

ARTH 3200: Topic in Aegean Bronze Age Art: Frescoes  
Spring 2024, Mondays, 10:15-1:00  
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### *Course Description*

Minoan, Cycladic, and Mycenaean wall paintings are a hallmark of the civilization of the Aegean Bronze Age which dates to roughly 3,300-1,100 BCE. These technically advanced paintings are often discussed in terms of their rich iconography. In this class, we will examine not only how frescoes were made, but also the paintings' iconographic interpretations, and their architectural context. This leads us to the interesting question of the types of paintings that are chosen for homes, palaces, fortifications, and other structures. The recent study of Minoan-style paintings from Egypt and the Near East adds a further dimension to the question of the context in which this unique type of art is found, and what this might indicate about the spread of a Minoan/Cycladic style throughout the Mediterranean.

Students will write and present two research papers to the class. In your first paper, you will examine a single wall painting and its architectural context. This paper should be roughly 15 pages long with footnotes, images, and a separate bibliography that you will hand out to the class. You will present this paper with a PowerPoint presentation to the class. Your second paper will examine a pictorial program of frescoes in a building or room, focusing on the architectural context as well as the motifs seen in the painting. These papers will be 15-25 pages in length with footnotes, a bibliography, and images. You will turn these papers in when you present them to the class (no exceptions). Images in the paper should be illustrated with PowerPoint.

### *Texts*

**\*When sections of a book or an article are assigned as readings, you will be provided with a PDF of the reading**

Betancourt, Philip. 2007. *Introduction to Aegean Art*. INSTAP Academic Press. (available on JSTOR).

Cline, Eric, Ed. 2010. *The Oxford Handbook of the Bronze Age Aegean*. Oxford University Press.

Palyvou, Clair. 2005. Akrotiri, Thera: An Architecture of Affluence 3,500 Years Old. INSTAP Academic Press. (available on JSTOR)

### ***Schedule***

#### **Class 1 Monday, January 22 Introduction to the course**

Readings: look over the Betancourt and Cline texts

#### **Class 2 Monday, January 29 How Aegean Bronze Age Frescoes were made**

Readings: Evelyn, Doniert, 1999. "The Craft of Fresco Painting," *Fresco: A Passport in the Past, Minoan Crete through the eyes of Mark Cameron*, British School at Athens, pp. 140-174.

#### **Class 3 Monday, February 5 Early Wall Paintings and their Architectural Contexts**

Readings: Chapters 5-8 of John McEnroe's book *Architecture of Minoan Crete: Constructing Identity in the Aegean Bronze Age*, 2010, University of Texas Press and Chapters 3 and 4 of Sara Immerwahr's *Aegean Painting in the Bronze Age*, 1990, Pennsylvania State University.

#### **Class 4 Monday, February 12 Palatial Wall Paintings part 1**

Reading: Continue with readings from February 5

\*By now you should have chosen a topic for your first paper

#### **Class 5 Monday, February 19 Palatial Wall Paintings part 2**

Readings: Continue with readings from February 5

#### **Class 6 Monday, February 26 Akrotiri part 1**

Readings: Clair Palyvou's *Akrotiri, Thera* Chapters 5-9.

#### **Class 7 Monday, March 11 Akrotiri part 2**

**Reading:** Andreas Vlachopoulos. 2014. "Physis and Techne on Thera: Reconstructing Bronze Age Environment and Land-Use based on new evidence from Phytoliths and the Akrotiri Wall Paintings," in *PHYSIS: L'environnement naturel et la Relation Homme-milieu dans le monde Égéen Protohistorique*, G Touchais, R Laffineur and F Rougemont, eds., pp. 183-197.

\*By now you should have chosen a topic for your second paper

### **Class 8 Monday, March 18 Student Presentations**

### **Class 9 Monday, March 25 Student Presentations**

### **Class 10 Monday, April 1 Mycenaean Wall Paintings**

Readings: Chapters 5 and 6 in Sara Immerwahr's *Aegean Painting in the Bronze Age* and Paul Rehak. 1992. "Tradition and Innovation in the Fresco from Room 31 in the 'Cult Center' at Mycenae," in *EIKON, Aegean Bronze Age Iconography*, R. Laffineur and J. Crowley, eds., pp. 39-62.

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### **Class 11 Monday, April 8 Iconographies of Power: Men and Women in Aegean Bronze Age Wall Painting**

Readings: Shaw, Maria. 2004. "The "Priest-King" Fresco from Knossos: Man, Woman, Priest, King, or Someone Else?" in *XAPIΣ: Essays in Honor of Sara A. Immerwahr*, A. Chapin, ed., pp. 65-84, and Koehl, Robert. 1995. "The Nature of Minoan Kingship," in *The Role of the Ruler in the Prehistoric Aegean*. Paul Rehak, ed., pp. 23-36, pls. XI-XII.

### **Class 12 Monday, April 15 Moving Abroad...Mari and Tell el Dab'a**

Readings: Bietak, Manfred. 2005. "The Setting of the Minoan Wall Paintings at Avaris," in *Aegean Wall Painting, A Tribute to Mark Cameron*. Lyvia Morgan, ed., British School at Athens Studies 13, pp. 83-90; Marinatos, Nanno. 1998. "The Tell el-Dab'a Paintings: A Study in Pictorial Tradition," *Egypt and the Levant* 8, pp. 83-99.

**Class 13 Monday, April 22 Student Presentations**

**Class 14 Monday, April 29 Student Presentations**

*Possible Paper Topics*

First Paper: Female figures from the Villa at Hagia Triada, Crete

The Cup-Bearer Fresco from Knossos

The Blue Monkeys from Building Beta at Akrotiri, Thera

The Spring Fresco from Building Delta at Akrotiri, Thera

The "Mykenaiia" fresco from Mycenae

The Procession Fresco from the Old Kadmeia at Thebes

Second Paper: Bull Leaping Frescoes from Knossos

The Procession Fresco from Knossos

The Miniature Frescoes from the West House at Akrotiri, Thera

The Robing Scene from the House of the Ladies at Akrotiri,

Thera

The Naval Scene from the Palace at Pylos

Pylos Battle Scenes in frescoes