

SOME ORNAMENTAL SCENES ON THE WALL PAINTINGS FROM TELL EL-DAB^a: ICONOGRAPHY AND CONTEXT¹

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„Minoan art, in contrast to Greek and Egyptian art, shows a constant shifting back and forth between abstract and representational motifs and a sophisticated play with formal possibilities.“²

The large assemblages of Minoan painted plaster fragments, which were unearthed in the area of palatial complex G (area H/III),³ include, among others, a significant group of fragments that belong to ornamental scenes. These fragments were mostly discovered in the vicinity of the *in situ* fresco material and according to the preliminary reports of the site they may originate from the nearby wall of the palatial doorway (Fig. 1).⁴

The first ornamental scene represents a frieze of running double spirals (Pl. I). The 19 fragments with spiral or border motifs from this frieze were found mostly southwest and some northeast of the enclosure wall of the entrance of palace G (Pl. II). The restoration of the material revealed that the biggest plaster fragment of this scene was joined by smaller ones, that were found both on the west and the east of the entrance of the palatial complex G (Pl. II: a).

The proposed reconstruction shows a frieze with a

minimum length of 17.94 m and a height of 0.43 m. The preserved fragments occupy 12.2 % of the reconstructed surface. The running spirals are orientated to the right. Multiple zones in blue, white and black colour frame the upper part of the frieze. The lower part of the frieze may have been framed by the same border, as it can be observed in many occasions of spiral zones, like the one from the ‘Monkey’ fresco at Akrotiri⁵ and the one from the Domestic Quarter⁶ at Knossos. However, without excluding this possibility, on the basis of the preserved material there are no secure evidence to support a reconstruction with a second border.

Before the spirals were painted black, they had been incised precisely by using a pointed tool or more probable with a compass on the wet lime plaster surface.⁷ The earliest use of a compass in the Minoan art until now has been detected on the offering table from Amnisos.⁸ Five impressed string lines were used for the definition of the ornamental spiral zone. First and foremost, the string line in the middle of the spiral zone has been proved very important for the placement of the plaster fragments in the reconstruction.

¹ I would like to thank Professor M. Bietak for generously giving me the opportunity to participate in the 2nd international SCIEM 2000 Conference. I am also indebted to him for allowing me to study a part of the fresco material from Tell el-Dab^a/Ezbet Helmi, depicting ornaments, that has been a research topic of my PhD Thesis.

² G. WALBERG, *Tradition and Innovation. Essays in Minoan art*, Mainz am Rhein 1986, 38.

³ M. BIETAK, Connections between Egypt and the Minoan World – New Results from Tell el-Dab^a, in: W.V. DAVIES and L. SCHOFIELD (eds.), *Egypt, the Aegean and the Levant: Interconnections in the Second Millennium BC*, London 1995, 19, fig. 2; M. BIETAK, Rich beyond the dreams of Avaris: Tell el Dab^a and the Aegean World – A Guide for the perplexed: A Response to Eric H. Cline, *BSA* 95 (2000), 192, figs. 2–3; M. BIETAK and N. MARINATOS, The Minoan Wall Paintings from Avaris, *E&L* 5 (1995), 49, fig. 1; M. BIETAK, J. DORNER and P. JÁNOSI, Ausgrabungen in dem Palast von Auaris. Vorbericht Tell el-Dab^a/Ezbet Helmi 1993–2000 mit einem Beitrag von Angela von Driesch und Joris Peters, *E&L* 11 (2001), 38f., fig. 7.

⁴ M. BIETAK, *BSA* 95 (2000), 192, fig. 5; M. BIETAK, J. DORNER and P. JÁNOSI, *E&L* 11 (2001), 42, 87.

⁵ CH. DOUMAS, *The Wall Paintings of Thera*, Athen 1992, fig. 85.

⁶ *PoM* III, 343f., 381f., fig. 229, 253–255, 259; S. IMMERWAHR, *Aegean Painting in the Bronze Age*, Philadelphia 1990, 179, No. 13; M. S. HOOD, Cretan Fresco Dates, in: S. SHERRATT (ed.), *The Wall Paintings of Thera*. Proceedings of the 1st International Symposium (Petros M. Nomikos Conference Centre, Thera, Hellas, 30 August–4 September 1997, Athens 2000, 205: nr. 32.

⁷ The same opinion was expressed by M.A. Cameron concerning a fragment of a similar spiral frieze from Knossos, M.A. CAMERON, *A General Study on Minoan Frescoes with Particular Reference to Unpublished Wall Paintings from Knossos*, Ph. D. Thesis, Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1975, pl. 155b; R.E. JONES, Analysis of Frescoes: technical Studies and Replication Experiments, in: D. EVELY (ed.), *Fresco: A Passport into the Minoan Past: Minoan Crete through the Eyes of Mark Cameron*, Athens 1999, 152.

⁸ M.A. CAMERON, *Op. cit.*, 413; Idem, Theoretical Interrelations among Thera, Cretan and Mainland Frescoes, in: CH. DOUMAS and H.C. PULCHERT (eds.), *Thera and the Ancient World I: Papers presented at the 2nd International Scientific Congress, Santorini, London 1978*, 583, pl. 2A.

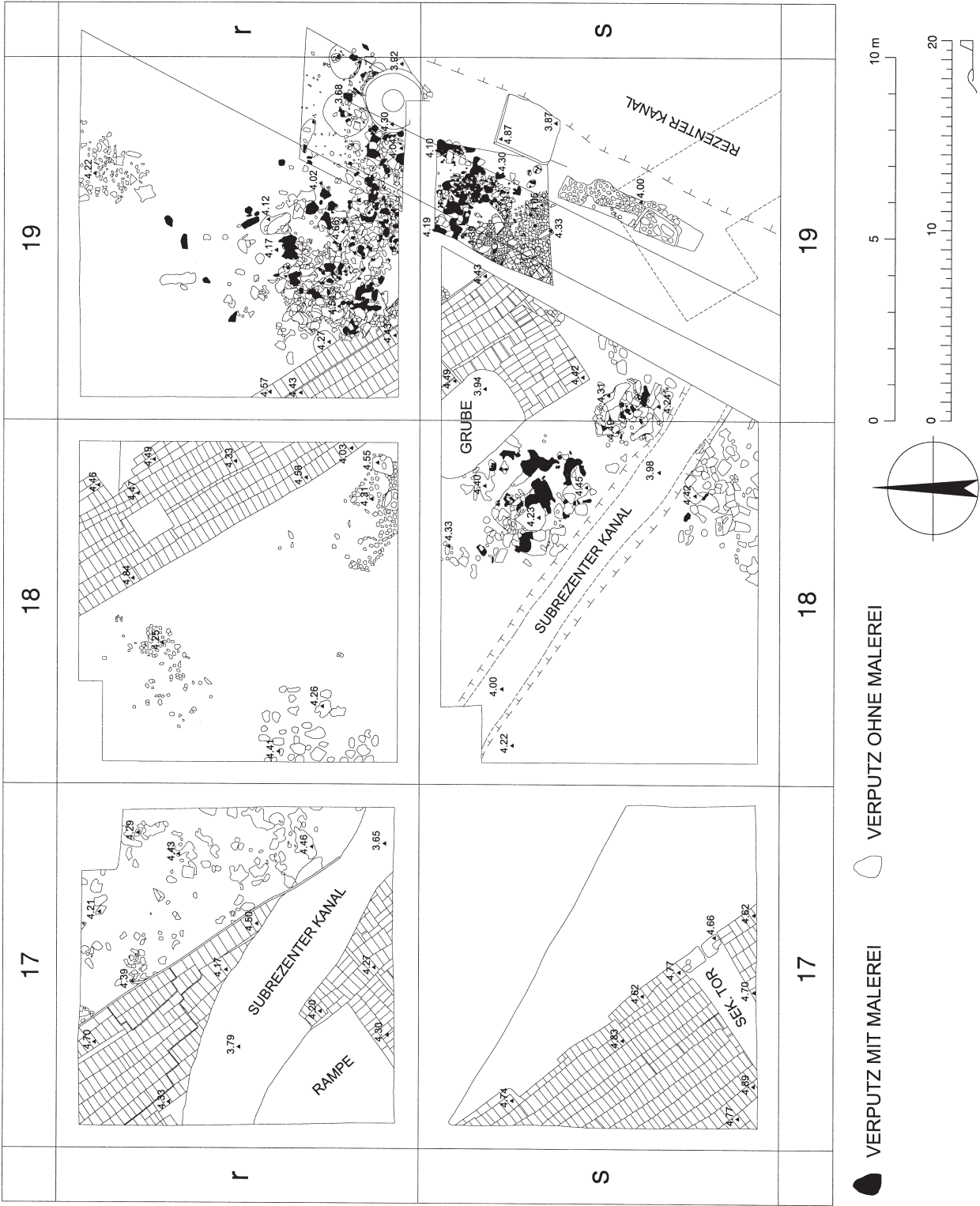


Fig. 1 The distribution of the Minoan plaster fragments around the portal of palace G (after M. BIETAK, J. DORNER & P. JÁNOSI, *EdL* 11 (2001), fig. 7)

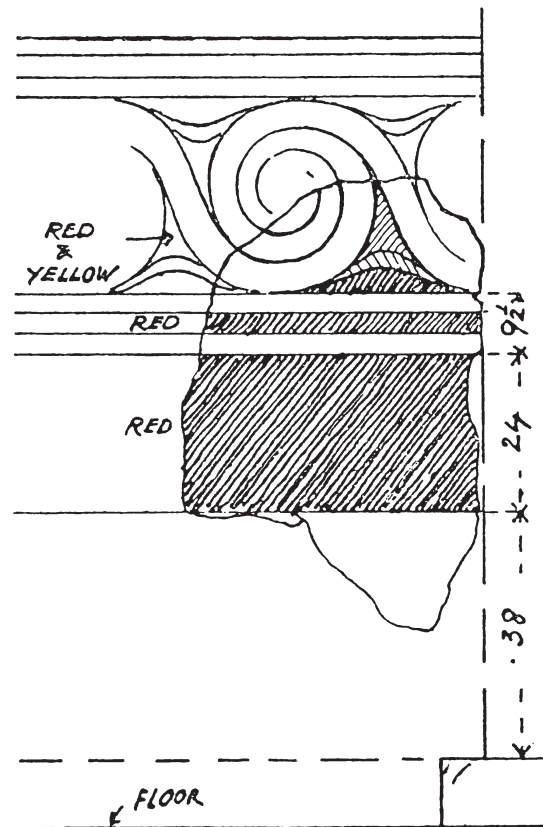


Fig. 2 Spiral frieze from Knossos
(Corridor of the Painted Pithos) (after *PoM* III, 388, fig. 259)

The motif of the retorted spirals is very common in the Minoan palatial art and primarily in the wall paintings. The plaster fragment from a house on the slope of Phaistos belongs to a frieze, which has been dated by the excavator in the Old Palace period.⁹ However, later studies suggest on the basis of stylistic comparisons and the chronological sequence of the building activities at the palace of Phaistos that this fragment can be dated to MM III.¹⁰ A distinction between this frieze and the one from Tell el-Dab^a, is that the spiral hooks from Phaistos were painted with red colour. Moreover, a MM IIIA plaster fragment from Phaistos shows a black painted spiral with

a white and blue coloured border that is similar to the spiral motif from Tell el-Dab^a.¹¹ We can also observe the same combination of colours on the MM IIIB/LM IA plaster fragment from Kasteli-Chania.¹² However, in this case the spirals are painted less meticulously and they are arranged with a round red mottle in their centre.

Further wall paintings representing friezes of running double spirals originate from the palace of Knossos, and particularly from the Corridor of the Painted Pithos (Fig. 2).¹³ The frieze was dated by A. Evans in the LM IA period, but according to S. Hood and M. Cameron it belongs to the final decoration of the Domestic quarter, namely to LM II.¹⁴ Finally, a fragment with two spiral hooks on a further plaster fragment from Knossos, precisely from the Royal Road/South, that has been dated in MM IIIA.¹⁵ This example is identical to one of the fragments of the frieze from Tell el-Dab^a (Pl. II: b).

A very important equivalent frieze was discovered in Akrotiri, in Room 2 of Xeste 3 (Fig. 3).¹⁶ Two colours were engaged for the spirals of this ornamental scene, red and black. Numerous plaster fragments were also found in Sector Gamma of Akrotiri and belong to an additional frieze of double spirals.¹⁷ Although this ornamental zone was created on the grounds of the same spiral type, it is rendered more elaborately with the addition of red dots and rosettes.

As far as the distribution of the motif in the pottery is concerned, there is an extensive range of parallels from the Old and New Palace period. The frieze of the retorted spirals is a very frequent pattern for the pottery decoration and its development can be mostly detected during the MM IIIB/LM IA transitional phase and in LM IA.¹⁸ An early appearance of the motif can be seen on a pottery vessel of the Classical Kamares Ware.¹⁹ A further example comes from the habitation deposit of Area N in Kea, where we have a fragment of a spouted jar of the Minoan light on dark pottery (MM IIB/ MM III).²⁰ The same motif

⁹ L. PERNIER and L. BANTI, *Il Palazzo Minoico di Festòs. Il secondo palazzo*, Rome 1951, pl. XL: 1; S. IMMERWAHR, *Op. cit.* (note 6), 22, fig. 6a; P. MILITELLO, *Gli Affreschi minoici di Festòs, Studi Archeologia Cretese* II (2001), 219, pl. D: 1.

¹⁰ M.A. CAMERON, *Op. cit.* (note 7), 590; P. MILITELLO, *Op. cit.*, 217.

¹¹ P. MILITELLO, *Op. cit.*, 219, pl. D.

¹² A. ANDREADAKI-BLAZAKI, *Υπόγειο 'Αδυτο ή "Δεξαμενή Καθαρών" στα Χανιά, AAA* XXI (1988), 66, pl. B.

¹³ *PoM* III, 388, fig. 259; S. IMMERWAHR, *Op. cit.* (note 6), 179; No. 13; S. HOOD, *Op. cit.*, 205, no. 23A.

¹⁴ M.A. CAMERON, *Op. cit.*; S. HOOD, *Op. cit. TWP*, 206.

¹⁵ M.A. CAMERON, *Op. cit.*, 383f., 725f., pl. 138b.

¹⁶ CH. DOUMAS, *Op. cit.*, fig. 93–94.

¹⁷ *Thera* III, 39–40, fig. 24, Color Plate B: 2, pl. 59: 1; *IAAE* 1969, 173, pl. 205a, 238a; CH. DOUMAS, *Op. cit.*, 184f., fig. 145.

¹⁸ P. WARREN and V. HANKEY, *Aegean Bronze Age Chronology*, Bristol 1989, 63, 74f.

¹⁹ G. WALBERG, *Kameres. A Study of the Character of Palatial Middle Minoan Pottery*, Boreas 8, Uppsala 1976, fig. 37: 5: i: 3.

²⁰ J.L. CASKEY, *Investigations in Kea Part II, a Conspectus of the pottery, Hesperia* 41 (1972), 387, pl. 90: F 3; pl. 92: G 18.



Fig. 3 Frieze of running double spirals from Akrotiri (Xeste 3)
(after C. G. DOUMAS, *The Wall Paintings of Thera*, Athen 1992, fig. 94)



Fig. 4 Eyed ewer with spiral decoration from Akrotiri
(after *Thera* IV, pl. 69a)



Fig. 5 Jug with spiral frieze from Poros (Herakleion)
(after A. LEMBESI, *PAE* 67, 1967, pl. 179γ)



Fig. 6 Incense burner from Akrotiri (after C. G. DOUMAS, *Αλς 1* (2003), fig. 31)

is shown on the light-on-dark ware of the second palace phase of Phaistos.²¹ In Akrotiri and specifically in Room D3 of the Delta Complex, an eyed ewer demonstrates running spirals, identical to the spiral frieze from Tell el-Dab^a. (Fig. 4).²² A jar from a chamber tomb from Poros, belonging according to the excavator to the MM IIIA burial phase, shows exactly the same motif (Fig. 5).²³

The retorted spirals are also very common in the decoration of bronze vessels, as it can be observed on four examples from the shaft graves in Mycenae.²⁴ The same motif occurs as well on the bronze cup that has a very uncertain manufacture date (EM II–LM IB) and it was found in Grave VII at Mochlos.²⁵ However, the jar and the bronze incense burner from Akrotiri display another comparable pattern (Fig. 6).²⁶ An Egyptian amphora, found in a tomb in Giza, bears a similar spiral frieze, only in this case the centers of the spirals are filled with blue dots, demon-



Fig. 7 The rhyton of the peak sanctuary from Zakros (after N. PLATON, *Ζάκρος. Το νέον μινωϊκόν ανάκτορον*, Athens 1971, fig. 76)

strating a strong influence probably from Minoan bronze vessels that according to C.A. Hope can be dated from the time of Amenophis II to the time of

²¹ L. PERNIER and L. BANTI, *Op. cit.* (note 9), fig. 219.

²² *Thera IV*, pl. 69a.

²³ A. LEMBESI, Ανασκαφή σπηλαιώδους τάφου εις Πόρον Ηρακλείου, *ΠΑΕ* 67, 1967, 201, pl. 179γ. The burials of the tomb are dated from MM IIIA till LM IB.

²⁴ R. HIGGINS, *Minoan and Mycenaean Art*, London 1994, 147, fig. 184; H. MATTHÄUS, *Die Bronzegefäße der kretisch-*

mykenischen Kultur, Prähistorische Bronzefunde, Abteilung II. Band 1, München 1980, 179f., 315, pl. 32: 259–260, pl. 58: 514; pl. 74: 1.

²⁵ H. MATTHÄUS, *Op. cit.*, 237; 260, pl. 44: 369.

²⁶ C. DOUMAS, Ανασκαφή Ακρωτηρίου Θήρας, *ΠΑΕ* 149 (1994), 161f., pl. 83α, pl. 93α; IDEM, Bringing to Life a Dead City at Akrotiri on Island of Thera, *Αλς 1* (2003), 54, fig. 31.

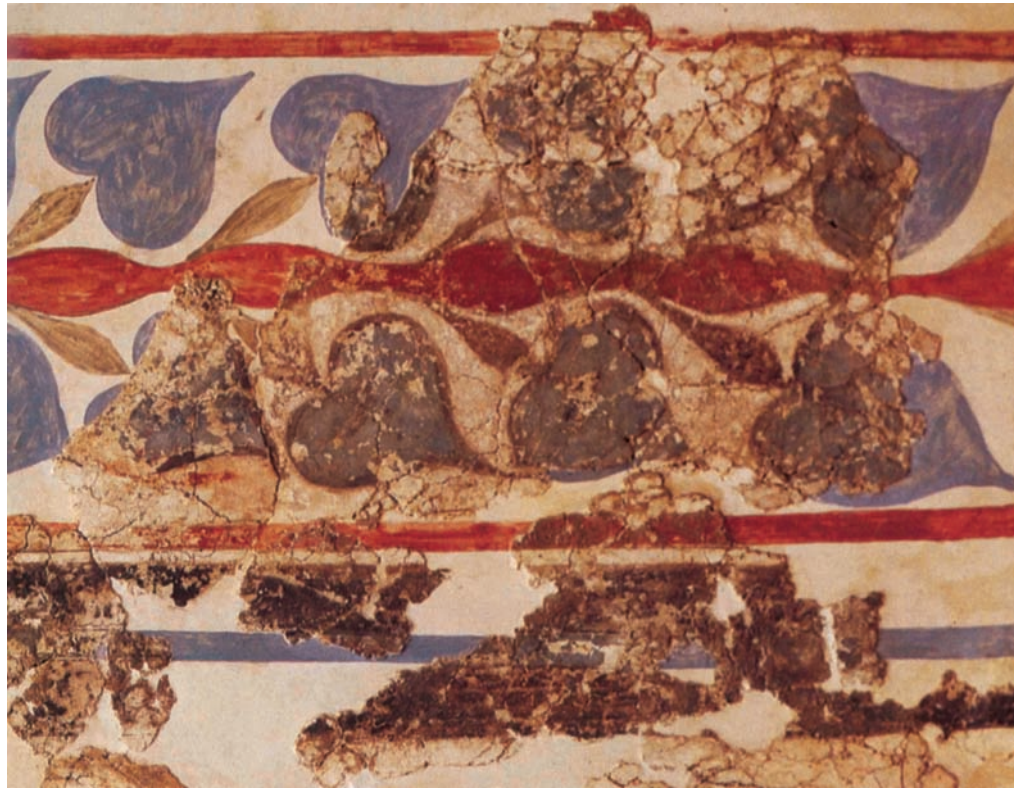


Fig. 8 The ivy frieze from Akrotiri (Beta House) (after CH. DOUMAS, *The Wall Paintings of Thera*, Athen 1992, 78)

Tuthmosis IV.²⁷ Similarly decorated metal vessels are being carried by the Keftius, as depicted on the walls of the Theban tombs of the 18th Dynasty.²⁸

The distribution of the retorted spirals in seals and seal impressions is very sparse and chronologically uncertain. This motif can be attested on a button seal from Knossos²⁹ that has been stylistically assigned to the Old Palatial period and another seal of unknown provenance.³⁰ A LM II miniature pyxis from Tholos B at Platanos is decorated with the same type of running double spirals.³¹ Finally, on the rhyton of the Peak sanctuary from Zakros, found in the Hall of Cer-

emonies of the Palace some vertical and horizontal friezes of an equivalent spiral design adorn the central wing of the tripartite building (Fig. 7).³² The panel of the gate is covered with a complex of spirals and framed by a frieze of running spirals.

The second ornamental zone illustrates an ivy frieze (Pl. III). One of the plaster fragments bearing this motif has been published in preliminary reports.³³ Only two fragments were found from this frieze and they lay next to each other and near the entrance of the enclosure wall of the palatial complex G.³⁴ The frieze is 44 cm. high and 48 cm long. The fragments

²⁷ F. SCHACHERMEYR, *Ägäis und Orient. Die überseeischen Kulturbeziehungen von Kreta und Mykenai mit Ägypten, der Levante und Kleinasien unter besonderen Berücksichtigung des 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr.*, Vienna 1967, 42, pl. XXVIII: 110; C.A. HOPE, Some Memphite Blue painted pottery of the mid-18th Dynasty, in: J. PHILLIPS, L. BELL, BRUCE B. WILLIAM, J. HOCH and RONALD J. LEPROHON (eds.), *Ancient Egypt, the Aegean and the Near East. Studies in honor of Martha Rhoads Bell*, 254, 258–259, figs. 20–21. I warmly thank D. Aston and B. Bader for the latter reference.

²⁸ L. VERCOUTTER, *L'Égypte et le monde Égéen Préhellénique*, Cairo 1956, fig. 33; W. HELCK, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens und Vorderasiens zur Ägäis bis ins 7. Jahrhundert v. Chr.*, Darmstadt 1995, 54f.; *PoM* II, 736f., fig. 470; R. HIGGINS, *Op. cit.*, 150, fig. 187.

²⁹ S. XANTHOUIDES, *Εκ Κρήτης*, *ArchEph* (1907), 150, pl. 6: No. 7; P. YULE, *Cretan Seals: A Study on Chronology*, Mainz am Rhein 1980, 158, pl. 24: 43: 2; *CMS* II 1, *Íi*. 456.

³⁰ *CMS* XII, *Ni*. 5

³¹ S. XANTHOUIDES, *The Vaulted Tombs of Mesara*, London 1924, 102, pl. XI; P. WARREN, *Minoan Stone Vases*, Cambridge 1969, 81, 264: D. 247, pl. P 454.

³² N. PLATON, *Ανασκαφαί Ζάκρου*, *ΠΑΕ*, 63 (1963), 185, pl. 152b, 152, 154a; N. PLATON, *Ζάκρος. Το νέον μινωϊκόν ανάκτορον*, Athens 1971, 132, fig. 76.

³³ M. BIETAK and N. MARINATOS, *E&L* 5 (1995), 57, fig. 13; M. BIETAK, J. DORNER and P. JÁNOSI, *E&L* 11 (2001), 86, fig. 42a.

³⁴ M. BIETAK, *E&L* 11 (2001), fig. 7.

cover a 39.30% of the reconstructed area. The red ivy leaves are painted on dark yellow ground, whereas the ornamental zone is framed by a multicoloured border, painted with alternative red and white stripes. The combination of these two colours is very common in the old and new palatial art. As explained in the case of the spiral frieze, the stripes were initially defined with impressed sting lines and the form of the ivy leaves was incised with a pointed tool.

The ivy frieze from Akrotiri illustrates an alternative version of this ornamental motif (Fig. 8).³⁵ The heart-shaped ivy leaves are painted blue and have a black outline. On the other hand, the ivy of Tell el-Dab^a consists of two antithetical J-spirals, which are joined with a C-spiral. The shape of the leaves is sometimes crudely rendered. However, in both cases we have the combination of different geometric forms in order to represent a naturalistic motif, expressing at the same time a very essential artistic tendency of the Minoan art, the *pictorialism*.³⁶ This form differentiates totally from the purely naturalistic ivy plants that are depicted, either independently, or integrated in a natural surrounding.³⁷ A plaster fragment from Knossos presents a textile pattern of a dark coloured ivy zone against yellow ochre background.³⁸ The form of these ivy

leaves demonstrates a style closer to the example from Akrotiri.

The ornamental function of the ivy or sacral ivy can be observed on many objects of the Minoan art since the EM III period.³⁹ A sealing from the 'Temple Repositories' (MM IIIB) shows the same abstract variation, consisting of two antithetical J-spirals.⁴⁰ But since the first appearance of the ornamental ivy, we can distinguish typologically two main categories. A simple, abstract and mainly stylized version and a second elaborate representational form, which however retains its geometrical character.⁴¹ Obviously, the frieze from Tell el-Dab^a can be classified belonging to the first category.

A possible early parallel of the ivy from Tell el-Dab^a could be represented with a MM III–LM IB bronze cup from tomb XII at Mochlos.⁴² Although the excavator of the site was certain that the context of the tomb can be assigned only to the MM III period, on the basis of the ceramic material, the dating of the necropolis of Mochlos in general has been seriously questioned.⁴³ The stone lamp from the Southeast House at Knossos⁴⁴ shows an ivy motif, which is also identical to the one from the bronze cup from Mochlos.⁴⁵ Its context is equally unsafe, since A. Evans dated it according to stylistic standards and

³⁵ Thera IV, pl. 117; CH. DOUMAS, *Op. cit.* (note 5), pls. 78–79, 83.

³⁶ A. FURUMARK, *The Mycenaean Pottery. Analysis and Classification*, Stockholm 1941, 133; S. ALEXIOU, *Μινωικά και Ελληνικά*, Athens 2002, 50f.

³⁷ *PoM* I, fig. 391; *PoM* II, fig. 201; M. MÖBIUS, Pflanzenbilder der minoischen Kunst in botanischer Betrachtung, *JdI* 48 (1933), 32, fig. 22b–c; W. S. SMITH, *Interconnections in the Ancient Near East*, New Haven 1965, fig. 110; S. HOOD, *The Arts of Prehistoric Greece*, Hamondsworth 1978, 67, fig. 50a; D. EVELY, (ed.), *Fresco: A Passport into the Past. Minoan Crete through the Eyes of Marc Cameron*, Athen 1999, 212; M. BIETAK and N. MARINATOS, *EdL* 5 (1995), figs. 12, 14.

³⁸ M.A.S. CAMERON and S. HOOD, *Sir Arthur Evans' Knossos Fresco Atlas*, London 1967, 23, pl. E: fig. 1.

³⁹ G. WALBERG, *Tradition and Innovation. Essays in Minoan Art*, Mainz am Rhein 1986, 81–82, fig. 98.; IDEM, Minoan Floral Iconography, in: R. LAFFINEUR and J. CROWLEY (eds.), *EIKON. Aegean Bronze Age Iconography*. Proceedings of the 4th International Conference, Australia, 6–9 April 1992, *Aegeum* 8 (1992), 245.

⁴⁰ P. YULE, *Op. cit.*, 160, pl. 25: 45: 12.

⁴¹ For the second elaborate type of the ivy ornament cf. G. WALBERG, *Op. cit.* (note 20), fig. 48: 25: 1: 11; *Tradition and Innovation*, 82, fig. 99; L. PERNIER and L. BANTI, *Op. cit.* (note 9), pl. XVIII: a; W.-D. NIEMEIER, Das Problem der Palaststilkeramik von Knossos, in: *Πεπραγμένα του Διεθνούς Κρητολογικού Συνεδρίου (Ηράκλειο, 29 Αυγούστου – 3*

Σεπτεμβρίου 1976) Τόμος Α'. Προϊστορικοί και Αρχαίοι Χρόνοι, Αθήνα 1980, 372, pl. 102β; IDEM, *Die Palaststilkeramik von Knossos*, Berlin 1985, 66, fig. 22 (1): Nr. 5; Thera II, pl. E: 2; pl. 10: 1; Thera VI, pl. 12c–d; pl. 73b.

⁴² R.B. SEAGER, *Explorations in the island of Mochlos*, Boston 1912, 62, fig. 31: XII f; *PoM* II: 2, fig. 288c; R. HIGGINS, *Op. cit.*, 144, fig. 177; H. MATTHÄUS, *Op. cit.*, 238f., pl. 42: 357. It has been suggested that the destruction of the settlement (LM IB) may be a *terminus ante quem* for the dating of the cup.

⁴³ A re-examination of the pottery from certain tombs at Mochlos is being made by V. Wartous. V. WARTOUS, Cretan International Relations during the MM IA Period, in: R. LAFFINEUR (ed.), *Emporia. Aegeans in Central and Eastern Mediterranean*, 10th International Aegean Conference, Italian School of Archaeology, 14–18 April 2004 (forthcoming).

⁴⁴ *PoM* I, 344f., fig. 249; *PoM* II: 2, fig. 287g, 288a; CH. ZERVOS, *L'Art de la Crète Néolithique et Minoenne*, Paris 1956, pl. 468; P. WARREN, *Minoan Stone Vases*, Cambridge 1969, 57; Herakleion Museum Nr. 66; S. HOOD, *Op. cit.*, 151, fig. 143.

⁴⁵ *PoM* II: 2, fig. 288c. The same form of heart-shaped ivies is represented with the glass beads from the Mycenaean Cemetery of Ahdonion. The context of the beads is also uncertain. K. DEMAKOPOULOU, *Ο Θησαυρός των Αηδονιών. Σφραγίδες και Κοσμήματα της Υστερης Εποχής του Χαλκού στο Αιγαίο*, Athens 1998, 65, pl. 54. Cf. gold relief beads in shape of stylized ivy-leaves in R. HIGGINS, *Op. cit.*, 173, fig. 205.

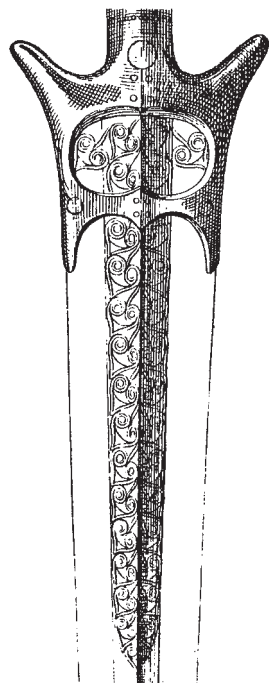


Fig. 9 Ivy decoration on a sword blade from shaft grave IV at Mycenae (after S. HOOD, *The Arts in Prehistoric Greece*, Harmondsworth 1978, fig. 172)

mostly in relation to the above mentioned bronze cup from Mochlos in MM III. However, a closer examination of the pottery material by M. R. Popham has shown that the House was used till the LM IIIA–B period.⁴⁶ Similar heart-shaped ivies are found on the golden necklace from SH IIA-Dendra⁴⁷ and on the golden leaves from a Mycenaean tholos tomb at Volos-Kapakli.⁴⁸

In contrast to the already mentioned unsafe parallels, the ivy on the sword blade from shaft grave IV of Grave Circle A at Mycenae represents a more reli-

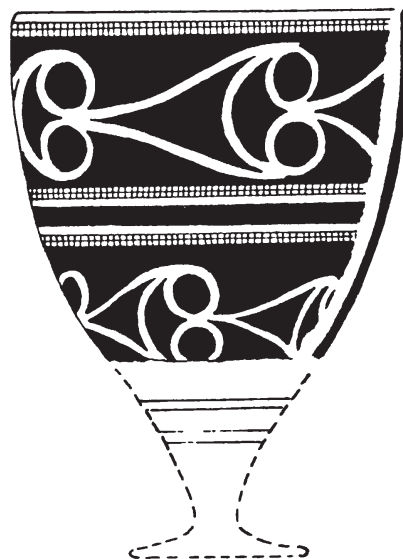


Fig. 10 Ivy zones on a “fine buff ware” cup from Knossos (after J.A. MACGILLIVRAY, *Knossos: Pottery groups of the Old Palace Period*, British School at Athens Studies, London 1998, pl. 22: 651)

able example for the stylistic classification of the frieze from Tell el-Dab'a (Fig. 9).⁴⁹ The same opinion can be suggested for a much earlier parallel on the ‘fine buff’ ware cup from Knossos, which has been dated in the transitional phase between the Old and New palace period (MM IIA) (Fig. 10).⁵⁰

The appearance of the abstract ivy becomes more frequent from LM IB to LM IIIA period.⁵¹ On the bronze incense burner, which was found at the workshop unit of the South wing of the Palace of Zakros, there is an additional example demonstrating the abstract and geometrical version of the ivy (Fig. 11).⁵² The same affinities can be observed on two seal impressions from Zakros⁵³ and Phaistos⁵⁴ (Fig. 12). A

⁴⁶ M.R. POPHAM, *The Destruction at the Palace at Knossos. Pottery of the LM IIIA Period*, SIMA 12, (1970) 32, pl. 1h, pl. 10c, pl. 22a–g; W.-D. NIEMEIER, *Op. cit.* (note 39), Berlin 1985, 67, 163f.

⁴⁷ A. W. PERSSON, *The Royal Tombs at Dendra near Midea*, Lund 1931, 38, pl. XVIII: 2; K. DEMAKOPOULOU, *Op. cit.*, 106f., pl. 41.

⁴⁸ K. KOROUNIOTIS, Ανασκαφή Θολωτού τάφου εν Βόλω, *ArchEph* (1906), 235, fig. 12; R. AVILA, Das Kuppelgrab von Volos-Kapakli, *PZ* 58 (1983), 42f., fig. 5:3; K. DEMAKOPOULOU, *Op. cit.*, 112, pl. 51.

⁴⁹ G. KARO, *Die Schachtgräber von Mykenai*, Munich 1930, 99, no. 402; *PoM* II, 481, fig. 288b; S. HOOD, *Op. cit.* (note 37), 175, fig. 172.

⁵⁰ J. A. MACGILLIVRAY, *Knossos: Pottery groups of the Old Palace Period*, British School at Athens Studies, London 1998, 67, 153: 651, pl. 22: 651, 108: 651, 100: 651.

⁵¹ P.P. BETANCOURT, *Η Ιστορία της Μινωικής Κεραμικής*,

Athens 1985, fig. 105; W.-D. NIEMEIER, *Op. cit.*, 74, fig. 23: 4, 6; S.W. MANNING, From process to people: longue durée to history, in: E.H. CLINE and D. HARRIS-CLINE (eds.), *The Aegean and the Orient in the Second Millennium: Proceedings of the 50th Anniversary Symposium*, University of Cincinnati, 18–20 April 1997, *Aegeum* 18 (1998), 318f.; IDEM, *A Test of Time*, Oxford und Oakville 1999, 104–105, fig. 25.

⁵² N. PLATON, *Op. cit.*, 219; H. MATTHÄUS, *Op. cit.*, 304, pl. 53: 466.

⁵³ *PoM* I, fig. 523: a–b; I. PINI, Towards a Standardization of Terminology. Problems of Description and Identification, in: R. LAFFINEUR and J.L. CROWLEY (eds.), *Aegean Bronze Age Iconography: Shaping a Methodology*. Proceedings of the 4th International Aegean Conference, 6–9 April 1992, *Aegeum* 8, EIKON, 14, pl. IVc.

⁵⁴ P. YULE, *Op. cit.*, 159, pl. 25: 45: 11; *CMS* II 5, no. 173, nos. 180–181; *CMS* II 1, no. 296.



Fig. 11 Incense burner from Zakros
(after H. MATTHÄUS, *Op. cit.*, 304, pl. 53: 466)

sealing from Knossos, unfortunately of unknown provenance, shows the same abstract ivy form.⁵⁵ Further parallels are demonstrated by a silver spoon, a golden and a silver cup from Midea⁵⁶ and several metal vessels from Dendra.⁵⁷ The kilt of a life-size processional male figure from Knossos is adorned with a network of stylized pendant ivies.⁵⁸ Finally, a special resemblance to the ivy of Tell el-Dab^a can be detected on a plaster fragment probably of LM I age from Knossos (Fig. 13).⁵⁹

The third ornamental zone from area H/III represents a foliate band (Pl. IV). The six preserved fragments of the foliate frieze were revealed east and northeast of the entrance (Pl. V). One of the fragments has been published in a preliminary report.⁶⁰ The vertical zone is 2.25 m high and 40 cm wide. The



Fig. 12 Seal impression with ivy motif from Zakros
(after I. PINI, *Aegeum* 8, (1992), pl. IVc)

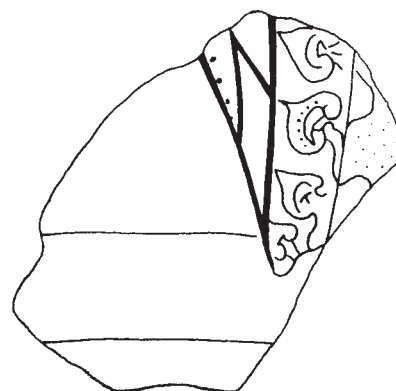


Fig. 13 Schematic drawing of a plaster fragment with stylized ivies from Knossos (after E. SAPOUNA-SAKELARAKI, *Μινωικό Ζώμα*, Athens 1971, fig. 76:δ)

fragments cover 18.9 % of the reconstructed surface. The border of the ornamental zone consists of alternative blue and whitish squares. The position of the two ornaments was initially defined by a string line. Between the elegantly and naturalistically rendered leaves are placed red triangular filling ornaments, which bear a fine black outline, like the whitish squares of the border. The majority of the fragments

⁵⁵ CMS II 8, nos. 138–139.

⁵⁶ A. W. PERSSON, *New Tombs at Dendra Near Midea*, London 1942, 89, fig. 101; fig. 88, pl. IV: Nr. 1–2; E. DAVIS, *The Vapheio cups and Aegean gold and silver ware*, New York University Ph. D. 1973, 240–242, figs. 203, 205.

⁵⁷ S. HOOD, *Op. cit.* (note 37), 169, fig. 165; H. MATTHÄUS, *Op. cit.*, 130, pl. 17: 153; pp. 189f., pl. 34: 285; p. 190, pl. 34: 286; p. 264f., pl. 46: 391

⁵⁸ *PoM* III, 729, fig. 456c, suppl. pl. XXVII; E. SAPOUNA-SAKELARAKI, *Μινωικό Ζώμα*, Athens 1971, 61, fig. 72γ, pl.

B:α, pl. 41:β Cat. no. 138γ; M. SHAW, *Anatomy and Execution of Complex Minoan textile patterns in the Procession Fresco from Knossos*, in: A. KARETSOU (ed.), *KPHTH–ΑΙΓΥΠΤΟΣ. Πολιτισμικοί δεσμοί τριών χιλιετιών*, Athens 2000, 56, fig. 1 C, pl. 2 C. cf. pendant ivies from jewelry craft K. DEMAKOPOULOU, *Op. cit.*, 76, pl. 10

⁵⁹ E. SAPOUNA-SAKELARAKI, *Op. cit.*, 181, fig. 76:δ, pl. E:α, Cat. No. 139.

⁶⁰ M. BIETAK, J. DORNER and P. JÁNOSI, *E&L* 11 (2001), 86, fig. 42b.



Fig. 14 Kamare ware jug with foliate bands (after D. LEVI, *Festòs e la civiltà minoica I*, Rome 1976, pl. XXXVIIIb)

originate from a wall corner. Therefore, it is safe to assume that the foliate band decorated a wall opening, such as an entrance or a niche.



Fig. 15 Plaster fragment with foliate band from Phaistos (after S. IMMERWAHR, *Aegean Painting in the Bronze Age*, Philadelphia 1990, fig. 6b)

A very significant feature of the foliate band from Tell el-Dab^a is the use of red triangles as filling ornaments. The depiction of red triangles and red filling ornaments in general characterize many wall paintings of the site. The spiral frieze with the red diamonds⁶¹ and the griffins with the red filling ornaments between the spiral hooks of the wing,⁶² reveal only some of the examples.

The motif of the foliate band appears already in the Old Palace period and belongs to the decorative patterns of the Kamare Ware (Fig. 14).⁶³ The ivory seal from the Tholos Γ in Platanos⁶⁴ and several others⁶⁵ from the Old Palace period represent a similar foliate band. From the Aegean wall paintings there is a parallel belonging to MM III (Fig. 15).⁶⁶ However, both the colours and the style of this painting differentiate totally from the ornamental scene from Tell el-Dab^a. The foliate band of Phaistos is completely stylized in comparison to the more naturalistic leaves of Tell el-Dab^a. Foliate bands are also very popular in the LM IA and LH I Pottery.⁶⁷ The appearance of

⁶¹ K. ASLANIDOU, Der minoische Spiralfries aus dem Grabungsareal H/IV in Tell el-Dab^a. Malvorgang und Rekonstruktion, *E&L* 12 (2002), 13f., pl. VI.

⁶² M. BIETAK, Avaris, Capital of the Hyksos kingdom: new results of excavations, in: E. D. OREN (ed.), *The Hyksos: new historical and archaeological perspectives*, 117, Philadelphia 1997, 117, Abb. 4. 31.; IDEM, Science versus Archaeology: Problems and Consequences of high Aegean Chronology, in: M. BIETAK (ed.), *The Synchronization in of Civilizations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second Millenium B. C. II*, Vienna 2003, 29, fig. 2.

⁶³ G. WALBERG, *Op. cit.* (note 20), 61, fig. 45: 18; 16; D. LEVI, *Festòs e la civiltà minoica I*, Rome 1976, pl. XXXVIIIb.

⁶⁴ *CMS* II 1, no. 333:b. The burials of the Tholos are dated from EM II till MM II.

⁶⁵ *CMS* IV, no. 101; *CMS* II 1, no. 222a, no. 333b.

⁶⁶ L. PERNIER and L. BANTI, *Op. cit.* (note 9), 161ff., pl. XL: 1; S. IMMERWAHR, *Op. cit.* (note 6), 183: no. 1, fig. 6b; M. CAMERON, *Op. cit.* (note 7), 590; P. MILITELLO, *Op. cit.* (note 9), 219, pl. D: 5.

⁶⁷ O.T.P.K. DICKINSON, The Definition of the Late Minoan I Pottery, *BSA* 69 (1974), 109–110, fig. 1; P.P. BETANCOURT *Op. cit.* (note 48), 183, fig. 98: Z–Θ; p. 186, fig. 100: B, Δ, E; W.-D. NIEMEIER, 91–95, fig. 37: 1, 5, 6, 8–10, 13, 16; IDEM, Die Katastrophe von Thera und die spätminoische Chronologie, *JdI* 95 (1980), 37, fig. 18: 7

the motif continues into the LM IB period.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the foliate bands of that period depict mostly single or multiple rows of leaves and less antithetical ones like in the previous periods.

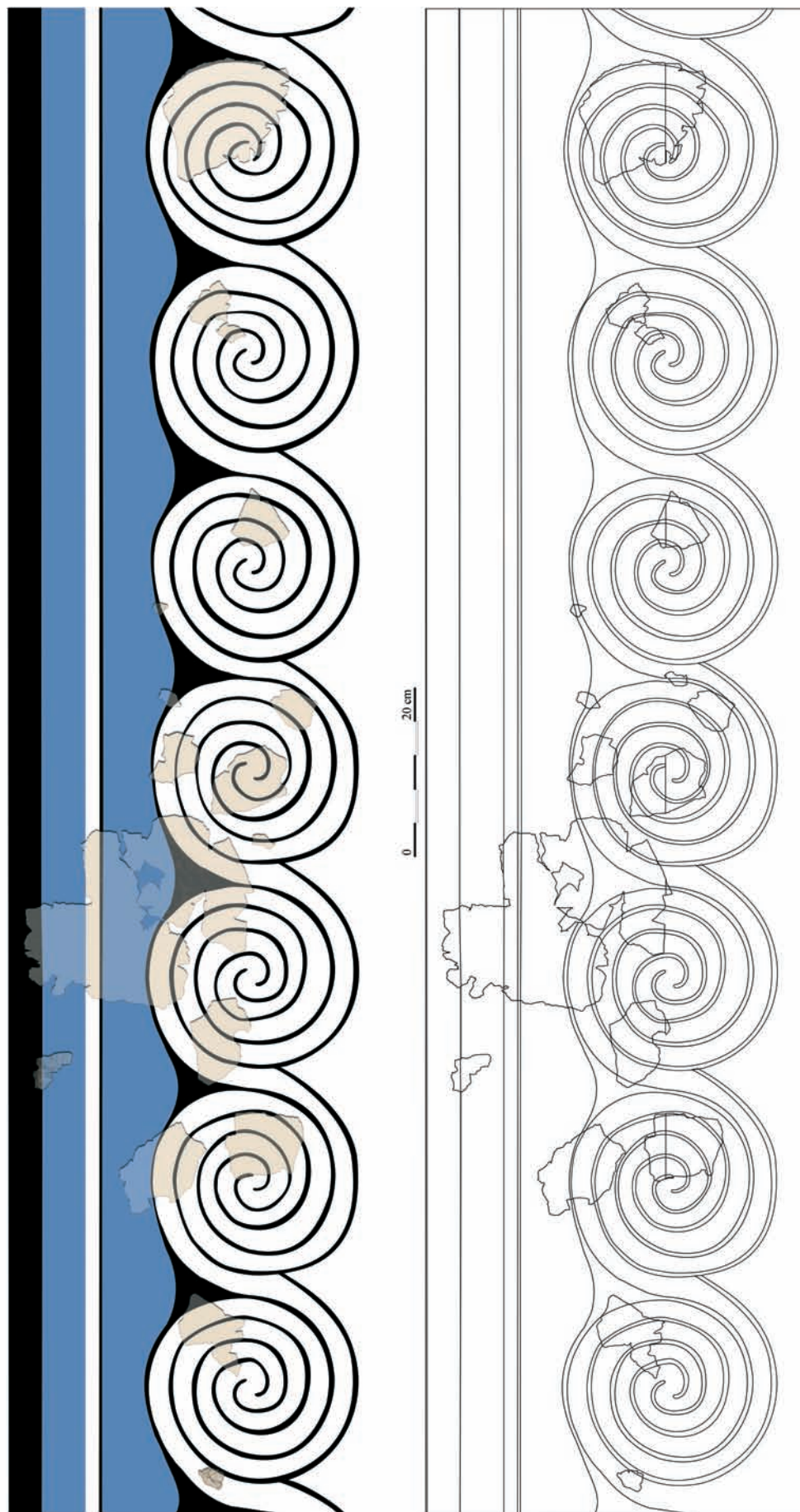
In this constant back and forth of the Minoan art, as described by G. Walberg, we can isolate some instances that reveal a very close connection with the ornamental scenes of palace G and at the same time originate from secure contexts. The above analysis connects the running double spirals, the ornamental ivy and the foliate band with well dated material from Kea, Phaistos, Akrotiri, Poros, the LH I art from the

shaft graves in Mycenae and Zakros. The Aegean painters from Tell el-Dab^a originate definitely from the new palatial tradition and especially the LM I art schools. A particular association of the ornamental friezes to the parallels from Akrotiri and the LH I art of the shaft graves might indicate a stylistic classification in the pre-eruption art of the LM IA period. Nevertheless, the dating of the Minoan wall paintings from Tell el-Dab^a can only be determined by the pottery classification and the stratigraphy of the site that connects the Minoan frescoes with str. d/C3, meaning the time of Tuthmosis III.⁶⁹

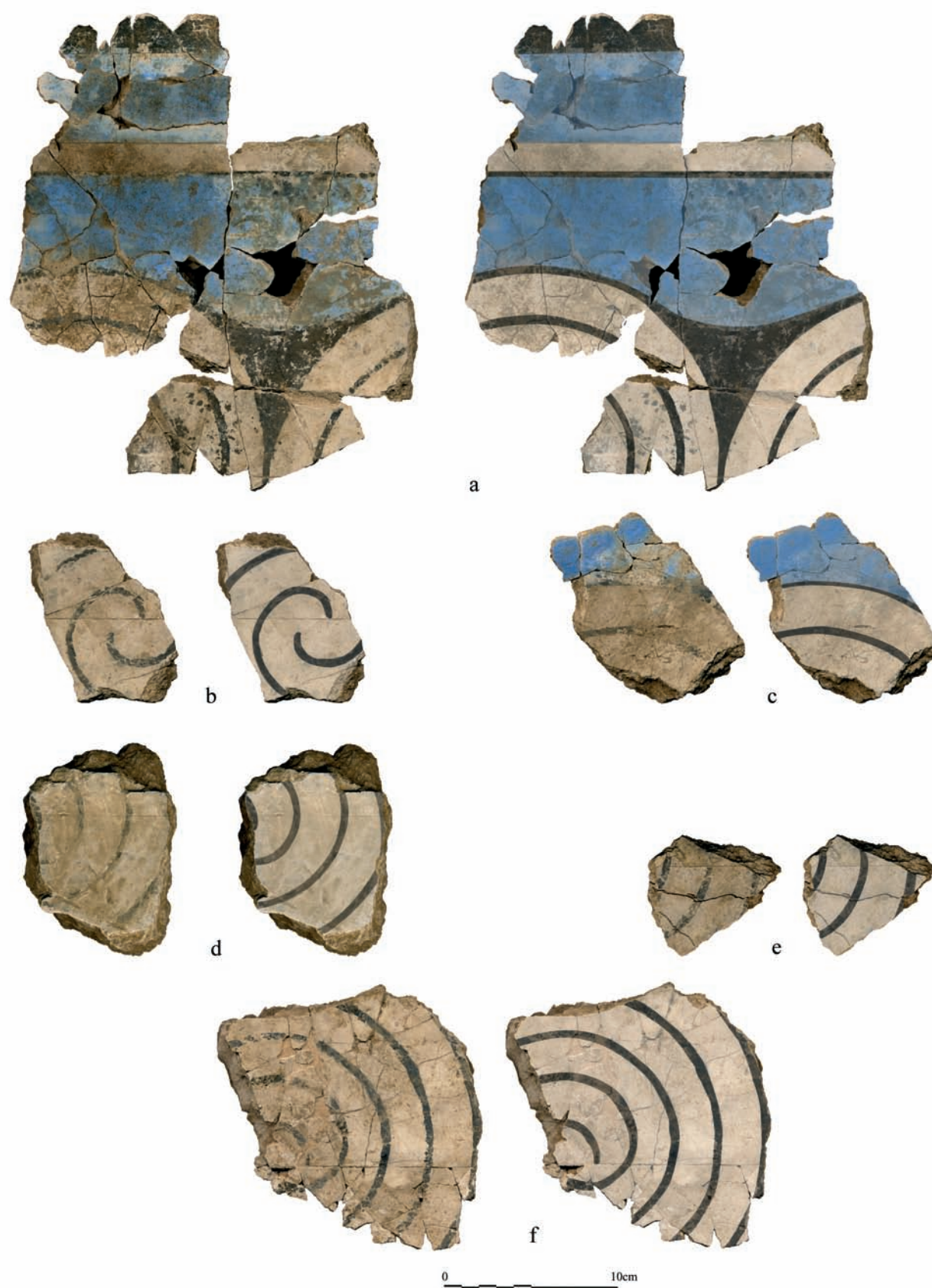
⁶⁸ P.P. BETANCOURT *Op. cit.*, 193, fig. 103: A; p. 105, fig. 105: Γ, I.

⁶⁹ M. BIETAK, Science versus Archaeology: Problems and Consequences of high Aegean Chronology, in: M. BIETAK (ed.), *The Synchronization in of Civilizations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second Millenium B.C. II*, Vienna 2003, 29, fig. 1; M. BIETAK and I. FOSTNER-MÜLLER, Ausgrabungen vom Palastbezirk von Avaris: Vorbericht Tell el-Dab^a/Ezbet Helmi, *E&L*, 13 (2003), 44, fig. 5; I. HEIN, Erste Beobachtungen zur Keramik aus Ezbet Helmi, *E&L*

4 (1994), 42; IDEM, Untersuchungen und vorläufige Bilanz zur Keramik an Ezbet Helmi, speziell Areal H/V, *E&L* 11 (2001), 140; P. FUSCALDO, Preliminary Report on the 18th Dynasty Pottery von Ezbet Helmi Area H/III-u/17 (The Bathroom), *E&L* 11 (2001), 149f., Abb. 5b; IDEM, The Base-Ring Wares from the Palace Complex at Tell el-Dab^a (Ezbet Helmi, Areas H/III and H/VI), *E&L* 13 (2003), 72; D. ASTON, The Pottery from H/VI Süd Strata a and b: Preliminary Report, *E&L* 11 (2001), 167f.



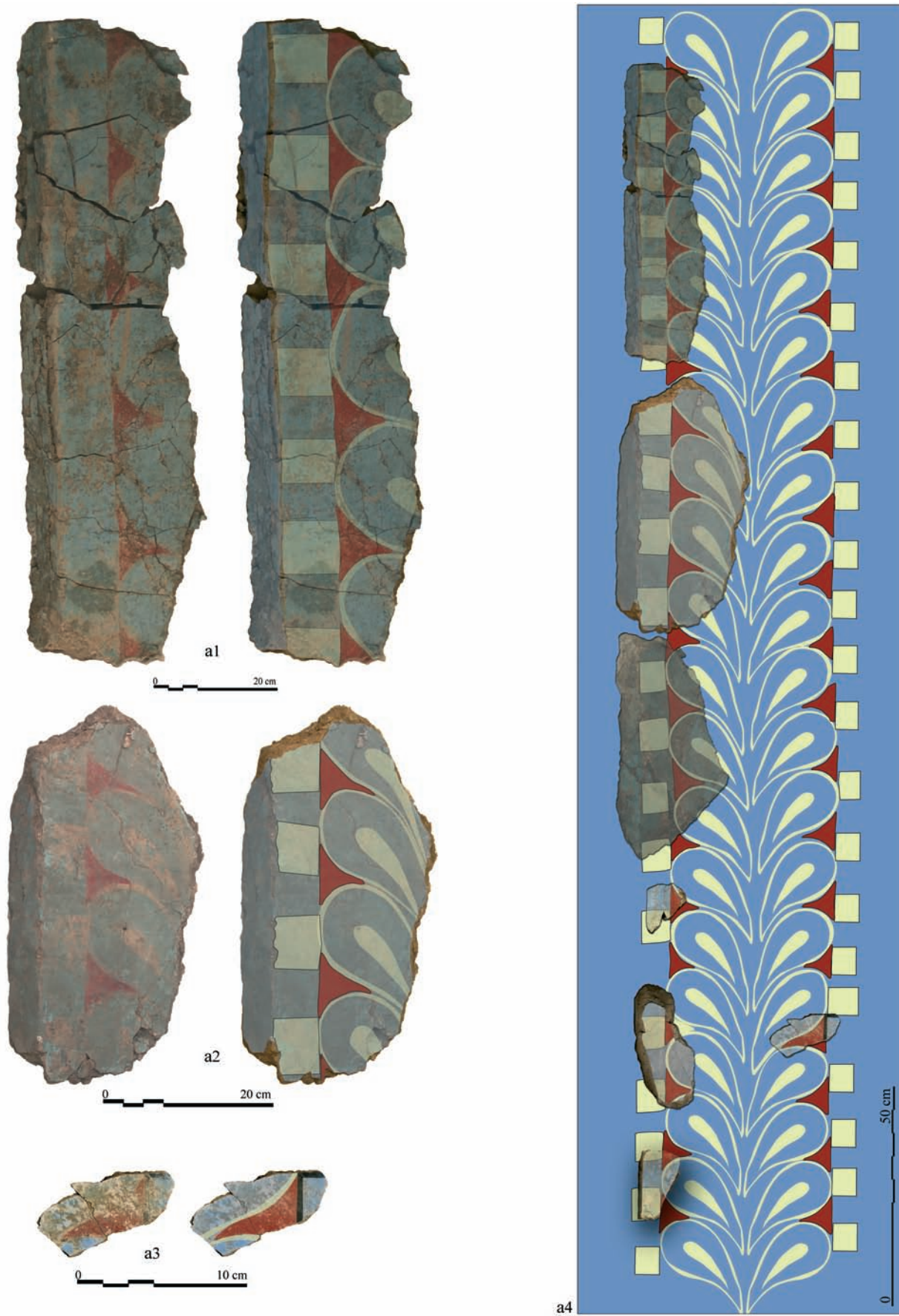
Pl. I The frieze of the running double spirals (reconstruction by K. Aslanidou)



Pl. II Some plaster fragments from the running double spiral frieze:
 a) Inv. no. B13; b) Inv. no. B 13a; c) Inv. no. B15a; d) Inv. no. B15d; f) Inv. no. B15



Pl. III The ivy frieze (reconstruction by K. Aslanidou)



Pl. IVa1–a3 Plaster fragments with foliate bands (Inv. nos. B20, B14, B19)
a4: the vertical zone of the foliate band (reconstruction by K. Aslanidou)

