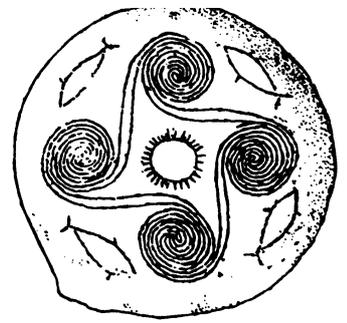




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**Sheffield Centre for Aegean Archaeology**

**Round Table 25 – 27 January 2008**

# **Technologies of Representation**

**Programme**

**&**

**Abstracts**

## Sheffield Centre for Aegean Archaeology Round Table 25 – 27 January 2008

### 'Technologies of Representation'

#### Final Programme & Abstracts

#### Friday 25 January

- 17:00 *Participants arrive, Dept Archaeology*
- 18:00 Richard Jones (Glasgow) Representation in the Aegean: the input of archaeological science
- 19:00 *Reception*

#### Saturday 26 January — Session 1

John Barrett, Session chair

- 09:00 John Bennet (Sheffield) Representation in the Aegean: Multi-Dimensional Approaches

In this paper, I present an overview of the rationale for the Round Table meeting. I then explore the concept of 'representation' in a post-Gellian world, before considering its relevance in relation to two examples drawn from the Aegean: feasting occasions at Pylos, and the odd relationship between text and image in the Aegean.

- 09:40 John Baines (Oxford) Displaying and communicating the integration of elite and other social groups in third and second millennium Egypt

Most of what we know about Egyptian civilization derives from elites, generally near the royal residence, and derives from presentations of their views, which tend to show the society as ideally harmonious or to assert that the elite cared and provided for others. In part, that vision legitimized social inequality. Since writing, with its statements of care, was restricted to the elite, written sources cannot document oral and material channels of communication between elites and others, and between the centre and outlying regions. We should also ask how non-elites were motivated to contribute their labour to elite undertakings and how far different sectors of society shared similar values. This paper explores possible approaches to such questions, presenting archaeological and pictorial evidence primarily from the third millennium (Old Kingdom), with some contrasting material from the later second millennium (New Kingdom). The aim is to throw light on how values were transmitted through social customs and variations within them, as well as being imprinted in material culture; and how they were represented, negotiated, and sometimes problematized on elite monuments.

- 10:20 John Moreland (Sheffield) Giving vision a history - seeing images in the middle ages

For Emile Mâle, the 'founder of the history of the art of medieval France', the Gothic cathedral was essentially a 'Bible in stone and glass'. He saw the building, and the images with which it was decorated, iconographically – each image had a fixed, accepted meaning, that people (literati and illiterati) saw and read. However, we are coming to appreciate that an 'iconographical' understanding may not best reflect how people in the Middle Ages actually saw such buildings, images and texts. As Michael Camille argues:

we must be ... aware that vision has a history. Only by an effort of imagination can we understand perceptions that took place in a sensory universe quite different from our own ... [we need to locate] vision in a particular time and place (1996, 15).

In the Middle Ages, the relationships between the eye, the object and the brain were quite different from the way we understand them and this affected the way people read images (including those within texts). Unless we understand this, unless we contextualise vision and memory, we will fail to understand the Middle Ages - or any other period!

- 11:00 *Coffee*

Peter Day, Session chair

11:15 Jack Davis &  
Sharon Stocker Hall 64 at Pylos: The Context of the Wall-Paintings  
(ASCSA)

The wall-paintings from Hall 64 at Pylos are among the most informative in the Mycenaean world and have been much discussed in the recent past. This paper explores the context of their recovery during the original excavations and represents part of the ongoing project systematically to recover and re-study the wall-painting fragments from Blegen's excavations.

11:30 Hariklia  
Brecoulaki The wall paintings of the "Palace of Nestor" reconsidered: Old  
(Sorbonne) and new finds, novel approaches and methodologies

The Pylos fragments represent one of the most significant collections of Mycenaean painting. In view of its great importance – comprising as we currently know more than 40,000 fragments – a project was designed since 2000 to document, conserve, and restudy this unique corpus. The documentation comprised the assignation of an identity code on the back of each fragment, the digital recording of every single piece of wall painting, classified according to context, and the final creation of a comprehensive data-base. The conservation of the fragments aimed in both safeguarding the collection by creating appropriate conditions for its storage and emergency treatments consisting basically in re-establishing the lost cohesion of plasters and paint layers, but also in gaining new information on the original colours and forms of the paintings they preserved. Such operations, together with the search for new joins, enhanced our understanding and evaluation of the iconography and style of paintings in the various areas of the palace. The discovery of entirely new, unpublished fragments, as a reward to the painstaking reorganization of the finds, also required a careful re-reading of the old note books of the excavations, in order to determine their proper context and deduce their possible function. The in-situ installation of a stereo-microscope coupled with a digital camera, the non-destructive analysis using portable equipment performed on a representative number of fragments and the experimental and analytical work on samples conducted in specialized laboratories, shed entirely new light on the complex technology of these paintings, in terms of painting materials and pictorial techniques. The long-term participation in our team of professional restorers, photographers, physical scientists and illustrators ensured the accuracy and quality of our results.

12:15 Maria Perla  
Colombini (Pisa) Organic materials in Pylos's wall paintings

Organic materials such as proteinaceous ones and plant gums have been extensively employed since the antiquity as binding media to disperse pigments in easel and mural paintings. Identifying organic materials in painting samples is of great interest to better understand the painting technique; however, it is still a difficult task due to the complexity of the matrix, the small amount of material available for the analysis and the degradation of the original materials.

Methods based on chromatography/mass spectrometry (PY-GC/MS, GC/MS, HPLC, DEMS) have been developed for their characterisation: proteinaceous materials, lipids, resins, pitches, plant gums, dyes and synthetic polymers may be identified in very small samples (<1 mg). Particularly, to obtain reliable results almost two techniques are applied on the same sample.

The above analytical procedures were applied to the characterisation of the binders in several samples from the wall paintings of the "Palace of Nestor" in Pylos, Greece. The results showed, in the 82% of the analysed samples, the presence of a complex organic mixture mainly consisting of egg, tragacanth and fruit tree gums. Moreover, in two pink-violet samples the presence of purple was ascertained.

It may be suggested that an "a secco" technique has been often used in these Aegean paintings.

12:30 Andreas Karydas  
(NCSR  
Dimokritos) & X-Ray Fluorescence characterization of pigments on wall-  
Hariklia painting fragments from "Nestor" palace  
Brecoulaki  
(Sorbonne)

The application of the X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF) technique for the non-invasive characterization of pigments on fragments from the "Nestor" Palace wall-paintings is presented and discussed. The XRF technique was selected and applied in the field (Chora museum storehouse) to provide information on the elemental content of the pigments in a large number of different coloured areas (350 different "spots" have been analyzed since 2002) suggesting the use of a specific palette of pigments. Moreover, XRF was utilized as a fast "screening" tool of different types of pigments, offering also reliable discrimination among inorganic and organic based pigments and supporting the conservation work undertaken by other colleagues (for example the merging of different fragments belonging to the same representation). It is widely recognized that elemental analysis of inorganic pigments should be supported, in

many cases, with structural analysis by means of XRD or of micro-Raman in order to identify unambiguously its mineral composition. Thus, the XRF analytical information, on its own, should be considered carefully, in particular when portable XRF spectrometers are used exhibiting analytical features and specifications that compromise portability versus analytical range and sensitivity. The advantages, limitations and problems met during the XRF analytical campaign at Chora Museum will be critically overviewed.

13:00

*Lunch*

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**Saturday 26 January — Session 2**

Roger Doonan, Session chair

14:15     Mark Peters             The colourless narrative: some thoughts on the Mycenaean  
(Sheffield)                     colour palette and the art of Pylian diplomacy

Analyses of Mycenaean palatial frescoes have progressed from purely descriptive approaches and the relatively piecemeal appreciation of iconographic elements to a recognition and consideration of the narrative potential of entire compositions. Yet the colour palette employed and the role that this played in defining the nature and meaning of the compositions remains underexploited. Drawing upon linguistic evidence from the Linear B tablets I explore issues surrounding the perception and significance of colour and show that while some basic colour terms clearly existed, others were understood through material properties and associations and still more were apparently absent. This seemingly corresponds to the evidence provided by the frescoes, which although showing a colour palette far less restricted than that of the earlier Bronze Age nevertheless shows some colours to be underrepresented. By contrast, blue and purple appear to merit particular attention and possess a significance that I suggest is transferred into the medium of the graphic tradition. Examining the selective application of this colour in frescoes from the palace at Pylos, particularly the lion-griffin pairings from the throne room and Room 46, I suggest that combinations of colour and motifs were carefully considered to project specific concepts and associations. Such choices were not simply aesthetic in nature or related to vague concepts of power and prestige but apparently worked in harmony to create multi-faceted compositional narratives at the heart of which lay diplomatic concerns with the political unity of the polity and the maintenance of Pylian identity.

14:55     Rachel Fox                     Representing people through taste and smell: social status and  
(Sheffield)                     sensory experiences in a Mycenaean palatial feasting context

The use of vessel and spatial diacritica in Mycenaean palatial feasting contexts has been explored relatively thoroughly over the last decade, particularly in relation to the palace at Pylos. However, the more ephemeral forms of diacritica – or ways of expressing one's position in the social matrix – remain elusive and infrequently discussed. These include the employment of the senses to indicate the social status of both host and guests. In this paper, I am concentrating on the lower senses of taste and smell in order to consider how these might have operated as technologies of representing social position in feasting contexts. The power of the palatial host could be expressed through the use of ingredients that were imported, thus signalling the ability to participate in long-distance exchange networks. These aromatics would be tasted in *haute cuisine* dishes or smelt in perfumed oil. As for the guests, their position in the social matrix could be indicated through exclusionary methods, such as smelling food that they were not permitted to eat, or being served diacritical dishes that contained different ingredients or were prepared in different ways, thus creating a hierarchy amongst those attending the feasts.

15:35     Eleni Hatzaki                 Pots, textiles, frescoes, & people: the social life of ceramic  
(Cincinnati)                     motifs & styles at Late Bronze Age Knossos, Crete

Decorated pottery, thanks to its aesthetic appeal and use as an easily identifiable dating tool, is perhaps the most thoroughly studied and amply illustrated body of material from the Prehistoric Aegean. Yet ceramic specialists rarely venture beyond typologies and chronologies of decorated pottery and, when they do so, they have rightly shifted attention to less studied groups of material, such as plain and coarse wares.

While decorated pottery has long been treated as a 'catalogue' for lost textile motifs and fresco programs, little attention has been paid to it as a body of material consumed in specific contexts and in association (or not) with textiles and frescoes. In this paper, the production, distribution and consumption of Late Bronze Age decorated ceramic vessels will be discussed in the context of the Palace, town, and cemeteries of Knossos. Changes in ceramic motifs and styles will be discussed diachronically in the context of Knossos's palatial fresco program and textile production.

16:15

*Tea*

John Moreland, Session chair

16:30 Matthew Haysom Image and worldview: from Neopalatial to Final Palatial Crete  
(BSA)

Cretan Bronze Age archaeology, unlike many other Prehistoric archaeologies, offers a rich body of imagery depicting people, animals and landscapes. Prehistorians have traditionally struggled in their interpretation of imagery. Frequently they have taken as their starting point the assigning of meaning to individual motifs and have resorted to the importing of narratives from later historical periods, anthropology, or the study of comparative religion. In Cretan archaeology these problems have been compounded by a number of long-standing chronological problems and by an underlying disconnect between iconographic studies and studies of the rest of the archaeological record. This paper will argue that by taking a more usual archaeological approach to imagery, by marrying a concern with the meaning of images with a concern for the lifecycles of objects; by charting patterns of distribution, association, and change; and by interrogating these patterns through comparative perspectives, fresh new insights may be gained. It will seek to demonstrate the profitability of the approach through a study of how and why imagery changed between the Neopalatial and Final Palatial periods on Crete, focusing on Minoan relief stone vases and the wall-paintings from the palace at Knossos.

17:10 Angeliki Karagianni Representations of time in Linear B  
(Sheffield)

Time is a perplexing concept that belongs to a class of general concepts (space, cause, action, etc.) that are regarded as "an inescapable dimension of all aspects of social experience and practice" (Munn 1992). Moreover, time is not a unitary or homogeneous concept, but rather consists of a complex net of varied conceptions whose forms depend on the different facets of individual and societal life, and on the different contexts where their use is articulated and manipulated. Although in philosophy, thinkers have placed time's 'locus' in either the natural world, or the human mind, in the disciplines of anthropology, sociology and archaeology it is widely accepted that social organization is what ultimately lies behind the conceptions and regulations of 'time'.

In this paper I explore these issues in relation to 'time-keeping' in the Linear B documents from Late Bronze Age Pylos and Knossos. Documents that preserve some kind of temporal references are to be found in three 'types' of transactions: 'ration' tablets, 'taxation' tablets, and on the 'religious' tablets, documenting palatial offerings to deities. Even in those series, however, explicit references to time are the exception rather than the rule. Specifically, I investigate the chronological sequence of those recorded transactions, and speculate on the reasons for their exceptional feature of 'dating', as well as the reasons for their organization in the specific temporal frames in which they were set.

17:50 **Discussion**

19.30 *Dinner (at Keith & Nong Branigan's 39 Edgehill Road, Nether Edge)*

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### Sunday 27 January — Session 3

Jane Rempel, Session chair

9:30 Ann Brysbaert Technologies and Representations in Bronze Age Aegean  
(Leicester) Architecture

This paper looks into a range of technologies that are represented within architectural settings. Production processes and their meanings are discussed.

10:10 Sue Sherratt Representation and hidden technologies  
(Sheffield)

In this paper I examine skeuomorphism as a representational phenomenon. I also offer some speculation about why representational art appears when it does in the Aegean (and why it does not appear at other times), and about the media on which it occurs.

10:50 *Coffee*

John Bennet, Session chair

11:10 Angelos Papadopoulos (Liverpool) Materialising Culture: Juxtapositions of Images of Violence and Media as Status Symbols in the Bronze Age Aegean

During the entire Bronze Age in the Aegean region, images of violence such as combats, battles, hunting and chariot scenes and even boxing and wrestling have been manipulated by elite individuals or aristocratic groups as manifestations of high social status to legitimate authority. Although the Late Bronze Age marked a peak in this kind of iconography, these images were part of the Aegean artistic repertoire already in the Early Bronze Age. However, such scenes and portraits were never depicted in a single medium. A great variety of materials were used over the centuries, such as various stones, precious metals, pottery, wall paintings, faience and ivory.

This paper will explore the evolution of themes and motifs, regionally and chronologically, in correspondence with the nature of the materials used. It will also examine the possibility of correlations between specific thematic cycles and certain materials, to see whether some military themes were depicted mostly in one medium rather than another. The reasons behind this selection will be discussed as well. Finally, an attempt will be made to analyse and comprehend the relationship between the image (the transmitter of the message) and the viewer (the recipient of it).

11:50 Kate Harrell (Sheffield) The Medium Is the Message: Contextualising Images of Warfare and Bellicosity on LH IIIB Pottery and Frescoes from Mycenae

Themes on Mycenaean pictorial pottery are generally accepted to have been adapted from the imagery of palace frescoes. Bellicose images are especially popular on pictorial pottery and in frescoes, with a range of images from chariots, horses being bridled, soldiers marching, scenes of combat and decorative motifs using armour and weapons. Yet a close examination of this theme on both pottery and wall paintings from Mycenae during the LH IIIB period reveals subtle differences in the way bellicose scenes are depicted. Wall painting scenes from the Cult Centre and the main megaron focus on the use of swords in ritual, decorative motifs using the figure-of-eight shield, and battle scenes at the citadel. This stands in contrast to the pottery from Mycenae, which almost exclusively portrays chariots, horses, and soldiers. These differences in imagery may be better understood in light of the contexts of the frescoes and pottery. This paper will examine these differences in closer detail and focus on the context of bellicose frescoes and pottery in order to offer an explanation about the differences in message based on the artistic medium.

12:30

***Closing discussion***