

## MINOAN ARTISANS TRAVELLING OVERSEAS: THE ALALAKH FRESCOES AND THE PAINTED PLASTER FLOOR AT TEL KABRI (WESTERN GALILEE)\*

Wolfgang Schiering zum 65. Geburtstag

The uniqueness and seeming suddenness of the emergence of the Cretan palace system in the Aegean has often been explained by connections with and influences from the older advanced civilisations of the Ancient Near East<sup>1</sup>. And contrary to C. Renfrew's "autonomous" model based exclusively on an environmental approach<sup>2</sup> a modified diffusionist theory appears indeed more convincing<sup>3</sup>. The conceptions of town and palace appear to have been adopted from the Ancient Near East - where they are much older<sup>4</sup> - furthermore the palatial administration system of Near Eastern type working with clay sealings<sup>5</sup> and inscribed clay

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- 1 Cf. *PM* II, 267-270; most recently: S. HILLER, "Palast und Tempel im Alten Orient und im minoischen Kreta", in R. HÄGG - N. MARINATOS (eds.), *The Function of the Minoan Palaces. Proceedings of the Fourth International Symposium at the Swedish Institute in Athens, 10-16 June 1984* (1987), 57-64; L. VANCE WATROUS, "The role of the Near East in the rise of the Cretan palaces", *ibid.*, 65-70.
  - 2 C. RENFREW, *The Emergence of Civilisation* (1972), *passim*.
  - 3 Cf. J. LEWTHWAITE, "Why did Civilization not emerge more often? A comparative approach to the development of Minoan Crete", in O. KRZYSZKOWSKA - L. NIXON (eds.), *Minoan Society, Proceedings of the Cambridge Colloquium 1981* (1983), 171-183. With G. CADOGAN, "Why was Crete Different?" in G. CADOGAN (ed), *The End of the Early Bronze Age in the Aegean* (1986), 153-171, esp. 169, I think that the Minoan palace organisation was not a slavish imitation of Near Eastern prototypes but "that a Minoan going to the Levant or a Levantine coming to Crete would have found the social organisation familiar; which suggests in turn that the conditions that produced such buildings and their organisations were similar". Thus I see Renfrew's multiplier effect' in action (cf. RENFREW, *op. cit.*, 476-504) but I think that the developments caused by it formed the precondition for adopting Near Eastern ideas and conceptions.
  - 4 For the town cf. F. KOLB, *Die Stadt im Altertum* (1984), 18-57; for the palace cf. J. MARGUERON, *Recherches sur les palais mésopotamiens de l'Age du Bronze* (1982), *passim*. However, there is no doubt that there are differences in layout and function between the Near Eastern and the Minoan palaces; cf. the relevant papers and discussions in HÄGG - MARINATOS (*supra* n. 1).
  - 5 Cf. E. FIANDRA, "A che cosa servivano le cretule di Festos?", in *Πεπραγμένα του Β' Διεθνούς Κρητολογικού Συνεδρίου* (1968), 383-397; EADEM, "Ancora a proposito delle Cretule di festos: connessione tra i sistemi amministrativi centralizzati e l'uso delle cretule nell'età del Bronzo", *BdA* 60

tablets<sup>6</sup> as well as certain motifs in Minoan iconography<sup>7</sup>.

But how did this Near Eastern influence actually work? Were merely ideas and conceptions transferred to Crete or was there also a movement of personnel (artisans, etc.)? One of those fascinated by this problem was Sir L. Woolley. After the conclusion of his epochal work at Ur he came in 1935 to the Amuq plain in northern Syria (after the 2nd World War as province Hatay part of Turkey) looking for a site to excavate which could throw light "upon the development of Cretan civilization and its connexions with the great civilizations of Nearer Asia"<sup>8</sup>. He selected Tell Atchana which proved to be the ancient town of Alalakh (Pl. XLVI, a).

And here in level VII Woolley thought to have found what he had looked for: in Yarim-Lim's palace he recognized "unmistakable connexions" with Minoan Crete. Similar building techniques as "the polished stone slabs lining the base of the walls", "the half timber construction", etc. as well as frescoes "identical in colouring, technique and style" at Alalakh and Knossos led him to the conclusion that "there can be no doubt but that Crete owes the best of its architecture, and its frescoes, to the Asiatic mainland" and that "we are bound to believe that trained experts, members of the Architects' and Painters' Guilds, were invited to travel overseas from Asia (possibly from Alalakh ...) to build and decorate the palaces of the Cretan rulers"<sup>9</sup>.

Woolley's main argument for this theory which has been accepted by eminent scholars<sup>10</sup> was that "Yarim-Lim's palace antedates by more than a century the Cretan examples in the same style"<sup>11</sup>. Level VII of Alalakh with Yarim-Lim's palace has been dated by Woolley "between circa 1780 and 1730 B.C."<sup>12</sup>. However, after a long debate on "Alalakh and Chronology", Woolley's date of level VII proved to be too high. Yarim-Lim of Alalakh was not - as Woolley had thought - Yarim-Lim I of Yamhad, the contemporary of the great Hammurapi of Babylon<sup>13</sup>, but a younger brother of King Abban of Yamhad who gave Alalakh to him as an appanage principality<sup>14</sup>. From evidence of the bilingual *Res Gestae* of Hattushilish I it is now generally agreed that Alalakh VII was destroyed by this Hittite King<sup>15</sup>. Unfortunately, the absolute chronology of the destruction of Alalakh VII is still under controversial discussion.

(1975), 1-25; P. FERIOLI - E. FIANDRA, "The Importance of Clay Sealings in the Ancient Administration", in I. PINI (ed.), *Fragen und Probleme der bronzezeitlichen ägäischen Glyptik*, CMS Suppl. 3 (1989), 41-53; J. WEINGARTEN, "Three Upheavals in Minoan Sealing Administration: Evidence for radical change", in T.G. PALAIMA (ed.), *Aegean Seals, Sealings, and Administration*, *Aegaeum* 5 (1990), 105-114, esp. 105-107 (cf. M. WIENER, *ibid.*, 236-239); P. FERIOLI - E. FIANDRA, "The Use of Clay Sealings in Administrative Systems from the 5th to the 1st Millennium B.C. in the Orient, Nubia, Egypt and the Aegen: Similarities and Differences", *ibid.*, 221-229.

6 However, the Minoan Hieroglyphic and Linear A script systems are not Near Eastern; their origins are still obscure (cf. T.G. PALAIMA and J.-P. OLIVIER, *ibid.*, 20-22).

7 Cf. J.L. CROWLEY, *The Aegean and the East. An Investigation into the Transference of Artistic Motifs between the Aegean, Egypt and the Near East in the Bronze Age* (1989), 181-199, 208-209.

8 L. WOOLLEY, *Alalakh. An Account of the Excavations at Tell Atchana in the Hatay, 1937-1949, Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London No. XVIII* (1955), 1.

9 L. WOOLLEY, *A Forgotten Kingdom* (1953), 74-75. Cf. also WOOLLEY (*supra* n. 8), 228.

10 Cf. for instance R. NAUMANN, *Architektur Kleinasiens*<sup>2</sup> (1971), 119; S. HOOD, *The Arts in Prehistoric Greece* (1978), 48.

11 WOOLLEY (*supra* n. 9), 74.

12 WOOLLEY (*supra* n. 8), 388-390.

13 B. LANDSBERGER, "Assyrische Königslisten und Dunkles Zeitalter", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 8 (1954), 51-56.

14 M.C. ASTOUR, *Hittite History and Absolute Chronology of the Bronze Age* (1989), 10 (with literature).

15 H. OTTEN, "Keilschrifttexte (Bogazköy 1957)", *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft* 91, December 1958, 73-84; ID., "Der Weg des hethitischen Staates zum Großreich", *Saeculum* 15 (1964), 118-119.

The dates recently proposed by different scholars lie between ca. 1650 and 1575 B.C. <sup>16</sup>. Personally I prefer a date in the second half of the 17th century as recently re-argued by J.D. Muhly *contra* M.-H. Carre Gates' low date <sup>17</sup>. Since according to textual evidence Level VII must have durated two to three generations, i.e. ca. 70-80 years <sup>18</sup>, the beginning of it has to be dated to around 1700 B.C.

In regard to architecture J.W. Graham has demonstrated that there are general resemblances in the arrangements between the Cretan and the Near Eastern palaces but within the limits of this broadness the differences are so profound that the evidence is far from substantiating Woolley's theory of Near Eastern architects working in Crete <sup>19</sup>. The Near Eastern priority in half-timber construction is not certain. In Crete it exists already by the third millennium (EM II) at Vasiliki <sup>20</sup>. The orthostates of Alalakh VII and of the contemporary palace at Tilmen Hüyük <sup>21</sup> are ca. 300 years later than the orthostates of the first phase of the Old Palace at Phaistos <sup>22</sup> and of the Chrysolakkos ossuary at Malia <sup>23</sup>. The earliest hitherto known orthostates in the Near East are those of the SW City Gate and Palaces E and Q of Tell Mardikh (Ebla) IIIA <sup>24</sup> which are not earlier than the earliest Cretan examples. Thus, at present the priority is not clear <sup>25</sup>.

Coming to the wall-paintings from Yarim-Limn's palace their very fragmentary state of preservation makes the comparison to the Cretan examples (which mostly are also in a rather fragmentary condition) quite difficult. Another problem is formed by the uncertainties in the dating of the Knossos frescoes compared by Woolley with the Alalakh fragments. As has been

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- 16 Cf. J.D. MUHLY, "Near Eastern Chronology and the Date of the Late Cypriot I Period", in N. ROBERTSON (ed.), *The Archaeology of Cyprus: Recent Developments* (1975), 76-89; P. ÅSTRÖM, "Methodological viewpoints on Middle Minoan Chronology", *OpAth* 12 (1978), 88; M.-H. CARRE GATES, "Alalakh Levels VI and V: A Chronological Re-assessment", *Syro-Mesopotamian Studies* 4 (1981), 11-50; A. KEMPINSKI, *Syrien und Palästina (Kanaan) in der letzten Phase der Mittelbronze IIB-Zeit (1650 - 1570 v. Chr.)*, (1983), 216-221; M.-H. CARRE GATES, "Alalakh and Chronology again", in P. ÅSTRÖM (ed.), *High, Middle or Low? Acts of an International Colloquium on Absolute Chronology Held at the University of Gothenburg 20th-22nd August 1978*, Part 2 (1987), 60-86.
- 17 J.D. MUHLY, "The Late Bronze Age in Cyprus: A 25 year retrospect", in V. KARAGEORGHIS (ed.) *Archaeology in Cyprus 1960-1985* (1985), 25-26 with n. 38: third quarter of the 17th century B.C. For a date ca. 1620/10 B.C. cf. KEMPINSKI, *op. cit.*, 219-220.
- 18 ASTOUR (*supra* n. 14), 10. On the question of 'generations' cf. also G. STEINER, "Die Dauer einer 'Generation' nach den Vorstellungen des Alten Orients", in ÅSTRÖM (ed. [*supra* n. 16]), Part 3 (1989), 170-195.
- 19 J.W. GRAHAM, *The Palaces of Crete* (1962), 231-232; ID., "The Relations of the Minoan Palaces to the Near Eastern Palaces of the Second Millennium", in E.L. BENNETT (ed.), *Mycenaean Studies* (1964), 195-215, esp. 196-202 on Alalakh. Cf. also MARGUERON (*supra* n. 4), 582-588.
- 20 Cf. J.W. SHAW, *Minoan Architecture. Materials and Techniques*, *AnnScAtene* 49, 1971 (1973), 139-140.
- 21 NAUMANN (*supra* n. 10), 410-411; K. BITTEL, *Die Hethiter* (1976), 240-241, fig. 271.
- 22 SHAW, *op. cit.*, 83-85, Figs. 86-88; D. LEVI, *Festòs e la civiltà minoica I* (1976), 31-35, Figs. 16-22. On the relative chronology cf. E. FIANDRA, "I periodi struttivi del primo palazzo di Festos", *KretChron* 15/16 (1961/62), Vol. I, 113-115. The latest pottery from the foundation trenches of the first phase of the palace at Phaistos was MM IA. Thus this first phase was constructed in late MM IA or early MM IB (the first phase of use); cf. also P. WARREN - V. HANKEY, *Aegean Bronze Age Chronology* (1989), 46-50. On the absolute chronology cf. *infra* n. 33.
- 23 J.W. SHAW, "The Chrysolakkos Facades", in *Πεπραγμένα τοῦ Γ' Διεθνούς Κρητολογικῶν Συνεδρίου* (1973), 319-331.
- 24 P. MATTHIAE, *I tesori di Ebla* (1984), Pls. 49-51. 64; ID., *Ebla: un impero ritrovato* <sup>2</sup> (1989), 143-147, 162, 169, Pls. 77-82. 89. Cf. also G. HULT, *Bronze Age Ashlar Masonry in the Eastern Mediterranean*, *SIMA LXVI* (1983), 38-39.
- 25 H. KLENGEL, *Geschichte und Kultur Altsyriens* (1979), 60-61, regards even as possible that Cretan builders were involved in the construction of Yarim-Limn's palace at Alalakh. On the other hand, HULT *op. cit.*, 38, argues that already the Royal Palace G of Tell Mardikh-EIba IIB 1 (EB IVA) may have had orthostates.



correctly stated by C.F. Hawke Smith in regard to the wall-paintings from Knossos "the structural phases are conjectural, and the stylistic considerations are open to doubt" <sup>26</sup>. Therefore we can not rely any more on the datings of the frescoes given by Sir A.J. Evans in his monumental work *The Palace of Minos at Knossos*.

In Yarim-Lim's palace the wall-paintings came from two rooms, room 5 of the "Chamber of Audience" <sup>27</sup>, and from a large room above magazines 11-13, according to Woolley "the great *salon* of Yarim-Lim's palace" <sup>28</sup>. In room 5 the basalt orthostates were covered with painted plaster, the decoration of which according to Woolley's description showed a dado imitating marbled stone slabs very similar to Knossian examples the oldest of which has been dated by Evans to MM IIIA <sup>29</sup>. This purely stylistic dating <sup>30</sup> is uncertain. However, as the recent excavations at Akrotiri on Thera demonstrate, painted dadoes imitating marbled alabaster slabs are known in the Aegean at least by LM IA <sup>31</sup>. According to the recent radiocarbon dates from Akrotiri, the eruption of the Thera volcano which buried the settlement there in late LM IA in Cretan terms most probably happened in the second half of the 17th century B.C. Therefore LM IA covered ca. the 17th century B.C. and not the 16th century B.C. as hitherto thought <sup>32</sup>.

26 C.F. HAWKE SMITH, "The Knossos Frescoes: A revised chronology", *BSA* 71 (1976), 65-76, 65.

27 WOOLLEY (*supra* n. 8), 92. For the position of the rooms cf. the plan of the palace *ibid.*, fig 35 facing p. 92.

28 *Ibid.*, 94, 230-231.

29 *Ibid.*, 92, 232. Woolley compares the dadoes illustrated in *PM* IV, 894 Fig. 873, 896 Fig. 874.

30 Cf. *PM* I, 355-356, Fig. 255.

31 S. MARINATOS, *Excavations at Thera VI* (1974), Colour Pls. 3-5. Cf. W. SCHIERING, "Stein- und Geländemotive in der minoischen Wandmalerei auf Kreta und Thera", in H.-G. BUCHHOLZ (ed.), *Ägäische Bronzezeit* (1987), 314-316. On the relative date of the Thera eruption in late LM IA in Cretan terms cf. W.-D. NIEMEIER, "Die Katastrophe von Thera und die spätminoische Chronologie", *Jdl* 95 (1980), 1-76; M. MARTHARI, "The Chronology of the Last Phases of Occupation at Akrotiri in the Light of the Evidence from the West House Pottery Groups", in *Thera and the Aegean World III: Proceedings of the Third International Congress, Santorini, Greece, 3rd - 9th September, 1989*, 3, Chronology (1990), 57-70. The LM IA date of the entire eruption is now confirmed by finds of tephra levels in LM IA-strata at Pseira, Mochlos, in Rhodes and Kos: cf. P.P. BETANCOURT - R. GOLDBERG - R.H. SIMPSON - C.J. VITALIANO, "Excavations at Pseira: The evidence for the Theran Eruption", *ibid.*, 96-99; J.S. SOLES - C. DAVARAS, "Theran Ash in Minoan Crete: New Excavations on Mochlos", *ibid.*, 89-954; T. MARKETOU, "New Evidence on the Topography and Site History of Prehistoric Ialysos", in S. DIETZ - I. PAPACHRISTODOULOU (eds.), *Archaeology in the Dodecanese* (1988), 27-33; C. DOUMAS, "The Prehistoric Eruption of Thera and its Effects: The evidence from Rhodes", *ibid.*, 34-38; T. MARKETOU, "Santorini Tephra from Rhodes and Kos: Some chronological remarks based on the stratigraphy", in *Thera and the Aegean World III*, 3, Chronology (1990), 100-113.

32 For the date of the Thera eruption according to radiocarbon datings cf. H.N. MICHAEL - P.P. BETANCOURT, "Further Evidence for an Early Date", *Archaeometry* 30 (1988), 169-175; R.A. HOUSLEY - R.E. HEDGES - I.A. LAW - C.R. BRONK, "Radiocarbon Dating by AMS of the Destruction of Akrotiri", in *Thera and the Aegean World III*, 3, Chronology (1990), 207-215; H.W. HUBBERTEN - M. BRUNS - M. CALAMATIOU - C. APOSTOLAKIS - A. GRIMANIS, "Radiocarbon Dates from the Akrotiri Excavations", *ibid.*, 179-187; S.W. MANNING, "The Thera Eruption, the Third Congress and the Problem of the Date", *Archaeometry* 32 (1990), 91-100.

To a date of the Thera eruption in the second half of the 17th century B.C. may also point the frost rings of trees in North America, Ireland, England and Germany indicating a climatic change possibly following the Thera eruption: cf. V.C. LAMARCHE - K.A. HIRSCHBOEK, "Frost Rings in Trees as Records of Major Volcanic Eruptions", *Nature* 307 (1984), 121-126; M.G. BAILLIE - M.A.R. MUNRO, "Irish Tree-Rings, Santorini, and Volcanic Dust Veils", *Nature* 332 (1988), 344-346; M.G.L. BAILLIE, "Irish Tree-Rings and an Event in 1628 B.C.", in *Thera and the Aegean World III*, 3, Chronology (1990), 160-166, as well as volcanic acidity dates from Greenland ice cores: cf. C.U. HAMMER - H.B. CLAUSEN - W.L. FRIEDRICH - H. TAUBER, "The Minoan Eruption of Santorini in Greece dated to 1645 B.C.?", *Nature* 328 (1987), 517-519; M.K. HUGHES, "Ice-Layer Dating of Eruption at Santorini", *Nature* 335 (1988), 211-212. However, on the problem to connect both of these sources of evidence with the Thera eruption cf. MANNING, *op. cit.*, 91-92.

Thus the Alalakh VII example of a marbled dado does not have a priority of 100 years or more but is roughly contemporary with the Thera examples. There are even indications that marbled dados were painted in Crete already by MM II (19th century B.C.)<sup>33</sup>.

On a partly joining group of fragments from Yarim Lim's *salon* (Pl. XLVI, b) we find creamy white grasses on a red ground painted "unmistakably in the spirit of Cretan art" as correctly stated by Woolley<sup>34</sup>. They appear to be moved by a wind, a characteristic feature of Minoan art<sup>35</sup> not to be found in the arts of the Ancient Near East<sup>36</sup>. Similar grass motifs appear in LM IA fresco painting and in MM III-LM I pottery decorations<sup>37</sup>.

A larger panel found in situ in Yarim Lim's *salon* is rather hard to study from the photographs in the publication<sup>38</sup>. With the help of the detailed description in Woolley's text, W. Stevenson Smith has drawn a reconstruction giving an impression of the general nature of

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The early date of the Thera eruption is compatible with the archaeological evidence; and since the eruption happened late in LM IA in Cretan terms, this phase appears to have started ca. 1700 B.C.: cf. P.P. BETANCOURT, "Dating of the Aegean Bronze Age with Radiocarbon", *Archaeometry* 29 (1987), 45-49; BETANCOURT - MICHAEL, *op. cit.*; S. MANNING, "The Bronze Age Eruption of Thera: Absolute dating, Aegean chronology and Mediterranean cultural interrelations", *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 1 (1988), 17-82; P.P. BETANCOURT, "High Chronology or Low Chronology: The archaeological evidence", in *Thera and the Aegean World III*, 3, Chronology (1990), 19-23; S. MANNING, "The Eruption of Thera: Date and Implications", in *ibid.*, 29-40. Arguing against a 17th century date of the Thera eruption and a marked chronological raising of the beginning of the Aegean Late Bronze Age: P. WARREN, "Absolute Dating of the Aegean Late Bronze Age", *Archaeometry* 29 (1987), 205-211; ID., "The Thera Eruption: Continuing discussion of the dating. III: Further Arguments against an early date", *Archaeometry* 30 (1988), 176-179, 181-182; HANKEY - WARREN, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 22), 140-141.

However, archaeological evidence for the new high chronology of the beginning of the Late Bronze Age in the Aegean is now given by chronological cross-connections between Crete and the Levant via Cyprus: cf. preliminary W.-D. NIEMEIER, "New Archaeological Evidence for a 17th Century Date of the 'Minoan Eruption' from Israel (Tel Kabri, Western Galilee)", in *Thera and the Aegean World III*, 3, Chronology (1990), 120-126 (a more thorough investigation in collaboration with G. BONANI, A. KEMPINSKI and W. WOELFLI is in preparation).

33 A MM II fresco fragment from the 'Loom-Weight Deposit' at Knossos (*PM* I, 251 Fig. 188a) most probably belonged to a dado of marbled panels. With CROWLEY, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 7), 202, I would interpret the unique painted marbled panels of the Throne Podium at Mari (A. PARROT, *Mission archéologique de Mari II 2. Le palais : peintures murales* [1958], 67-69, Pl. XV) as intrusive element and as indication of earlier Cretan prototypes. As to the absolute dates of the Middle Minoan periods they have to be raised in consequence of the raising of the LMIA phase, cf. W.-D. NIEMEIER, "Erläuterungen zur absoluten Chronologie und zu den Kulturphasen in Zentralkreta", in J. SCHÄFER (ed.), *Amnisos nach den archäologischen, historischen und epigraphischen Zeugnissen des Altertums und der Neuzeit* (in print): start of MM IB ca. 2000 B.C., of MM II ca. 1900 B.C. Similar datings have been already proposed by B.J. KEMP - R.S. MERRILLEES, *Minoan Pottery in Second Millennium Egypt* (1980), 250-267. An Egyptian scarab of the IX-XIth Dynasties found recently in a MM IB/II context in Herakleion-Poros (quoted by WARREN - HANKEY, *op. cit.* [*supra* n. 22], 214) can be interpreted as evidence for MM IB having started ca. 2000 B.C. and not 1900 B.C. as mostly thought hitherto (cf. most recently WARREN - HANKEY, *op. cit.*, 131-135).

34 WOOLLEY (*supra* n. 9), 231, Pl. XXXVIII a.

35 Cf. W. SCHIERING, "Die Naturanschauung in der altkretischen Kunst", *AK* 8 (1965), 3-12, esp. 3; G. WALBERG, *Tradition and Innovation: Essays in Minoan Art* (1986), 89, 98. Cf. for instance the ivy of the 'Cat Fresco' from Ayia Triada (HOOD, *op. cit.* [*supra* n. 10], 52, Fig. 34), and the lilies of the 'Spring Fresco' from Akrotiri (S. MARINATOS, *Excavations at Thera IV* [1971], Colour Pls. A-C).

36 On the un-Near Eastern character of the movement of the grasses on the Alalakh fresco fragments cf. also A. MORTGAAT, *Alt Vorderasiatische Malerei* (1959), 12.

37 Fresco-painting: *PM* II, 451, Fig. 264 (House of the Frescoes, Knossos). Pottery-decoration: cf. G. WALBERG, *Kameres: a Study of the Character of Palatial Middle Minoan Pottery* (1976), 49, 66, Fig. 36, motif. 3 no. 37; W.-D. NIEMEIER, *Die Palaststilkeramik von Knossos : Stil, Chronologie und historischer Kontext* (1985), 77-79, Fig. 26, nos. 1-4.

38 WOOLLEY (*supra* n. 8), 230-231, Pls. XXXVI b, XXXVII b-c.

the composition of the fragments in question (Pl. XLVI, c) <sup>39</sup>. The composition apparently showed a row of trees on red ground with the twigs and leaves painted in darker green on a greenish grey wash. Woolley observed that this method of painting was like that of the miniature frescoes at Knossos, and he cited for comparison the "Sacred Grove and Dance Fresco" <sup>40</sup>. The date of this fresco is disputable, but it may have been painted in LM I <sup>41</sup>. That miniature frescoes existed by LM IA is demonstrated by the evidence of the miniature fresco from the West House at Akrotiri <sup>42</sup>. The upper termination of the representation on the Alalakh wall painting in question is formed by an irregular wavy light band. This motif is connected with a characteristic Minoan phenomenon which has been called "concentric composition" by W. Stevenson Smith and "umschliessende Bildform" by W. Schiering and in which terrain motifs project also from above <sup>43</sup>. As Schiering has demonstrated the wavy outlines of these projections are influenced by the marbling of alabaster slabs <sup>44</sup>. This motif is unknown in the arts of the ancient Near East <sup>45</sup>.

On a last fragment from the same room at Alalakh we see a bull's horn, possibly belonging to a bucranium, with a disk set between its horns, below a horizontal band of yellow, black and purple <sup>46</sup>. As is well known, the bull is a very popular motif which appears in Minoan art first in MM IB-MM II on seals <sup>47</sup>. The same is true for the bucranium <sup>48</sup>. In pottery decoration the latter motif appears - probably inspired by fresco prototypes - first in MM III <sup>49</sup>. Fresco fragments with bucrania from Knossos cannot be closely dated <sup>50</sup>. As Woolley suggested, it is "tempting to see in the bull design a further analogy with Knossos, but that is not necessarily the case" <sup>51</sup>. Bucrania were already a very popular motif in the pottery of the Tel Halaf culture of the late sixth and fifth millennium B.C. <sup>52</sup>, and bulls appear in the wall-paintings of the palace at Mari <sup>53</sup>.

Thus the bull's horn of the last fragment is not definitely identifiable as Minoan motif. However, the other fragments of wall paintings from Yarim-Lim's palace show characteristic Minoan motifs which appear contemporary or even earlier in Crete. Moreover, the sense of movement detectable in the wall-painting fragments from Yarim-Lim's palace is characteristically Minoan and in opposition to Near Eastern tradition <sup>54</sup>.

39 Cf. W. STEVENSON SMITH, *Interconnections in the Ancient Near East* (1965), 103.

40 WOOLLEY (*supra* n. 8), 230. Illustration of the 'Sacred Grove and Dance Fresco': *PM* III, Pl. XVIII facing p. 67. For a new reconstruction with some corrections cf. N. MARINATOS, "Public Festivals in the West Courts of the Palaces", in HÄGG - MARINATOS (eds), *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 1), 141-142, Fig. 7.

41 Cf. HOOD, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 10), 63.

42 MARINATOS (*supra* n. 31), Colour Pls. 7-9.

43 STEVENSON SMITH, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 39), 73-77; SCHIERING (*supra* n. 35), 3, cf. WALBERG (*supra* n. 35), 126-130.

44 W. SCHIERING, "Steine und Malerei in der minoischen Kunst", *Jdl* 75 (1960), 26-34; *ID.* (*supra* n. 35), 9-11.

45 Cf. STEVENSON SMITH, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 39), 103.

46 WOOLLEY (*supra* n. 8), 231, Pl. XXXVIII b.

47 Cf. P. YULE, *Early Cretan Seals: A Study in Chronology* (1980), 124.

48 Cf. *ibid.*, 123-124.

49 Cf. G. WALBERG, *Provincial Middle Minoan Pottery* (1983), 61, Pl. 50 motif 25:6; J.H. CROUWEL - W.-D. NIEMEIER, "Eine knossische Palastsilscherbe mit Bukranion-Darstellung aus Mykene", *AA* 1989, 6-7, Fig. 3-4.

50 *PM* III, 40-41, Fig. 26 a. d, from the 'North-West Heap'. HOOD, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 10), 62, suggests a LM I date.

51 WOOLLEY (*supra* n. 8), 231.

52 Cf. J. MELLAART, *Earliest Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (1965), 119-124.

53 PARROT, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 33), Pl. VI, Colour Pls. B.E.

54 Cf. H.A. GROENEWEGEN-FRANKFORT, *Arrest and Movement: An Essay on Space and Time in the Representational Art of the ancient Near East* (1951), 191-205; WALBERG (*supra* n. 35), 89-90.



Woolley's strongest argument for a direct connection between the Alalakh paintings and those in Crete was that they both were executed in true fresco painting on wet lime plaster<sup>55</sup>. But it is exactly this fact which definitely disproves Woolley's theory of the Near Eastern ancestry of Cretan fresco painting. Until most recently the Alalakh frescos formed the only known example of true fresco painting on the ancient Near East, in which apart from that exclusively the tempera technique has been used for wall-paintings<sup>56</sup>. In Crete, true fresco painting is known at least from MM IIA (ca. 1900 B.C.) on<sup>57</sup>. Thus true fresco painting apparently has been first invented on Crete, probably because it was suitable to the temperament of the Minoan artists<sup>58</sup>. Thus, technique, style and iconography of the fresco fragments from the Yarim-Lim palace at Alalakh indicate that their resemblances to the Cretan Wall-paintings worked in the reverse direction as that originally thought by Woolley<sup>59</sup>.

There is much evidence that Cretan objects of art were highly valued in the ancient Near East. In the Mari tablets Cretan imports are mentioned, among them a metal vessel (*katappum kaptaru*) and a weapon (*kakkum kaptaru*) partly covered with gold and the top inlaid with lapislazuli<sup>60</sup>, a description reminding us of the precious weapons found at Malia<sup>61</sup>. The prestige character of the Cretan objects in the Mari texts is indicated by the fact that two of them were presented by King Zimri-Lim of Mari to other Mesopotamian Kings<sup>62</sup>. Two silver cups

55 WOOLLEY (*supra* n. 8), 228-230; BARKER, *ibid.*, 233-234. That the Knossian wall-paintings were executed in true fresco technique and not in tempera on a dry lime plaster surface as has sometimes been argued is clear from the exhaustive study by M.A.S. CAMERON - R.E. JONES - S.E. PHILIPPAKIS, "Scientific Analyses of Minoan Fresco Samples from Knossos", *BSA* 72 (1977), 121-184. Without knowing the results of this examination K. ASIMENOS, "Technical Observations on the Thera Wall-Paintings", in *Thera and the Aegean World I* (1978), 571-587, argues for the technique of the Thera frescoes as being *al secco* (tempera or water-based). However, in comparison to the thorough study by Cameron *et al.*, Asimenos' arguments are not convincing. The string marks (ASIMENOS, *op. cit.*, 575, Pl. 2) form evidence for *buon fresco* technique, since they would be unnecessary in *al secco* technique (cf. CAMERON *et al.*, *op. cit.*, 154). The existence of *al secco* over-paint (ASIMENOS, *op. cit.*, 576-577, Pl. 4) does not necessarily indicate that the whole technique was *al secco*. At Alalakh *al secco* over-paint appears on a ground painting in *buon fresco*: cf. WOOLLEY (*supra* n. 8), 229-230. Refusing *buon fresco* technique for the Thera frescoes, Asimenos (*op. cit.*, 577) has problems to explain some of their features; and he ignores the result of scientific analysis according to which the technique of the Thera wall-paintings is *buon fresco*: cf. W. NOLL - L. BORN - R. HOLM, "Keramiken und Wandmalereien der Ausgrabungen von Thera", *Die Naturwissenschaften* 62 (1975), 87-94, esp. 93.

56 Cf. PARROT, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 33), 58, 109; MOORTGAT, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 36), 19.

57 Cf. CAMERON *et al.*, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 55), 163 (for the date of no. 14 cf. p. 176; for probably MM IB fresco examples cf. *ibid.*, 175 nos. 5-9).

58 Cf. SCHIERING (*supra* n. 44), 35: "Welche Technik hätte diesem quecksilbrigen Temperament der Kreter besser entsprochen als die ganz aus dem Moment schaffende Freskomalerei?"

59 As earlier suggested by PARROT, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 33), 109; F. SCHACHERMEYR, *Ägäis und Orient* (1967), 46; STEVENSON SMITH, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 39), 104.

60 G. DOSSIN, "Les archives économiques du palais de Mari", *Syria* 20 (1939), 111-112; M.C. ASTOUR, "Ugarit and the Aegean", in *Orient and Occident: Essays presented to Cyrus H. Gordon on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday* (*Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 22, 1973), 19-20; J.-M. DURAND, *Textes administratifs des salles 134 et 160 du palais de Mari*, *Archives Royales de Mari* XXI (1983), 258-261. For the translation of *Katappum* as "a container, usually of metal", cf. *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, vol. 8 (K) (1971), 303. *Contra* the recent unacceptable attempt by J. STRANGE, *Caphtor/ Keftiu: A new Investigation* (1980), *passim*, to identify Caphtor/Keftiu not with Crete but with Cyprus, cf. J.D. MUHLY, "The Nature of Trade and the Role of Cyprus", in *Early Metallurgy in Cyprus, 4000 - 5000 B.C. Acta of the International Archaeological Symposium 1981* (1982), 259-260; S. WACHSMANN, *Aegeans in the Theban Tombs* (1987), 93-102.

61 F. CHAPOUTHIER - J. CHARBONNEAUX, *Fouilles exécutées à Mallia, premier rapport, EtCrét I* (1928), 60, Pl. I; B. DETOURNAY - J.-C. POURSAT - F. VANDENABEELE, *Fouilles exécutées à Mallia : Le Quartier Mu II, EtCrét XXVI* (1980), 147-149, Frontispiece, Fig. 219.

62 Cf. ASTOUR (*supra* n. 60), 20.

from the Royal Tombs of Byblos are probably imports from Crete<sup>63</sup>. As finds of Kamares pottery at Ugarit, Qatna, Byblos and Hazor (Pl. XLVI, a) demonstrate, this outstanding pottery was highly esteemed in the Levant<sup>64</sup>. Thus, at least from the 19th century B.C. on, Crete within its relations to the Levant was not only the receiver but developed into an equal partner producing works of art for which there was a great demand in the Near East.

These Cretan works of art arrived by some kind of exchange or trade in the Levant. But, as Woolley has stated, "one cannot export a palace on board of a ship, nor is the 'art and mystery' of fresco-working a form of merchandise"<sup>65</sup>. Do we therefore have to reconstruct just the reverse scenario as that suggested by Woolley, i.e. Cretan artisans travelling to Alalakh for painting the frescoes there?

In "Greater Canaan" - as R. Amiran has termed the area between the Amuq plain to the north and the deserts to the south and to the east for the Middle and Late Bronze Age, since they appear to form a largely uniform civilization with regional variations<sup>66</sup> - there are two other sites which can contribute to the problem: Qatna and Tel Kabri (Pl. XLVI, a). Fragments of wall-paintings from the palace at Qatna in Syria show painted imitation of marbling in the characteristic Aegean manner<sup>67</sup>. Unfortunately it is not possible to fix the date of these paintings closer between MB IIB and LB I (i.e. between ca. 1700 and 1400 B.C.)<sup>68</sup> and no informations are published about their technique.

The second site is Tel Kabri in northern Israel, in the northern part of the plain of Acco, Western Galilee. This site has been systematically excavated since 1986 by the Archaeological Institute of Tel Aviv University under the directorship of A. Kempinski<sup>69</sup> and from 1989 on in collaboration with the Archaeological Institutes of Tel Aviv and Freiburg universities under the joint directorship of A. Kempinski and myself<sup>70</sup>. Lying on one of the most important trade-routes of the ancient Near East, the later so-called *Via Maris*, it was settled from Neolithic times on<sup>71</sup>. In the (Palestinian) Middle Bronze Age Tel Kabri was a large fortified city covering 32 ha, and forming the centre of one of the Canaanite city states, probably Rehov which is

63 P. MONTET, *Byblos et l'Égypte, quatre campagnes des fouilles à Gebeil, 1921-1922-1923-1924* (1929); 191-192, Pls. 111, no. 748, 112, no. 749. For the Minoan character of these pieces cf. most recently G. CADOGAN, "Early Minoan and Middle Minoan Chronology", *AJA* 87 (1983), 514.

64 Cf. WALBERG (*supra* n. 49), 144; W.-D. NIEMEIER, "Crete, Egeo e Mediterraneo agli inizi del Bronzo Tardo", in M. MARAZZI - S. TUSA - L. VAGNETTI (eds.), *Traffici micenei nel Mediterraneo: Problemi storici e documentazione archeologica* (1986), 245-270, esp. 250, Fig. 19; WARREN - HANKEY, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 22), 134-135, Pl. 12a.

65 WOOLLEY (*supra* n. 9), 74.

66 R. AMIRAN, *Ancient Pottery of the Holy Land from its Beginning in the Neolithic Period to the End of the Iron Age* (1969), 167-170; cf. also KEMPINSKI, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 16), 85-86. On the problem to use the term Canaan for this entire area cf. *infra* n. 94.

67 M. DU BUISSON, *Le site archéologique de Mishifre-Qatna* (1935), Frontispiece; STEVENSON SMITH, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 39), Fig. 31. For the Aegean character cf. CROWLEY, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 7), 149.

68 C. SCHAEFFER, *Stratigraphie comparée et chronologie de l'Asie Occidentale, IIIe et IIe millénaires* (1948), 116; STEVENSON SMITH, *op. cit.*, 17-18. At Alalakh fresco fragments with marbling have been found also in a house in level IV (LBI); cf. WOOLLEY (*supra* n. 8), 231-232, Pl. XXXIX.

69 A. KEMPINSKI (ed.), *Excavations at Kabri: Preliminary Report of 1986 Season* (1987) (Hebrew); ID. (ed.), *Excavations at Kabri: Preliminary Report of 1987 Season* (1988) (Hebrew with English summaries); ID. (ed.), *Excavations at Kabri: Preliminary Report of 1988 Season* (1989) (Hebrew with English summaries); ID. - E. MIRON, "Kabri 1986-1987", *IEJ* 37 (1987), 175-177.

70 A. KEMPINSKI - W.-D. NIEMEIER (eds.), *Excavations at Kabri: Preliminary Report of 1989 Season* (1990) (Hebrew and English); A. KEMPINSKI - W.-D. NIEMEIER, "Kabri 1988-1989", *IEJ* 40, 1990 (in print).

71 Cf. M. PRAUSNITZ, *From Hunters to Farmers and Traders* (1970), 160-168.



mentioned in the Egyptian Execration Texts <sup>72</sup>. The Middle Bronze Age city of Kabri was destroyed and abandoned about 1600 B.C., i.e. in (Palestinian) MB IIC or (better) late MB IIB, depending on the terminology used <sup>73</sup>.

Within the city the palace of the local ruler is under excavation in area D. The palace plan as exposed after the 1989 season (Pl. XLVII and XLVIII, a) shows a (most probably inner) courtyard (locus 603). From this a door with a threshold of sandstone ashlar blocks gives access to the northern wing. Near to its centre, room 607 entered over this threshold had a pithos sunk into the thick plaster floor. This pithos was probably used for ritual purification (a jug was found on the floor nearby). A door with a similar threshold as that leading from the courtyard into room 607 gives access to room 611 to the west of 607. This threshold excavated in the 1987 season was plastered and painted with a grid pattern of red lines between which traces of figural painting could be detected. As has then been recognized by Kempinski, similar floor-techniques and designs are known from the Minoan palaces but not from the Ancient Near East <sup>74</sup>. In the 1989 season we have excavated about two thirds of room 611, a square room of approximately 10 x 10 m. Its exact function is still unclear, since hitherto it was nearly completely empty of finds. A pithos which was sunk in the centre of this room, too, as well as the precious painted floor discussed *infra* point to a ceremonial function. There is evidence that the walls of this room were also covered with painted plaster of which unfortunately only tiny fragments have been preserved.

The plaster floor has been painted in true fresco technique, as is clear from the tests executed by M. Tagliapietra (restorer and fresco specialist) at the site as well as from laboratory analyses of samples of the floor done by P. Rosano (chemist) and P. Cornale (geologist). The colours of the floor resisted in the tests of colour resistance by tamponing with soaked watt and by rubbing with soft brushes <sup>75</sup>. In microscope photographs (Pl. XLVIII, b) floor-samples show uneven "lines of demarcation" between the paint-film's lower edge and the upper limit of unstained plaster as characteristic for true fresco painting <sup>76</sup>. On the plaster covering the threshold the shallow impression of a string beside one of the red lines is distinguishable (Pl. XLIX, a). Such string impressions served as guiding lines for the principal directions of the lines, a technique found also in Cretan and Thera fresco painting but not in *tempera* and *fresco secco* <sup>77</sup>.

The colours identified in the floor's painting are red, yellow, brown (?), grey, black and blue, a spectrum very similar to those of Cretan and of Thera wall-painting. According to

72 Cf. A. KEMPINSKI, "Kabri and its Environment in the Middle Bronze II Period", in M. YEDA'AYA (ed.), *Qadmoniot Hagalil Hamaaravi*, 66-75 (Hebrew).

73 On the absolute date of the end of the MB II city of Kabri cf. A. KEMPINSKI in KEMPINSKI - NIEMEIER (ed., *supra* n. 70), 1-4; ID., "Two Scarabs of Yakubum", in S. ISRAELIT-GROLL (ed.), *Studies in Egyptology Presented to Miriam Lichtheim* (1990), 632-634. On the problem of chronological terminology cf. most recently P. BIENKOWSKI, "The Division of Middle Bronze II B-C in Palestine", *Levant* 21 (1989), 169-170, who convincingly comes to the conclusion (*ibid.*, 176): "The time has come to abandon the use of the sub-phase M B IIC (or MB III) applicable to the whole of Palestine, since it cannot be supported stratigraphically or ceramically. A more accurate terminology is 'earlier' or 'later' MB IIB...'. Cf. already KEMPINSKI (*supra* n. 16), 221-224.

74 KEMPINSKI in KEMPINSKI (ed., *supra* n. 69), 38-39, VII, Fig. 12.

75 Cf. CAMERON *et. al.*, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 55), 131, 161-162.

76 Cf. CAMERON *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, 163-164, Pl. 15 e-f.

77 Cf. CAMERON *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, 154 (Knossos); M.A.S. CAMERON, "Theoretical Interrelations among Thera, Cretan and Mainland Frescoes", in *Thera and the Aegean World I* (1978), 579-592, esp. 583-584, Pl. 2 (Amnisos); ASIMENOS, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 55), 575, Pl. 2 (Thera). For the Thera wall-paintings being true fresco paintings cf. NOLL *et. al.*, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 55), 93.

spectrophotometrical analysis the pigments used for painting the Kabri floor were red ochre, yellow ochre and carbon, i.e. the same ones as used in Cretan and Thera wall-painting<sup>78</sup>.

Unfortunately the floor is in a rather poor condition. Frequently the uppermost layer with the paint is broken away. Where the principal surface is preserved it is rather worn, so that often the single decorative motifs are hardly recognizable. The general character of the decoration is clear, however.

Like the threshold the room itself was also painted with a grid pattern of red lines. The squares enclosed by this grid are alternating white and yellow in a chequerboard pattern and have a lateral length of ca. 40 cms. Originally the floor - which has been cut off along the edges in antiquity for robbing the orthostates along the wall bases - had more than 600 of such squares which undoubtedly imitated the slabs of a stone pavement. This is especially clear in the central area, where the decoration of the squares imitates the marbling of alabaster (Pl. XLIX, b: infra-red photograph; Pl. L, a: water colour) as on the dadoes of Alalakh, Knossos, and Thera mentioned earlier<sup>79</sup>. In Crete painted plaster floors imitating slab-paved floors are known from MM I on<sup>80</sup>.

Other parts of the Kabri floor were decorated with floral motifs. Among them are chains of stylized linear iris blossoms of the characteristic Minoan "V type" which occurs first in LM IA frescoes and vase-painting<sup>81</sup>. Iris-chains are especially popular in LM II-III A 1 vase painting<sup>82</sup> but appear already in LM IA wall-painting<sup>83</sup>. In some squares near the S wall of the room the decoration is rather well preserved. One of them (Pl. L, b: infra-red photograph; Pl. LI, a: water colour) is decorated with an elegantly curved spray with more "naturalistic" iris blossoms on both sides. Iris blossoms never grow on a spray like this, however<sup>84</sup>. Such kind of decorative mixture is a characteristic feature of Minoan fresco painting<sup>85</sup>. From the upper edge of the square orange crocuses grow down which have parallels on LM IA frescoes in Crete and Thera<sup>86</sup>.

The Kabri floor and also the fresco fragments from Yarim-Lim's palace at Alalakh do not have only single Minoan motifs foreign to "Greater Canaan" which could be explained as

78 Cf. CAMERON *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, 140-146; NOLL *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, 92; ASIMENOS, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 55), 573-574.

79 Cf. *supra* with notes 29-31.

80 Cf. E.S. HIRSCH, *Painted Decoration on the Floors of Bronze Age Structures on Crete and the Greek Mainland*, SIMA LIII (1977), 13, no. C 23, Fig. 4, 17, no. C 43.

81 Frescoes: S. MARINATOS, *Excavations at Thera VII* (1976), Colour Pls. D.F; CAMERON (*supra* n. 76), 586-588, 585 Pl. 3 C no. 10 (stylistic dating).

Vase-painting: J.N. COLDSTREAM - G.L. HUXLEY (eds.), *Kythera: Excavations and Studies* (1972), 121-122, theta 15, Pl. 31; S. MARINATOS, *Excavations at Thera VI* (1974), Pl. 70; cf; NIEMEIER (*supra* n. 31), 24 Fig. 5. On the 'V type' cf. A. FURUMARK, *Mycenaean Pottery: Analysis and Classification* (1941), 190.

82 Cf. NIEMEIER (*supra* n. 37), 63-65, Fig. 21.

83 As decoration of garments on the Thera fresco quoted in n. 81. For other examples of motifs appearing in wall-painting earlier than in pottery decoration cf. L. MORGAN, "Morphology, Syntax and the Issue of Chronology" in J.A. MCGILLIVRAY - R.L.N. BARBER (eds.), *The Prehistoric Cycladies: Contributions to a Workshop on Cycladic Chronology* (1984), 165-178.

84 Cf. H. MÖBIUS, "Pflanzenbilder der minoischen Kunst in botanischer Betrachtung", *Jdl* 48 (1933), 1-39, esp. 10-11, Fig. 5 A.

85 Cf. MÖBIUS, *op. cit.*, *passim*; I. CERCEAU, "Les représentations végétales dans l'art égéen : problèmes d'identification", in *L'iconographie minoenne*, BCH Suppl. XI (1985), 181-184.

86 Cf. PM II, Colour Pl. X facing p. 447; N. MARINATOS, *Art and Religion in Thera: Reconstructing a Bronze Age Society* (1984), 61-70, Figs. 40-49. The chronological cross-connections between late MB IIB Kabri and LM IA Thera supporting the new high chronology of the beginning of the Aegean Late Bronze Age have been discussed by me elsewhere (cf. *supra* n. 32).

intrusive or incorporated elements arriving by motif transfer<sup>87</sup> but they show a purely Minoan iconography as well as technique. This can only mean that they were executed by travelling Minoan artisans. Thus the painted plaster floor in room 611 of the palace at Kabri is the best preserved Minoan plaster floor and can give an impression of what has been lost in Crete<sup>88</sup>. The implications of the Kabri floor for the development of Minoan and Mycenaean painted plaster floors will be discussed elsewhere. In this connection I can only deal with the aspect of Minoan foreign relations.

How could Minoan artisans execute fresco paintings in Levantine palaces? We have evidence for exchange of informations on the equipment of the palaces within the ancient Near East (to which Minoan Crete belonged in a certain sense as westernmost member). Thus about 1800 B.C. the King of Ugarit sent one of his "young men" to Mari, evidently to report upon the famous palace of King Zimri-Lim which was decorated with an important series of wall paintings<sup>89</sup>. That Cretans actually travelled to the Levantine coast is proved by a tablet from the Mari archives mentioning a Cretan who purchases tin at Ugarit from agents of the Mari palace<sup>90</sup>. A tale in the mythological poetry of Ugarit is of highest interest in our context. In it the goddess Anat is sending the divine messenger, Qadesh-wa-Amrur, over the sea by way of Byblos (Gabal) to the god of handicrafts, Kothar wa-Khasis, who is brought from his throne in *Kptr* (almost unanimously identified as Caphtor = Crete) to build a splendid palace for god Baal and to furnish it with precious works of art<sup>91</sup>. The tablets in question have been written down in the first half of the 14th century B.C., the myth itself most probably dates back to the Middle Bronze Age, however<sup>92</sup>.

As A.S. Kapelrud has stated, the background of Kothar wa-Khasis "is the master-builder and the master-smith as he is found in the Near Eastern courts of this time, a highly skilled specialist"<sup>93</sup>. The evidence discussed in this paper appears to show that like in Canaanite<sup>94</sup> mythology, the god of handicrafts was called from Crete to furnish the palaces of the deities with precious works of art, in reality the rulers of Tel Kabri (Rehov) and Alalakh (and other cities?, cf. Qatna) asked the rulers of Crete for sending artisans to decorate their palaces with fresco painting. As has been demonstrated by C. Zaccagnini, the sending of specialized

87 Cf. CROWLEY, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 7), 202-213, 263-283, 288-289.

88 As HIRSCH (*supra* n. 80), 5, 9-10, 13 has stated, most probably many plaster floors in Crete have been lost or not recognized.

89 Cf. C. SCHAEFFER, *Ugaritica* I (1939), 16 with n. 2. On the Mari paintings cf. PARROT, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 33), *passim*.

90 Cf. G. DOSSIN, "La route de l'étain en Mésopotamie au temps de Zimri-Lim", *Revue d'Assyriologie* 64 (1970), 97-106, esp. 101-103; J.D. MUHLY, *Copper and Tin: The distribution of mineral resources and the nature of the metals trade in the Bronze Age*, *Transactions published by the Connecticut Academy of Art and Sciences* 43 (1973), 293-294.

91 Cf. H.L. GINSBERG, in J.B. PRITCHARD (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*<sup>3</sup> (1969), 132-138; C.H. GORDON, *Ugarit and Minoan Crete* (1966), 22-23, 48-49, 58-60, 63-64. Sceptical about the identification of *Kptr* as Caphtor: J.L. GIBSON, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (1978), 55 n. 2.

92 Cf. W.F. ALBRIGHT, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (1968), 4, n. 9; J.C. DE MOOR, *The Seasonal Pattern in the Ugaritic Myth of Ba'lu According to the Version of Ilmilku*, *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 16 (1971), 47-52.

93 A.S. KAPELRUD, *Baal in the Ras Shamra Texts* (1952), 85-86.

94 Using this term here is not unproblematic. The Ugaritians did not look upon themselves as 'Canaanites' (cf. A.F. RAINEY, "A Canaanite at Ugarit", *IEJ* 13 [1963], 43-45; ID., "Ugarit and the Canaanites Again", *IEJ* 14 [1964], 101).

However, as has been stated by DE MOOR, *op. cit.*, 53: "This hardly proves anything more than 'Canaan' and 'Canaanite' are misnomers. As long as no better terms have been coined to indicate the large amount of linguistic, social and religious agreement among the Semitic cultures of modern Palestine, Lebanon and Syria, there is no harm in using them..."



workers is well attested in the framework of the diplomatic relations between the rulers in the ancient Near East, their transfers are inserted into the dynamics and formal apparatus of the practice of gift-change <sup>95</sup>.

Wolf-Dietrich NIEMEIER

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95 C. ZACCAGNINI, "Patterns of Mobility among Ancient Near Eastern Craftsmen", *JNES* 42 (1983), 245-264. I would like to thank Th.G. Palaima for the reference.

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

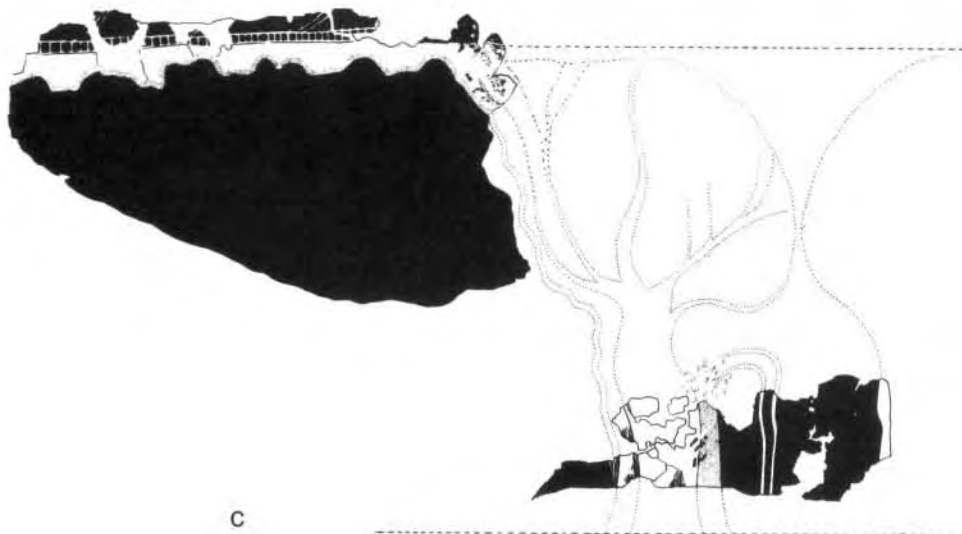
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a

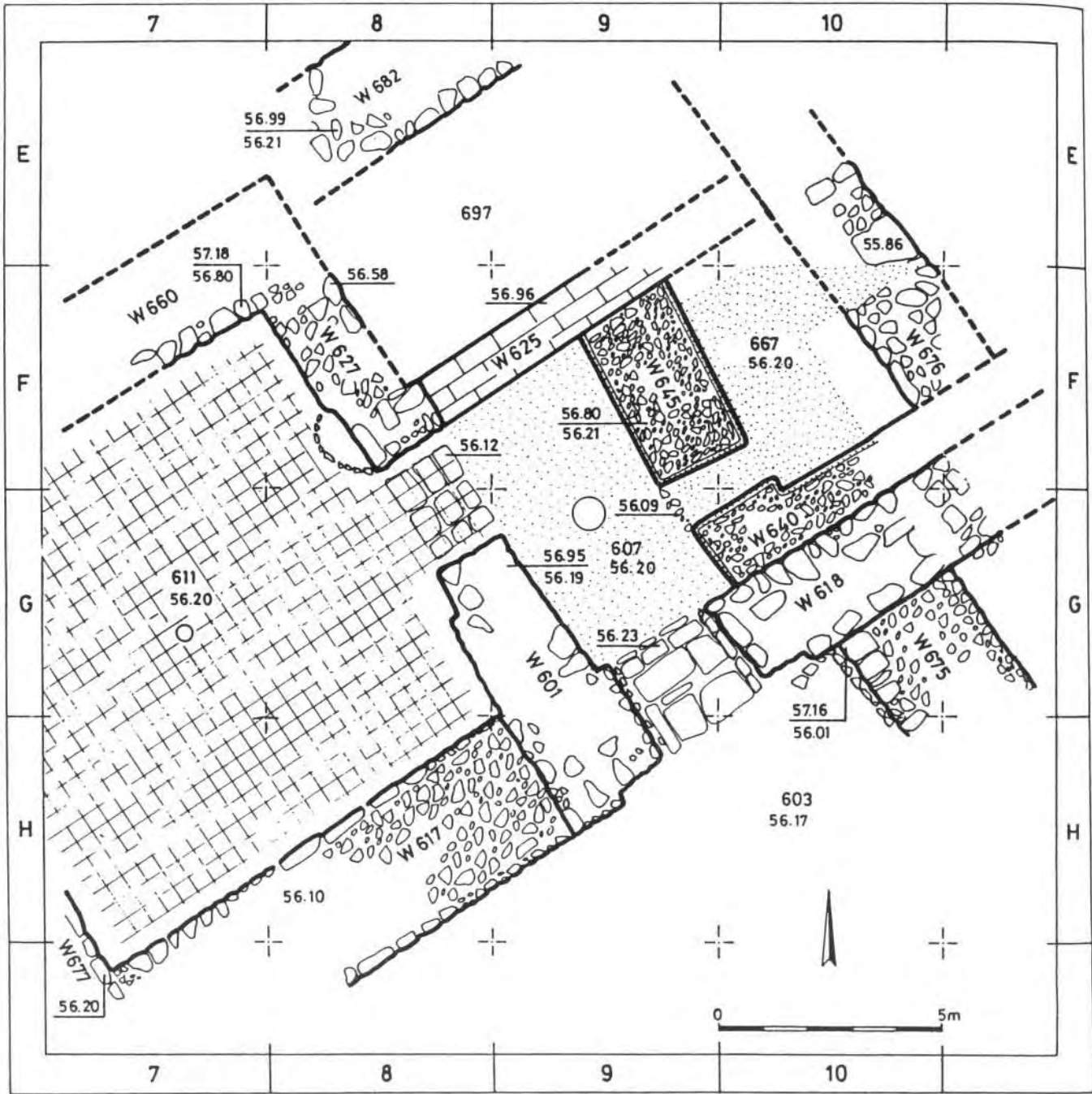


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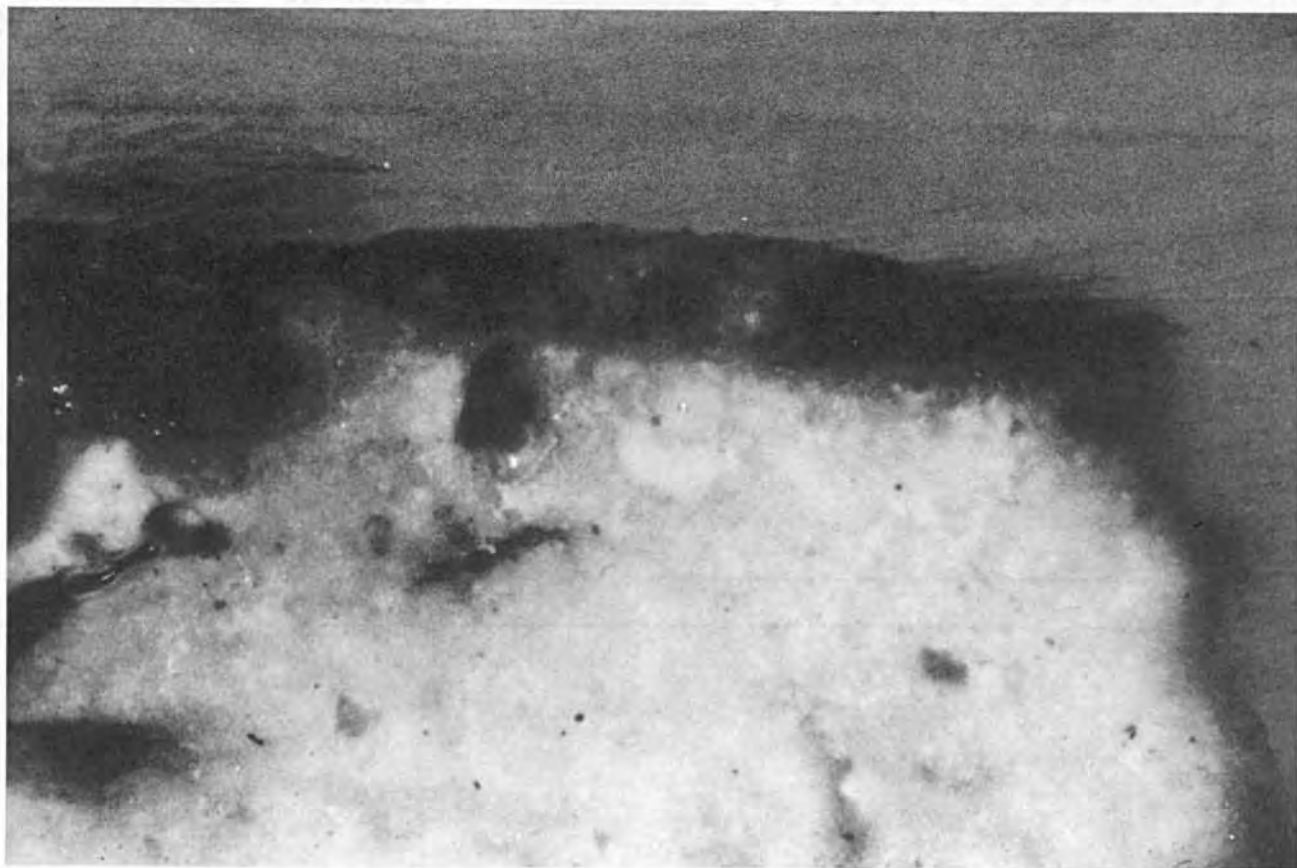
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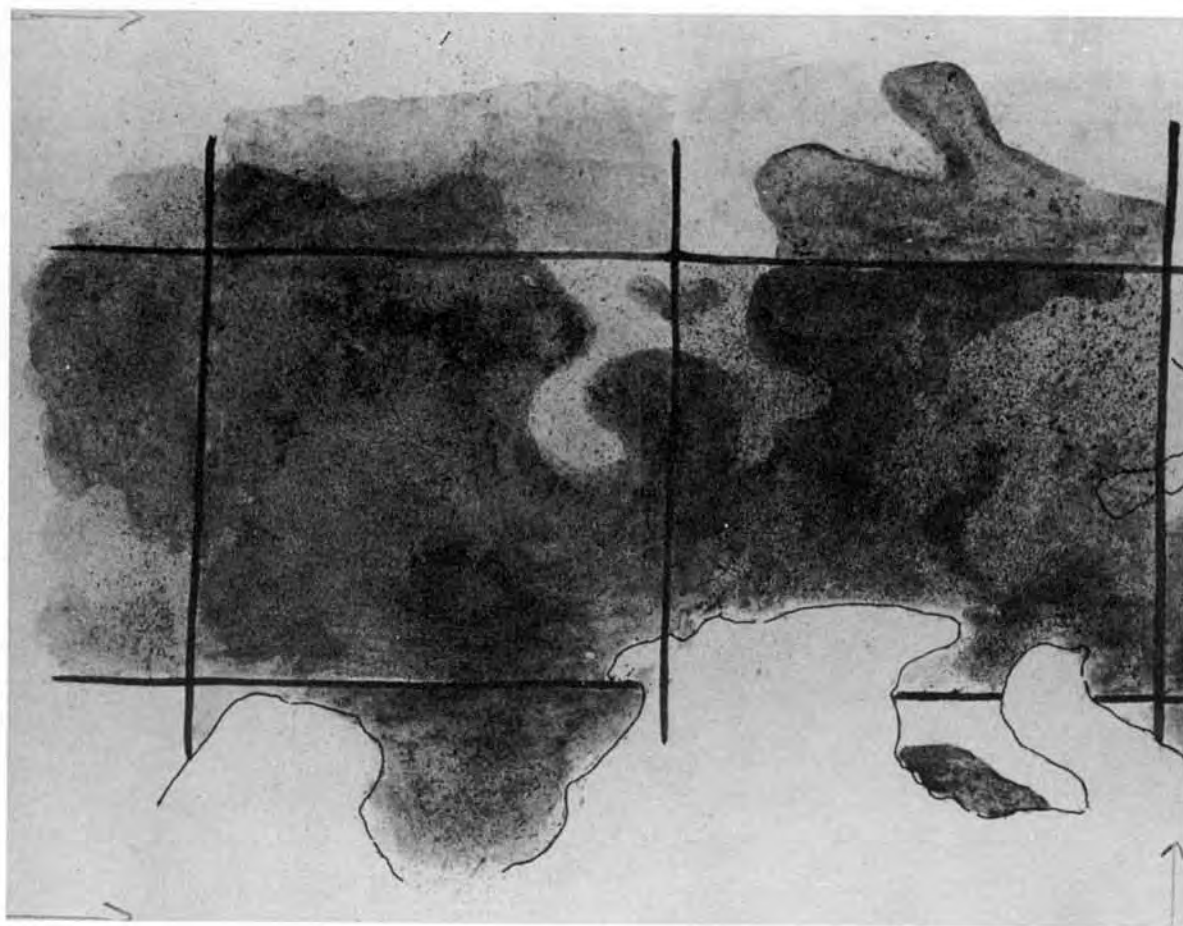
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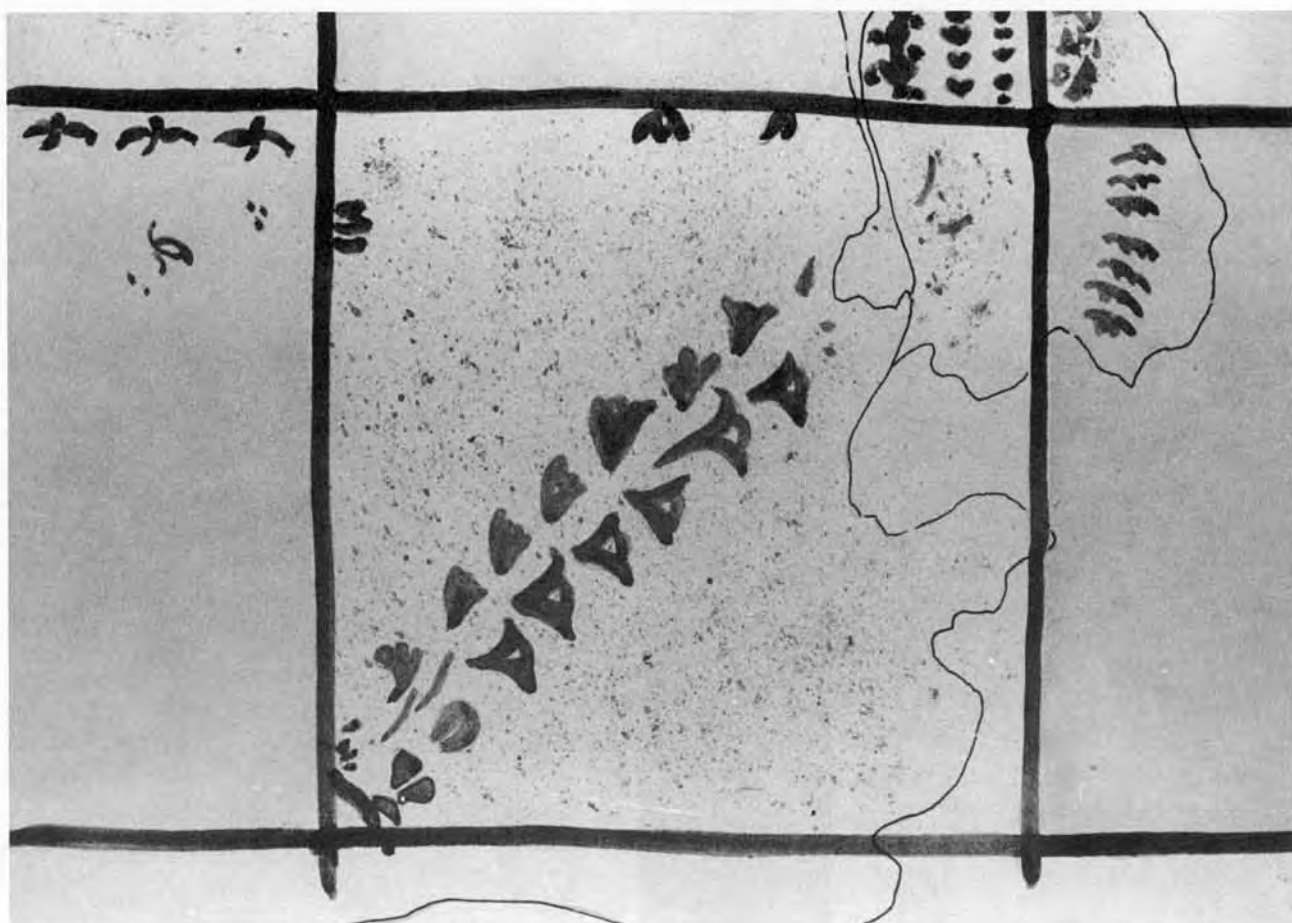
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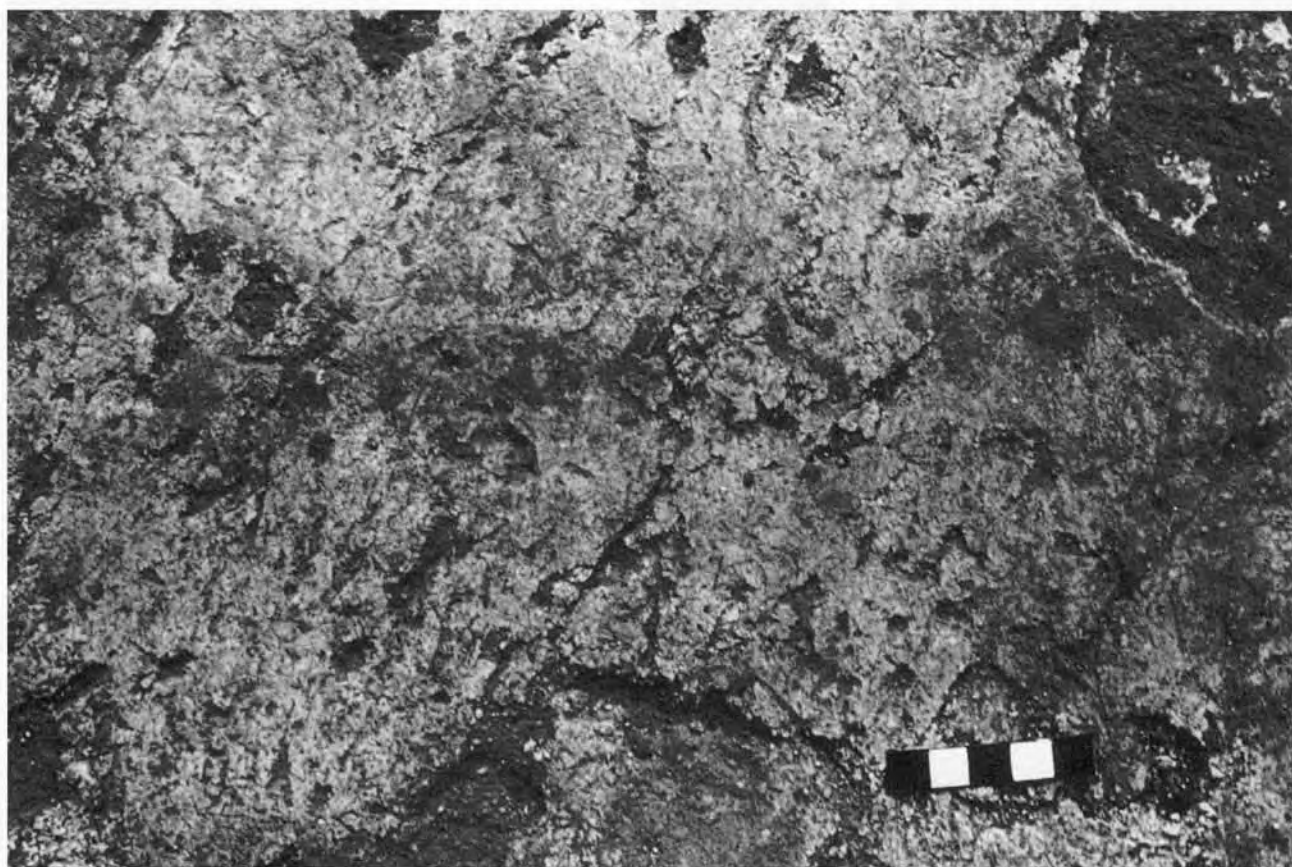
a



b



a



b