

MacGillavry, *Building 1*, Chapter 11). Barley and simple wheats were cultivated along with legumes, fig and grape. No naked wheats, such as the *triticum aestivum* represented at contemporary Knossos, were found, perhaps suggesting a regional preference or tradition (Sarpaki, *Building 1*, Chapter 7, who also notes the occurrence of flax in LM IIIA:2 deposits). Sarpaki makes the interesting suggestion that the lack of whole grains recovered from the Building 1 deposits may mean grain was stored as flour (rather than there being no storage). The stone tools, many from hand sized natural cobbles (apparently with some selection of sources not close at hand for particular materials) fit a typology increasingly identifiable across LBA Crete, including pestles, whetstones, pounders, querns, pounders/grinders, and tools likely used as polishers. Natural stalactites were collected and valued for appearance in LM III and perhaps earlier; pumice was fairly widely collected and in use, likely as an abrasive (Evely, *Building 1*, Chapter 5, p.317; *Block M*, Chapter 8). Plastered decoration in the MM II-LM IB period was clearly sophisticated, with multiple types of blue pigment and use of solid colour grounds; there are ornamental painted plaster objects in MM IIIB in both buildings (Westlake, *Building 1*, Chapter 6; *Block M*, Chapter 9).

Overall, the books present the results of an excavation long due for publication, in an impressive and readable manner, with much thoughtful interpretation and reliable expertise. With this cycle of excavations long complete and a new one in train, focused on new elements including survey in the wider region and the identification of a possible palatial building, we may look forward to refreshing new takes on the process and results of excavation at this rich site, with ambitious, widely-scoping aims overtly tying the work into wider research in the Mediterranean and Middle East.

SARO WALLACE
GERDA HENKEL FELLOW
sarowallace@hotmail.com

Lyvia Morgan, *KEOS XI. Wallpaintings and Social Context. The Northeast Bastion at Ayia Irini*. pp. 533 + xxix, 74 plates, 102 figs, 2 tbls. Philadelphia: INSTAP Academic Press, 2020. ISBN 9781931534970, hardcover \$80.

This massive volume by one of the leading experts on Aegean Bronze Age fresco painting represents the

fruition of many years of work on some interesting but extremely fragmentary frescoes from an unusual source at Ayia Irini, the most significant prehistoric settlement on Kea (ancient Keos, the first of the Cyclades south of Attica). The unusual source is two very large upper storey rooms in a bastion that was added to the fortification wall at the beginning of the Late Bronze Age, in Period VI of the sequence at Ayia Irini, and destroyed by an earthquake early in Period VII. The resulting rubble was evidently left uncleared, and the paintings flaked off the walls progressively, to be found at various levels in the debris that developed. This bastion was part of a major building programme undertaken during the period.¹

The volume is not just a full publication of the material, that pays attention to many areas of interest, such as the evidence for the sources of the pigments used (in which Kea is notably rich) and the methods by which the frescoes were planned and painted, as well as presenting in catalogue all the pieces used in reconstructing the frescoes, with full colour illustrations (it is very much to the credit of INSTAP Academic Press that they have been willing to include so much colour illustration). It contains within it an enormous amount of information and discussion, backed by a bibliography of nearly 40 pages, concerning artistic themes and methods of representation on other Aegean frescoes and on different forms of Aegean Bronze Age art such as seals and precious vessels in metal and ivory, with references to contemporary Egyptian and Near Eastern artwork where this has relevance. It also, in a Prologue entitled “Perception and Interpretation: the Process”, sets out the principles and methods that Morgan follows in reconstructing frescoes, displaying full awareness of the degree to which interpretation is inevitably influenced, not only by the choices of the original excavators and processors of the material, but by the development of a theoretical approach to the interpretation of art. The meticulousness with which the possible arrangements of the fragmentary material have been considered and restored, with readiness to alter an arrangement where necessary, is admirable, and gives the lie direct to the reported opinion of an unnamed ‘distinguished archaeologist’ that where fresco fragments had fallen from their walls, they were “the sort that one can put together in any way one pleases” (p. 10). It is acknowledged that a lot of the discussion is for specialists, and a helpful guide to the sections which cover “the crux of the matter” is provided on p. xxviii.

¹ As summarised in Gorogianni and Fitzsimons 2017: 143.

It can be considered certain that the Northeast Bastion frescoes came from the walls of two rooms on an upper floor within the bastion, with access by a stairway from a ground floor that produced ample evidence for food and drink storage and preparation and presentation,² but none for any form of residential occupation. An outer room, N.18, which provided access to the inner room N.20, was decorated with life-size panels of massed plants placed between windows on at least two walls, probably with continuous zones of plain yellow ochre above and red ochre below; its floor was of red-coated plaster. N.20 was decorated on all walls, in a zone running above a series of windows, with a miniature frieze, of a type best known from the famous examples from the West House at Akrotiri on Santorini but represented in material from a few other Aegean sites, notably the Knossos palace, and, remarkably, also from Tel Kabri in northern Israel (all are discussed in some detail on pp. 360-370). As at Akrotiri, there was a dado course of red ochre below the level of the windows, and the floor, at least partly of schist slabs, had red paint on the plaster between the slabs, creating a pattern. All ceilings seem to have been of unpainted plaster.

It is noteworthy that, with the exception of two frescoes decorated with 'splash' patterns only, without representations of any kind, identified in an upstairs room of Building A and a room of the 'Temple' (p. 39), these frescoes are the *only* extant frescoes from Period VI of Akrotiri, which increases the likelihood that this addition to the existing fortifications was not concerned primarily with defence but with display, in a conspicuous position. The large windows would give a fine view of the main approach to the town from the north, that would pass the Bastion on the way to a major gateway through the fortification; from this, 'Avenue A' led directly to a small square, which gave access to Building A, the largest in Ayia Irini, but not as large at this time as it later became (see fig. 1.4 for all this). The possibility that the Bastion represents a separate focus of power or influence from Building A and that there was no settled hierarchy in Ayia Irini at this time cannot be ignored.³ There is a plausible argument that its rooms formed a suite for formal entertainment of quite large numbers, and it is strongly argued by Morgan that N.20 was a dining hall.⁴

Some 3000 fragments of fresco were recovered in excavation, but only about half of these were useful, just over 1000 from the miniature frieze and nearly 600 from the plant panels. It is estimated that the frieze may have been 54 cm high (p. 265), much the same as the West House frieze at Akrotiri, and there are some indications of variations in scale of the representations on it, both of buildings and human figures. As well as the colour illustrations of the fragments inserted in the catalogues and shown on a larger scale in the plates, watercolour paintings are provided of major elements of the frieze and the plant panels, with reconstructions that give some impression of how the two rooms might have looked. All reconstructions were worked out on paper; no pieces were embedded in plaster, as was done in the past at Knossos particularly, which has made correcting over-ambitious or mistaken restorations so difficult.

The subjects of the plant-pattern panels in N.18 were relatively easily identified, as there were only two arrangements (bramble and myrtle, and grasses, reeds, and leaves). But only 12-15% of the frieze was preserved in reasonably good condition, so it is not surprising that, while it is possible to reconstruct several scenes of human activity or simply of natural background showing the sky, rocky terrain, a river with marshy banks, and the sea, no overall theme can be reconstructed for a single wall, let alone for the whole frieze. Admittedly, a possible overall theme for the whole of the miniature frieze from the West House at Akrotiri remains a matter of dispute, although it is generally accepted that the 'Ship Fresco' represents a ceremonial occasion. There are in fact indications that scenes of human activity were mostly placed on the frieze sections on the north and south walls of the room, while the river and marsh might have taken up the whole of the east wall section.

Some fragments clearly show town buildings, sometimes with a woman at a window or in a street outside, but only five fragments showing women have been identified in total, and the great majority of scenes involving humans show men exclusively, in a variety of activities in the open air. Some in short robes are conducting what looks like a ceremonial meeting (fig. 7.11); others, most often shown wearing tunics, are apparently greeting one another, or are part of a procession, or are carrying items by a river, including vessels, held or suspended on poles (fig. 7.12). A man carrying one end of a pole from which an animal is slung (fig. 7.16) is considered a hunter, and a scene of dogs harassing deer may be part of a hunt scene; one man is shown herding animals (fig. 7.7), of which several examples

² Gorogianni and Fitzsimons 2017: 146.

³ Gorogianni and Fitzsimons 2017: 148-149.

⁴ Most recently the volume under review, pp. 35-36, see also Gorogianni and Fitzsimons 2017: 145-149 for a general discussion of the Northeast Bastion.

were shown (p. 153), and three are paddling in a boat on the sea (fig. 7.9). Others are active by the sea, in a scene which contains an element virtually unique in Aegean art (part-reconstructed on fig. 7.8, cf. also fig. 7.26), cooking in cauldrons on the sea shore, in front of possible shipsheds. A series of ships that show notable similarities with the ships in the Akrotiri West House fresco, and like them seem to be carrying passengers, are shown moving on the sea past this scene. Also particularly remarkable, because found in hardly any other contemporary fresco work in Crete or elsewhere, is the evidence for a horse-and-chariot team, presumably with a driver in the chariot box (figs 3.5, 7.10; fig. 7.11 shows a probably rather later example from Knossos). There were clearly other representations of horses (p. 160), one in association with a building (fig. 7.6), so presumably in a town setting.

Relationships between some of these scenes in terms of theme can be suggested, and some have good parallels in subject matter with Akrotiri or, in the case of the men carrying items, in a miniature fresco from an important building at Tylissos west of Knossos (fig. 11.5). All the separate elements identified, including the depictions of the natural setting, receive full discussion in a sequence of sections before the discussion of the possible meaning, in which the possible linking theme of a public festival, as at Akrotiri, seems very plausible. Indeed, Morgan argues that showing scenes of public festival was the purpose of miniature frescoes (summarised on p. 380), although the examples from the palace at Knossos, as she acknowledges, show activities more clearly associated with the palace than a town and have other very distinctive features such as an emphasis on female activity, and the association with a large upper storey room within the palace is rather conjectural (pp. 365-370).

Morgan presents a strong argument for seeing the painters of the miniature frieze as local, not 'itinerants', even if they learned their skills elsewhere, perhaps at Akrotiri on Thera, with which there are notable links in technical features and themes. Yet the Ayia Irini paintings include stylistic features that are not seen anywhere else, such as clouds in the sky and foam on the sea, and as already indicated some of the scenes are unique. Morgan argues for the existence of a distinctive "Cycladic voice" in fresco painting (p. 360), of which a single surviving fragment of a miniature fresco at Phylakopi on Melos which shows a stylistic connection with the Ayia Irini material may be considered a further example (p. 362). While Minoan influence from Crete must lie behind the adoption of fresco-painting in the Cyclades, as it does behind many other features

of material culture identifiable on Kea and several other Cycladic islands in the early Late Bronze Age, this is no more an indication of *domination* from Crete in the fabled 'thalassocracy' and of colonisation and potentially the domination of local arts by Cretan craftworkers and Cretan tastes than is the evidence for increasingly strong Minoan influence of a similar kind on the mainland in the same period. It is in fact possible to point to distinctions between the different levels of 'Minoanisation' observable in the different islands, suggesting differing experience of Minoan influences, and to identify important local features, some inherited from the past or simply distinctive and without clear Minoan parallel. In the particular case of the Northeast Bastion, even if the idea of an upper storey dining hall suitable for elite gatherings is Minoan,⁵ its incorporation within a bastion of the fortification rather than a monumental building seems quite un-Minoan, and the whole construction could be interpreted as a statement, by an important faction of the population at least, of Kea's independence and readiness to defend itself. The putative dining hall and its anteroom in N.18 could also have served as a very suitable place to welcome visiting dignitaries such as ambassadors – which should remind us that there is no reason to suppose that Kea would have been without friends in any confrontation with a greater power. The relationship of Kea to other Aegean centres is in fact likely to have been complicated, and potentially variable, over the decades during which the Northeast Bastion stood, when there were important developments in many parts of the Aegean.

Overall, this book is a very valuable contribution not just to the study of Aegean fresco-painting, but to Aegean archaeology in general, especially, not least in its demonstration that the more closely material is examined, the more it is likely to show individual features whose significance may be missed in attempts to create overarching general theories.

OLIVER DICKINSON
DURHAM UNIVERSITY, UK
otpkdickinson@googlemail.com

Gorogianni, E. and Fitzsimons, R.D. 2017. Social complexity in Late Middle Bronze Age and Early Late Bronze Age Cyclades: a view from Ayia Irini. In C.W. Wiersma and S. Voutsaki (eds), *Social Change in Aegean Prehistory*: 124–158. Oxford & Philadelphia: Oxbow Books.

⁵ Gorogianni and Fitzsimons 2017: 148.