to skirts found in this deposit at Knossos, two use the motif of the bucranium. The second group of reliefs definitely includes bulls, according to B. Kaiser, Pls. 415–416.

3. Room of the Woman’s Seat

Cameron mentions an “unpublished bull fragment” from this location. Whether the fragment mentioned is the one illustrated in Kaiser and suggested by him to belong to the depiction of a boar remains a question. Kaiser also mentions parts of life-sized human figures, probably female, in high relief, but questions whether all these pieces were found together, or whether there has been a mix-up in the Museum storeroom.

4. Southwest Angle Fresco Dump
M.A.S. Cameron, No. 42A; B. Kaiser, Pl. 436.

It should be noted that, as we move to the South Wing of the palace, we witness a paucity of reliefs, one likely due to the erosion of this sector of the building. In his discussion of the white skinned figures with colourful kilts from the North Fresco Heap, Cameron suggested that they are connected stylistically with another female figure, known only from a white arm in relief wearing a colourful band with a dotted fringe, from this location (M.A.S. Cameron, vol. III, p. 44). Kaiser did not seem to be aware of its location. Cameron took this to be part of a girl taureador and expressed no doubts about its provenance. I therefore opted to give it a location in the plan.

On the arm we see an armlet, an accessory not evident in representations of women wearing the typical sleeved dress. An armlet is seen in a number of the taureadors and on the leaper from the Bull and Maze painting from Egypt.

5. House of the Sacrificed Oxen
PM II, 310 (no illustration).

Parts of the neck, jaw and dewlap of a red bull were found along with part of a large bossed rosette. The bull was under life size and the relief not too high. The pieces remain unpublished.

The house, directly off the southeast corner of the palace, was destroyed in MM III.B. Evans reasonably suggested that the relief originally belonged to a space in that corner of the palace and that it had collapsed within the adjacent house.

6. Area of Restored Light Area / The Southeast Corner of the Palace
PM II, 332 ff, Pl. 188; M.A.S. Cameron, No. 78C; B. Kaiser, 284, Pl. 461 a, b.

The fragment shows animal hair with thick, short, unruly curls, either from a bull’s crown or a lion’s mane (here Pl. 7). These two alternatives as to the animal depicted are suggested by all three sources, though Cameron definitely prefers the identification as that of a bull. Cameron could well be right, both because there are parallels for this treatment of the hair in paintings of bulls (cf. Nos. B and G below), and because there are no signs of lions, either in relief or straight painting elsewhere in the palace.

7. Bathroom of Queen’s Megaron
M.A.S. Cameron, No. 42C

The provenance is stated to be either from the above named location or from the Loomweight Basement (No.15). For reasons he does not explain, Cameron thought that the former was more likely. The relief is a single piece preserving white skin and part of a kilt in dark red with white dotted decoration, of the type found in the North Fresco Heap (No. 2). Cameron interprets the piece as part of a taureador figure.

8. Area of the Fish Fresco / East Light Area of the Queen’s Megaron

Kaiser illustrates fragments of what he interprets as the muscular and powerful thighs of an animal which his restoration suggests to be in a flying gallop motion (B. Kaiser, T30). The strong muscular legs might be those of a bull. Kaiser suggests that this composition may belong with the many frescoes found in the area of the Queen’s Megaron.

9. Area of the Southern Light Well of the Hall of the Double Axes
PM III, 330; M.A.S. Cameron, No. 42E; B. Kaiser, 282–283, Pl. 436 right.

Interesting here is the fragment depicting a white thigh, also preserving part of a kilt with dotted

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93 PM III, Fig. 25 a and d, opp. p. 40.
94 The two fragments illustrated in B. Kaiser, Pl. 459, right, have a different caption as to location. In his catalogue, 283, Kaiser seems to have found them in the same location in the museum and he combines them in one restoration (his T 30).
Kaiser reports parts of a woman and of a bull. The bull fragments he connects stylistically and technically with bull fragments found in the Area of the Fish Fresco, near the Queen's Megaron (here No. 8).

15. The Loomweight Basement / Area of Bull Relief and Spiral Fresco

This is the third substantial deposit of reliefs, consisting largely of fragments of bulls, some in somewhat lower relief than those of the Northern Entrance, most life size. Among the parts of bulls represented are a left foreshoulder, two hoofs, fragments of legs, and a horn (white on red ground). There was also a human leg or arm, suggesting to Evans a bull grappling scene. Evans also restored a painted spiral frieze found there as being diagonal and compared his restoration to a similarly diagonal pattern created by a simpler pattern painted in the niches in the central court at Phaistos (PM I, 373, Fig. 271). The point implied would be that such diagonal patterns are connected with bull scenes or activities.

For the same deposit, Kaiser quotes the presence of some 200 stucco fragments which he divides stylistically into three groups. To the first belong numerous parts of bulls (Kaiser estimates three bulls) and the arm of a woman. It is of uncertain provenance, however, as is implied by Kaiser's caption for its illustration (his Pl. 436, left).

There was also a white foot wearing an anklet (B. Kaiser, Pl. 43 right). Cameron's No. 79A4, the fine bull's leg in smaller scale, is attributed by Kaiser to the second group. More bull parts, including a hoof, belong to the last group on account of the cursory style of the relief (B. Kaiser, Pl. 437, left). Many pieces bear traces of burning.

There are a few points of conflict of opinion and information between Cameron and Kaiser. One is that according to Cameron, the description of the museum label given as "Area of Bull Relief" should be differentiated from the description in other labels that give the location as: "Area of Bull Relief and Spiral Fresco." The former label, according to Cameron, should be taken to mean the North Entrance, the latter the Loomweight Basement. If Cameron was correct, and he had years of familiarity with the system as he did research for his dissertation, Kaiser's Pls. 433-435 should belong to reliefs of the North Entrance. Interesting fragments in these two plates are parts of bull's eyes, a tail and a mane. It seems peculiar, though, that Evans would not have mentioned these pieces in the PM.

The problematic piece was already discussed above in connection with Nos. 8 and 13.
16. Area of the House Façade / Area of Town Mosaic
   B. Kaiser, 278, Pls. 440, left and top right, and 451 c.
   Kaiser reports fragments of a bull, one preserving part of a red background and a fragment of a human figure with a dress pattern.

17. Court of the Stone Spout / Area of Cowboy Fresco
   M.A.S. Cameron, No. 79A6; B. Kaiser, 98, 277, Pl. 430 centre; also B. Kaiser, 99, 276-277, Pl. 441.
   Of interest here is the unique example of a bull relief which is executed in a very small scale (not "true miniature", though). Only a hoof remains, painted red against a red background.
   In the second group, discussed by Kaiser, there are again a few bull parts and what Kaiser interprets as the claws of a griffin.

18. Area outside the NE Magazines (= Cameron’s label). I assume this is the same area as Kaiser’s NE Rubbish Heap.
   M.A.S. Cameron, 17A; B. Kaiser, 275-276.
   Cameron is uncertain about the provenance of 17A, a man’s arm with closed fist. Kaiser discusses parts of men and women and bulls, and suggests a bull leaping scene with male and female participants, but provides no illustrations.

19. North of North Portico and North of the Palace
   B. Kaiser, 273-275, Pls. 426-429, 453.100
   These are two separate locations. Some of the pieces seem to belong to bulls, others are definitely of human figures (red skinned). There are also parts of scenery, perhaps a riverside with multicolored pebbles.

20. The Royal Road
   B. Kaiser, 286, Pls. 467e, 467 f; M.A.S. Cameron, Nos. 75: 78B, 67A-C.
   The deposit contains numerous fragments of bulls in high relief. The site is located directly north of the Royal Road, but whether from a domestic context or from the fringes of the road which was integrally linked with the palace is not known. LM IB, the latest material in the deposit, provides a date ante quem for the reliefs.

B. The Paintings

The publication of the frescoes from the Palace of Knossos has fared better than that of the reliefs. The two major publications are the PM (passim) and the KFA. References to illustrations in the latter will be given only as necessary, and to supplement the PM. The most complete treatment of the Knossian frescoes is of course M.A.S. Cameron’s dissertation, but this remains unpublished. As in the case of the stucco reliefs, there are extensive and illuminating discussions of the compositions listed below, accompanied by a detailed catalogue, to which reference is made occasionally below.

A. Northwest Treasury
   PM II, 620-621, Figs. 387 (plan) and 389; KFA, Pl. VIII, Fig. 2.
   The one plaster fragment was found "on the northern border of the building, where it overlooked the 'Theatral Area.'" Because this location is so close to the palace, it is unclear to which of the two buildings the painting actually belongs.
   The scene was likely a bull catching one, to judge by the presence of a rope shown apparently tied to the tree depicted. Preserved are the forelegs of a bull in flying gallop shown in mid-air, charging towards the tree. This depiction is of the kind that seems to have inspired the theme of a bull in flying gallop in front of a papyrus thicket encountered in wall paintings of the later New Kingdom, as in the Malkata palace.101
   The rather eclectic and unrealistic rendition of the tree, perhaps an olive tree, as well as the scale of the bull, which is neither miniature nor very large, suggests this to be a late fresco (post LM IB).

B. Miniatures under the Later Kasellas of the 13th Magazine
   PM I, 442-447; 526-529; PM II, 599-606; PM III, 32-34.
   Evans suggested that the plasters fell from the walls of a room he hypothetically restored over the projecting magazines (Nos. 11-16: PM IV, 631, Fig. 621) in the West Wing of the palace. The pieces, which could well belong to a single composition, consist of a charging bull, a crowd of spectators in

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98 Kaiser states the location to be “Room North of Room of Stone Amphora,” which was on the museum label. Kaiser interpreted this to mean the School Room. I am inclined to believe Cameron’s judgment here, one reflected in the place name I adopt in the Catalogue entry.

99 In this group, Kaiser describes the provenance as the “Area of the Cowboy Fresco.”

100 Pl. 453 in Kaiser suggests the provenance of the pieces to be ambiguous, since it also includes the alternative location as “Area of Man in High Relief.”

101 W. S. Smith (supra note 83) 287, Figs. 281-282.
miniature technique, and several building façades, also in miniature scale. The style, particularly evident in the rendition of the bull, is naturalistic with fine attention to texture and details. Evans’s attribution of this composition to preseismic MM IIIIB has subsequently been questioned by others (S. A. Immerwahr 173–174). The following are the main pieces:

1. Swarthy bull and parts of the flowing locks of an acrobat above him (PM I, 529, Fig. 385)
2. Male spectators watching from behind a walled enclosure (PM I, 527, Fig. 384)
3. Façade of building with panels with checkers and variegated stone decorated with double axes and horns of consecration (PM I, 446, Fig. 321).
4. Columnar façade decorated with a rosette frieze, horns of consecration and with double axes attached to capitals. (PM I, 443, Fig. 319: this omits the rosette frieze, for which see KFA, Pl. V, No.1).
5. Fragment of a half-rosette frieze, apparently part of an architectural façade (PM II, 604, Fig. 377).
6. Border and ? star pattern, perhaps from a façade (PM I, 479, Fig. 343).

C.? Room of the Spiral Cornice and Miniature Paintings

PM III, 46ff, sections 70–72, passim.

These numerous pieces forming several compositions will not be described individually, partly because they are among the best known Knossian frescoes, partly because their connection with bull sports is tentative and hypothetical. The best preserved compositions are, as nicknamed by Evans, the Temple Fresco and the Sacred Grove Fresco. Because of the crowds of spectators shown in them, they obviously depict some kind of festival with performances taking place, in the case of the former, in front of a tripartite shrine, and in an open space with trees, likely a court, in the latter.

D. Anteroom of the Room of the Throne

PM IV, 893, Fig. 872.

All that is preserved is the hoof of a large scale bull turning left, that is in the direction of the Throne Room, shown over a painted dado simulating slabs of variegated marble. The bull would have been either stationary or walking – not charging.

E. West Porch

PM II, 672–678, Figs. 428 and 429; PM IV, 893–896, Figs. 872–3.

Preserved in situ was the front hoof of a (walking?) bull set flat over a painted dado imitating slabs of variegated marble, as in the anteroom of the Throne Room (No. D). Evans restored the scene as one of bull-grappling or leaping on the basis of traces of a bull, apparently in flying gallop, seen on an underlying earlier fresco. Evans believed that more scenes of bull sports covered the rest of the walls in the porch.

F. The Ivory Deposit

PM III, 207–209, Figs. 141–142.

This is another miniature fresco preserved in two sections, one with the horn and ear of a bull rendered in fine detail, the other an interesting façade where an intercepting diagonal form has also been interpreted as part of a bull by Evans. The façade is decorated with a frieze of double axes, alternating, as I show in my recent restoration, with altars of incurved sides (cf. PM III, Fig. 141 and in Fig. 9 in this article).

As is discussed in my text, these plaster fragments were found in the same deposit as the ivory figurines, most probably representing leapers (PM III, 428–435).

G. Area of the Demon Seals

M.A.S. Cameron, No. 75A-C

Cameron is the only person who discusses these few fragments of what he describes as a large, black and white bull. Interestingly, the pieces also preserve part of the mane or crown of the bull. This starts at the forehead and is depicted, as usually, by short, curly hair. Cameron relied on this detail to support his view that the relief from the Southeast Corner of the palace (here, No. 6) is likely to belong also to a bull, rather than to a lion’s mane, as suggested by others. A shaggy mane rendered quite realistically can also be seen in the miniature painting of a bull from the 13th Magazine (here, No. B).

H. Queen’s Megaron

PM III, 208–209, Fig. 143.

Evans suggests that this piece, made of several joining fragments, belongs with other miniature paintings from the nearby Ivory Deposit (here, No. G). Preserved are the neck of a bull with parts of

102 EVANS believed that the crowds in the Temple Fresco were probably watching bull games and similar feats (PM III, 208). This matter is further discussed in my text.

103 M. C. Shaw, The Lion Gate Relief of Mycenae Reconsidered, in Philita Epe, Festschrift for G. Mylonas (Athens 1986) 108–23, passim, and Fig. 11.
two leapers above it; one is white skinned, the other represented by strands of hair only. Above these figures there is a barred border.

I. Court of the Stone Spout / Area of the Cowboy Fresco

*PM* III, 203–232.

This is the well known and relatively well preserved Taureador Fresco. The fragments, fallen from a room upstairs, were found with LM II pottery, evidence that further corroborates the date suggested by the style and conventions of depiction, such as an intermediary scale, more typical in late Minoan and in Mycenaean frescoes. Detailed descriptions and bibliographical reference to each panel are provided in S. A. Immerwahr, 175.

### APPENDIX 2

**Bull Leaping Scenes on Mycenaean Sites**

1. Acropolis of Mycenae (Fragments under the Ramp House)


Interesting in the Mycenaean painting is the presence of an architectural façade with women looking out of windows at a spectacle. It is possible that such a façade was also represented in the case of the Knossian Taureador fresco.

2. The Palace at Orchomenos

*H. Bulle*, *Orchomenos I. Die älteren Ansiedlungsschichten*, München 1907, 71–85, Pl. XXVIII.

Bulle suggested that two horizontal figures with their arms stretched out and placed parallel to and above each other are leapers, but this remains an unlikely identification, especially as no parts of a bull were found.

3. The Palace at Pylos


Two partially preserved leapers appear behind the legs of a white bull. One is alighting, of the other only the hair is preserved. The background is blue and the scale similar to that of the Taureador fresco from under the Ramp House. The scene could be part of a series of panels.

4. Tyris Palace

*G. Rodenwaldt*, *Tyris II. Die Fresken des Palastes*, Athens 1912, 162–165, Pl. XVIII; *PM* II, fig. 415.

This is a very poorly painted scene, preserving part of one bull in flying gallop with part of a white-skinned leaper over his back. The bull has two tails, one apparently a mistake which was not properly covered over. Another white leaper stands in front of the bull.

5. Bull Reliefs carved in Gypsum Slabs, from the Tomb of Atreus,

*PM* III, 192–202 (also *J. Younger*, note 47 in the main part of this article).

There is a charging bull with an olive tree in back of him as well as a stationary or walking one. The relief dates to the LH III period, though, according to S. Hood, the reliefs were probably Minoan work plundered from Crete and brought to Mycenae (personal communication, Letter of February 21, 1994).

* My dedication of the article to Professor Emerita Machteld Mellink is only a small token of my affectionate gratitude to her for being such an exceptional, inspiring and deeply caring teacher. The article is especially appropriate, as it deals with aspects also considered in my doctoral dissertation, which was written under Professor Mellink’s supervision (*An Evaluation of Possible Affinities between Egyptian and Minoan Wall paintings before the New Kingdom*, submitted to the Department of Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology at Bryn Mawr College, April 1967).

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Emerita SARA IMMERWAHR, and Professors DAVID OWEN and JOSEPH W. SHAW

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List of Abbreviations


CMS: *Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel*, ed. F. MATZ, H. BIESantz & I. PINI (Berlin 1964)

B. KAISER, *Untersuchungen zum minoischen Relief* (Bonn 1976)


S. HOOD: *The Arts in Prehistoric Greece* (Harmondsworth 1978)


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