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A LOST MYCENAEAN FRESCO FRAGMENT RE-EXAMINED*

Yannis Galanakis, Emily Catherine Egan

Summary

This article examines an important wall painting fragment purportedly found in the megaron of the Late Bronze Age palace at Mycenae in 1893. Originally published in Russian in 1897, the fragment depicts a right-facing mid-size male figure with stylistic affinities to processional figures subsequently excavated on Crete and the Greek mainland. Despite its apparent iconographic and historical significance, the painting has received limited attention in Aegean literature. Below, the thrilling yet murky history of the fragment's discovery is assembled from public and private testimonies by the eminent individuals involved. Possible reconstructions of the fragment are presented, and its iconography is explored in light of current chronologies and known comparanda. It is argued that, while many details of the fragment's biography remain ambiguous, the potential value of the find as a rare representation of a processing man in a mainland palatial context is substantial.

"Он рассматривал вещь или фрагмент не изоли рованно,
а на фоне больших общих вопросов развития культуры."

"He considered an artefact or a fragment not in isolation,
but as a part of larger, general issues of cultural history."

Krouglikova 1970, 4 on B.V. Pharmakovsky's attention to detail.

INTRODUCTION

The wall painting fragment discussed here has received limited attention in Aegean scholarship with the few notable exceptions that we mention below. Said to come from the megaron at Mycenae, it depicts part of a medium-scale male figure rendered in a typical Late Bronze Age Aegean style. Reportedly found in 1893, it was published by Boris Pharmakovsky in Russian and subsequently in French in 1897 (Pharmakovsky 1897a; 1897b). A Russian archaeologist, Pharmakovsky (1870-1928) is best known for his work at Olbia on the northern Black Sea coast, and was a childhood friend of Lenin, with whom he "played cowboys and Indians" (Klejn 2012, 15). The original Russian article (Pharmakovsky 1897a) was published in the *Annales of the Imperial Archaeological Society* of St Petersburg also known as *Zapiski* (Записки). Entitled Стенная живопись Микенской эпохи (Mural Painting in the Mycenaean Age), the article dealt broadly with current research on the topic of Mycenaean painting. Hard to find in western libraries, this publication came to our attention as we browsed through the excellent online catalogue of books and articles from the Salomon Reinach library.[1] Until now, the original Russian source does not appear to have been consulted by western scholars.[2]

The publication of this fragment in 1897 occurred at a time when the study of Greek Bronze Age wall painting was still in its infancy. It would be three years until Arthur Evans broke ground at Knossos, almost ten years before Antonios Keramopoullos started working at Thebes, and many decades prior to the monumental discoveries at Pylos and Akrotiri.[3] Thus the new fragment from Mycenae was indeed sensational, not least be-

* Figures are gathered at the end of the article.

1 See http://www.tpsalomonreinach.mom.fr/consultation.php access date: 19 March 2017.

2 Evans, who counts among the small number of scholars who mention this fragment, does not cite his source. His mention of the Bucharest Museum as the depository of this fragment (Evans 1928, 750) – a detail that does not appear in the Russian report (see more below) – suggests that he consulted Pharmakovksy's slightly later French publication.

3 For overviews of the state of the field in the late nineteenth century, see Tsountas 1887; 1893; Tsountas, Manatt 1897; Perrot, Chipiez 1894.

cause of perceived affinities with earlier works, adding further fuel to the debate over the influence of the Eastern Mediterranean on the art and society of Mycenaean Greece that preoccupied scholarship at the end of the nineteenth century.[4]

Advertised in field summaries and in specialised publications, Pharmakovsky's fragment never made it to mainstream research. Yet certain specialists immediately realised its importance: Edmond Pottier, curator at the Louvre and founding father of the *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum*, after being informed of the find during a discussion with Pharmakovsky, immediately announced it in a session of the *Académie des Inscriptions* in Paris on 14 May 1897 with a note that its publication was imminent by the Russian scholar (Pottier 1897).[5] Pottier saw in this piece both similarities to the contemporary art of Assyria and Egypt, and at the same time a mixture of oriental influence with local Hellenic elements. It was most likely Pottier who convinced Pharmakovsky to make this exciting discovery more widely known by publishing it in French ("Un nouveau fragment de fresque mycénienne") in the *Revue Archéologique* that same year (Pharmakovsky 1897b). Shorter than the original Russian article, the French version focused only on the fragment and its direct implications for the field of Mycenaean painting and the origins of Mycenaean art.[6] Subsequently, the fragment has been cited only occasionally in Aegean scholarship, most notably by Evans (1928, 750, fig. 484) and John Younger (1995, 534, no. 144).[7]

PHARMAKOVSKY'S DISCOVERY

Although his research in pre-Classical art is largely unknown, limited to a few articles and his university lecture notes, Pharmakovsky was a pioneer of Aegean archaeology in late nineteenth- and early twentieth- century Russia (Krouglikova 1970; Pharmakovskaya 1988; Garkusha 2010).[8] As part of his undergraduate studies (1887-1892) in the Department of History and Philology of the Imperial Novorossiya University in Odessa (now the Odessa I. I. Mechnikov National University in Ukraine), Pharmakovsky specialized in ancient Greek art history, largely inspired by the lectures of Alexey Pavlovsky. He first visited Greece in the summer of 1890, and after completing his studies, and in preparation for an academic career, he received a three-year scholarship from Odessa to study abroad.

From September 1893 until April 1896, Pharmakovsky was largely based in Athens[9] along with other young Russian scholars including Vladimir Malmberg, Yakov Smirnov and Sergei Zhebelov (Garkusha 2010, 15). While in residence, he had the opportunity to attend lectures – by Théophile Homolle and Charles Waldstein among numerous others – and to come into contact with what was then cutting-edge art-historical scholarship and the associated debates. Pharmakovsky's correspondence to his parents reveals a student full of excitement for visiting

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4 Pharmakovsky's work on Mycenaean archaeology (1896; 1897a; 1897b) is best understood in the context of the vexed question of "l'origine de l'art mycénien" and particularly his attempt to disprove the claims of Helbig (1896) that Mycenaean art was nothing but the "Phoenician art" of the second millennium BC.

5 The Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA) in St. Petersburg also includes the correspondence between Pottier and Pharmakovsky regarding the latter's publication in the *Revue Archéologique*: 1073/1/306 and 1073/1/349.

6 A summary of the French article appears in the "Archaeological Discoveries" section of the *AJA* (1898/2, 279). In this version, Egyptian influence was also noted along with "the beginnings of [Hellenic] independent observation of nature." Indeed, it was this same quest for "origins" that first led scholars such as Evans to Crete (see Galanakis 2014).

7 Also see Rodenwaldt 1911, 249, n. 1; Vermeule 1964, 176, fig. 34 and 342, n. 5; Immerwahr 1990, 194 (additional fragment no. 2); and Blakolmer 2007, 42, fig. 2.

8 RGIA records in St Petersburg also state that in 1906-07 Pharmakovsky taught a course on the history of ancient painting and in 1907-08 on "Art in the heroic age of Greece and the Aegean culture (Cretan and Mycenaean)": http://bioslovhist.history.spbu.ru/component/fabrik/details/1/612-farmakovskij.html access date: 19 March 2017. RGIA also has extensive archival holdings on Pharmakovsky and his correspondence, to be discussed further below (http://rgia.su/object/114596134 access date: 19 March 2017).

9 RGIA has an important folder (1073/1/354, 104 pages and 2 telegrams) with Pharmakovsky's family correspondence during his stay in Greece, including a description of his life and work in the Russian Mission in Athens. Most of this material is cited by Pharmakovskaya (1988) in her biography of Pharmakovsky.

the ruins and museums of Greece, attending lectures and enjoying the weather and life in Athens, which included numerous parties. He also did translation work for the Russian Embassy. From his letters, it becomes clear that Pharmakovsky was fascinated by Wilhelm Dörpfeld, his tours, lectures and mentorship. In a dispatch to his mother dated 18 February 1894, he describes Dörpfeld as a "highly talented lecturer."[10]

In March 1894, with a group of 45 people, Pharmakovsky went on a two-week tour of the Peloponnese led by Dörpfeld. On 18 March, he wrote to his mother: "to describe what I saw there is not possible – it would require a volume!" As part of this trip they visited Delphi, Olympia, Argos, Tiryns and Mycenae, the last two being described by Pharmakovsky as the "colossal castles of the Homeric heroes."[11] They had lectures on topics ranging from Mycenaean graves to Byzantine architecture – a visual introduction to the history of art and architecture of Greece, very similar to current summer study programmes.[12] He does not mention Mycenae again in his correspondence to his parents. At the end of his Peloponnesian trip, Pharmakovsky prepared the appreciation speech for Dörpfeld – and he was very proud to do so, copying it almost verbatim in the letter to his mother. In April of 1894, he joined Dörpfeld on another two-week tour, this time of the "islands and Troy."[13] Although he gives no details about this trip, from one of his contemporaries we learn that this memorable excursion, on a chartered steam boat, took them to Aegina, Poros, places around Attica and Euboea, the Cyclades – including Delos and Thera – and ultimately east to Assos and Troy (Tikhonov 2009, 453-454).[14]

While based in Athens, Pharmakovsky had the opportunity to visit museums and sites across Europe, in Italy, England, France, Germany and Austria. It was at the end of his scholarship that he started his excavations at Olbia, which – with interruptions – he continued until the 1920s. This work was to become the highlight of his archaeological career and for it he is considered among the most important Russian Classical archaeologists of his time.[15]

In 1902, Pharmakovsky defended his dissertation in Odessa on "Attic vase-painting and its relation to monumental art in the era immediately after the Greco-Persian wars." He was subsequently elected to a university post in 1905, becoming Professor of Archaeology and Art History at the University of St Petersburg from 1919 until his death in 1928. For the last four years of his life he was also the Keeper of Antiquities at the Hermitage Museum.

The focus of our paper takes us back to Pharmakovsky's years in Athens, during which time he supposedly encountered the Mycenae fragment. Interestingly, accounts of the fragment's discovery differ between Pharmakovsky's Russian and French publications. Although both agree with regards to the fragment's discoverer (a Romanian traveller[16] voyaging in Greece), the year it was found (1893) and its alleged find-spot (on the floor of the megaron on the acropolis at Mycenae) (Pharmakovsky 1897a, 267; 1897b, 374),[17] the Russian report alone mentions the season of discovery (Spring / весной) and that the discoverer, whose 'initials' are given as "Mr A-u,"[18] took it

10 Boris Pharmakovsky Archive, letter to his mother, 18 February 1894, Code: F. 1073, Op. 1, D. 354, nos. 59-60 (RGIA, St Petersburg).

11 Boris Pharmakovsky Archive, letter to his mother, 18 March 1894, Code: F. 1073, Op. 1, D. 354, nos. 67-70 (RGIA, St Petersburg).

12 A similar account comes from Pharmakovsky's contemporary, Smirnov (Tikhonov 2009, 453-454).

13 He mentions this trip as "forthcoming" in his February letter to his mother: Boris Pharmakovsky Archive, letter to his mother, 18 February 1894, Code: F. 1073, Op. 1, D. 354, nos. 59-60 (RGIA, St Petersburg).

14 This is the annual DAI island trip which Dörpfeld organised (the first such trip was held in 1892). Following Evans' discoveries at Knossos, the trip also included Crete in the itinerary with stops also at Andros, Tenos, Mykonos, Delos, Syros, Paros, Naxos, Thera and Melos (Seymour 1904, 215).

15 Although Pharmakovsky considered Dörpfeld to be the person who taught him how to excavate (Pharmakovskaya 1988, 47-52 and *passim*), in his correspondence to his parents he does not mention participating in any excavations beyond observing, generally, the archaeological work taking place in Athens.

16 The Russian publication identifies him only as a "traveller" (Pharmakovsky 1897a, 3).

17 To identify the megaron, Pharmakovsky refers to Perrot, Chipiez 1894, fig. 90, 'G'. While no secure evidence exists to the contrary, this provenance should be treated cautiously given the murky circumstances of its discovery.

18 Most likely these 'initials' are the first and last letters of the person's surname (*e.g.* Alexandrescu).

with him to his private collection in Romania (Pharmakovsky 1897a, 267). In the *Revue Archéologique*, Pharmakovsky (1897b, 374) adds that the fragment was later gifted to the Bucharest Museum. Despite our best efforts to locate the fragment, its current whereabouts remain unknown.[19]

As the story goes, Pharmakovsky, who was in Greece with his friend Victor Bobrov (1864-1935), a stipendiary of the Imperial Academy of Arts in St Petersburg, encountered by chance the Romanian, who allowed them to observe the fragment "immediately after it was discovered" (Pharmakovsky 1897a, 267). It was in Nauplion, where the pair travelled after visiting Mycenae, that Bobrov produced the watercolour drawing of the fragment (Fig. 1).[20] Pharmakovsky used this drawing in both versions of his publication.

On the subject of the fragment's discovery, perhaps the most important piece of information to emerge from the Russian archives is that Pharmakovsky did not arrive in Athens until September of 1893, meaning that he was not there in the "Spring" of the same year, when the fresco supposedly came to light.[21] There is also no mention in Pharmakovsky's personal letters of an encounter with a "Romanian traveller" nor of the painting itself. This silence is remarkable given Pharmakovsky's eagerness to report, often in great detail, new discoveries, ongoing excavations and archaeological trips to his parents. Given also how anxious he was with his studies and exams, one would expect that he would have relished the opportunity to 'claim' such a sensational find, especially given its apparent relevance to the vexed question of the origins of Mycenaean art.

While he does not mention the fragment in his letters to his parents, Pharmakovsky does mention Bobrov, who was apparently popular among the French and German archaeologists for his architectural drawings.[22] With Bobrov, Pharmakovsky went on excursions, including a two-day trip to Sounion, Laurion and Menidi in the spring of 1894 (Pharmakovskaya 1988, 48). Could Bobrov have been the "traveller" (intentionally disguised as a Romanian) who unearthed the painting? Were both he and Pharmakovsky somehow involved? Could they have accidentally found the fragment during one of their trips? Based on the length of his stipend,[23] Bobrov likely stayed in Greece until 1894-95, and it is reasonable to suggest that it was during this time that the two men (or at least Bobrov) may have discovered, and subsequently illicitly (?) removed the fragment, which had "by some chance (по какой-то)…not been then noticed by the archaeologists" working at Mycenae (Pharmakovsky 1897a, 267).[24]

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19 No record appears to exist in the Bucharest Institute of Archaeology (formerly the National Museum of Antiquities) which would have been the museum most likely to have housed the Mycenae fragment in late nineteenth century Romania. The National Museum of Art in Bucharest also informed us that they have no record of this fragment. It is possible that the painting was lost when museum collections were evacuated to Moscow in 1917 (not all of them came back to Romania), or looted in 1944 during the course of World War II. We hope that this contribution might help bring this fragment once again to light, if it still exists.

20 Also noted in Pharmakovskaya 1988, 74, n. 2. The fact that the illustration was published by permission of the Imperial Academy (where the watercolour was presumably kept) suggests that Bobrov's trip to Greece was related to his studies in art and architecture. For a brief biography on Bobrov, see https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Бобров,_Виктор_Никанорович (access date: 19 March 2017), where it is mentioned that he travelled with a bursary to Egypt, Spain and Italy for three years (1892-1894/5) with Greece forming another stop amid his trips around the Mediterranean.

21 We would like to thank Dr Elvira Myachinskaya for confirming this piece of information for us via a thorough search through the Pharmakovsky Archive in St Petersburg.

22 E.g. Boris Pharmakovsky Archive, letter to his mother, 18 February 1894, Code: F. 1073, Op. 1, D. 354, nos. 59-60 (RGIA, St Petersburg).

23 See https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Бобров,_Виктор_Никанорович (access date: 19 March 2017).

24 Here Pharmakovsky refers to the team led by Tsountas, who was working in the area of the megaron in 1886 (Tsountas 1887). The fragment was known neither to Rodenwaldt (1921) nor to the British team who worked in the megaron shortly thereafter (Wace *et al.* 1921-23). More recently, Younger (1995, 534, no. 114), has proposed that the fragment may have come instead from the Mycenae "Pithos Terrace," an area in which fresco fragments depicting processing women were later excavated (Immerwahr 1990, 191, My No. 2). If true, it is conceivable that Pharmakovsky simply wanted to tie the fragment to a prominent place on the citadel. The suggestion, then, that Tsountas overlooked the painting during his excavation may be there to obscure the original find-spot, particularly if the fragment was illicitly removed.

THE PAINTED FIGURE

The precise circumstances of the fragment's discovery aside, there is no reason to doubt that the piece is genuine, not least because of its marked similarities with other Bronze Age murals that would not be discovered until later (most notably, the "Cup-bearer" figure unearthed at Knossos in 1900[25] – discussed further below). That Bobrov and Pharmakovsky observed the fragment first-hand is suggested by their detailed comments and illustration. In the absence of the actual fragment, Bobrov's watercolour (see Fig. 1), reproduced here for the first time in colour since 1897, is enlightening as it provides dimensions for the fragment and also helps to clarify certain visual details.

In his published accounts, Pharmakovsky offered only a brief iconographic analysis due to limited comparanda. He did observe, however, that the body of the male figure was painted using the same red colour as the male bodies depicted in wall painting fragments found at Mycenae by Tsountas (1887, pl. 11). Pharmakovsky (1897a, 272 and 290) also cited his fragment as an example of the first of his three newly defined periods of Mycenaean painting, dating to the sixteenth century BC.[26] Works produced in this initial period, he argued, were characterised by incised lines, prominent outlines, and no trace of shading – features, he believed, that all originated in Egyptian painting. The second period was represented by a fresco fragment found by Tsountas (1887, 160-162, pl. 10.1) depicting Mycenaean genii on a blue ground, in which attempts at shading were observed but no incised lines were visible. The Taureador fresco found by Heinrich Schliemann (1886, 303-307, pl. XIII) at Tiryns was taken by Pharmakovsky as an example of his third period, defined by the inclusion of hatched shading and figures rendered with no outlines.

At the end of his article, Pharmakovsky (1897a, 267) concluded with the then-usual references to possible exogenous influences in the art of Mycenae, recognising – as Pottier had already done – the beginnings of independent observation by Mycenaean artists, who did not rely entirely on the art of the Eastern Mediterranean for creative inspiration.[27] Based on a fresco from Tell el-Amarna that he saw at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, Pharmakovsky (1897a, 290) identified similarities in the way the human figure was portrayed in Egyptian painting and in his second and third Mycenaean periods.[28] Based on this resemblance, he suggested that the painters of Amarna ought to have been Mycenaean or at least have been influenced by Mycenaean art. Thus despite originating in Egypt, the painting tradition of Mycenaean Greece, according to Pharmakovsky (1897a, 290), influenced the art of Egypt in the fourteenth century BC – "the first time European art had any influence outside of Europe."

Another important observation made by Pharmakovsky (1897a, 270; 1897b, 376) concerns the condition of his Mycenae fragment, which he noted did not exhibit the traces of burning typical of paintings excavated at the site by Tsountas. He concluded that the excellent preservation of the colours was the result of protection offered by a layer of fresh white plaster applied to the painting's surface in preparation for an updated mural programme. Traces of this plaster layer can be discerned in Bobrov's watercolour as whitish areas on top of the figure and background zone (Fig. 1). Superficially, re-plastering events at many Aegean sites – including Pylos (Lang 1969, 4-5)

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25 On the discovery of this Knossian painting, see Sherratt 2000, 7-9 and Chapin 2014, 1-2.

26 Oddly, this dating appears only in Pharmakovsky's Russian article. In his French article (1897b, 379), he recognised an initial stage of Egyptian influence on Mycenaean art, but also stressed that the Mycenaean artists soon managed to develop their own distinct style: "Après avoir subi l'influence de l'art égyptien artistes mycéniens ont donc créé à leur tour une technique et un style qui leur sont propres." It is also worth noting that within Russian circles, Pharmakovsky's interpretation was not immediately accepted as indicated by the reaction of the art historian Dmitry Aynalov (1897), who, in the same volume of the *Zapiski*, attempted to assign the Mycenae fragment to the Archaic period.

27 Pharmakovsky (1896) had also explored these ideas (but without reference to this particular fresco) in an article on "Mycenae and Phoenicia." This article, appearing in *Filologicheskoe obozrîenīe*, has been digitised and is available (upon subscription) online: https://mirlyn.lib.umich.edu/Record/005649597#0 (access date: 19 March 2017).

28 This observation is very much echoed at exactly the same time by Evans (1896, 919), who noted that "Professor Petrie's discoveries at Tell-el-Amarna show the contact of this Aegean element for a moment infusing naturalism and life into the time-honoured conventionalities of Egypt itself." For scholars such as Beloch, Evans, Reinach and Sergi, the origins debate of Mycenaean culture was very much entangled with the origins of European prehistoric culture in general (see Aubet 2001, 198-199; Duchêne 2006; Momigliano 2006; Galanakis 2014, with additional references).

and Mycenae itself (Wardle 2016, 593) – reinforce Pharmakovsky's interpretation, although accretions of calcium from groundwater may also explain the white surface deposits.

Bobrov's painting of the fragment was reproduced 1:1 in colour by Pharmakovsky (1897a, pl. III) in his Russian publication. As rendered, the piece measures 13.2 cm (maximum height) by 8.3 cm (maximum width). The cross-section provided at the bottom of the painting suggests a maximum thickness for the fragment of 2.75 cm, of which 1.53 cm is the prepared surface and 1.22 cm is a substrate of mud plaster or part of the wall to which the painting originally adhered. The illustration further confirms that the colours were found well-preserved (as noted above) with no signs of damage by fire.

Represented on the fragment is a bare-chested male figure facing to the viewer's right. The complete right shoulder, arm and hand (all in the foreground), and parts of the neck and upper torso of the figure are preserved.[29] The arm hangs at a slight angle behind the body, with the forearm bent sharply at the elbow, positioning the hand, clenched in a tight fist, in the figure's right armpit. The sinuous curve of the contour line descending beneath the hand indicates that the man's back was arched, with the upper portion curved outward to show the chest in three-quarters view. The figure wears a necklace, an armband and an undulating U-shaped wristband. The thumb and fingers of his clenched hand are shown in the distorted Aegean style. In his fist he holds an object that looks like a 'spoon', but which Pharmakovsky (1897b, 374) and subsequently Evans (1928, 750) tentatively identified as a flower/fruit or flower bud. More recently, Younger (1995, 534, 535) has hypothesized that this element may be a *plektron* for a *phorminx* that the figure originally held in his now-missing left hand, or the end of a leash attached to a bull, like that depicted on a seal of unknown provenance now in the British Museum (CMS VII, no. 102).

Undoubtedly, this object is the key to understanding the full meaning of the larger image. At present, however, we are unable to offer a conclusive identification. Upon initial inspection the 'spoon' appeared to us to have similarities to the stemmed yellow fruits held, together with red pomegranates, by diminutive female figures depicted in a recently published mural from the Western Staircase at Tiryns (Papadimitriou *et al.* 2015; Maran *et al.* 2015).[30] We admit, however, that the interpretation of the 'spoon' as a fruit (consistent with the proposals of Pharmakovsky and Evans), is unlikely given that flora are very rarely carried by male figures in Aegean Bronze Age art.[31] In the Classical period, Xenophon (*Symp.* 4.17) recorded the presence of male *thallophoroi* (young branch carriers) in the Panathenaic procession, but comparable individuals are not currently attested in prehistoric events documented in Linear B records (Weilhartner 2013, 158) or depicted in art.

Younger's suggestion of a *plektron* is possible, although parallels are also unknown in prehistoric Aegean murals. Where stringed instruments do appear, as in the LM IIIA2 paintings from Ayia Triada – including those on the side of the well-known sarcophagus and in the Great Procession Fresco (Privitera 2015, 74, fig. 2) –, the strings are plucked by the musicians' bare fingers.[32] Younger's second suggestion that the object represents the end of a leash likewise seems doubtful given that the lower 'stem' of the object terminates before the edge of the fragment (indicating that it does not continue as a leash should). If the 'stem' is short on account of erosion, the rounded terminus remains unusual for a leash, resembling more closely the end of a whip such as that held in the hand of a charioteer featured on an LM II-IIIA1 lentoid seal from Knossos (CMS VII, no. 87).

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29 It is unclear if a white circle depicted on the upper part of the torso (near the pinky of the right hand) is meant to be a nipple or is simply a trace of excess plaster. As a nipple, its position would be comparable to that on the chest of a Knossian bull leaper (*KFA*, pl. IX).

30 At present, the identity of the yellow fruits in the Tiryns scene remains undetermined. Tentative suggestions by the excavators include quinces and dates (Papadimitriou *et al.* 2015, 201-202).

31 One notable exception occurs in a wall painting from Xeste 4 at Akrotiri, where a processing male figure carries a 'snake frame', the arms of which terminate in what have been identified as 'buds' of lilies or papyri (Boulotis 2005, 31). While these buds are solid in colour and slightly oval in shape, their yellow colour and short stems are remarkably similar to the rendering of the Mycenae figure's 'spoon'. We would like to thank Dr Jennifer Wilson for bringing this Theran painting to our attention.

32 Also see Evans' (1928, 834-836) discussion of the Ayia Triada figures. In the Lyre Player fresco from Pylos, the hands of the seated musician are not preserved (Lang 1969, 79-80, pls. 125, 126, no. 43 H 6).

In connection with his leash hypothesis, Younger (1995, 516, 522, 535) further conjectured that the figure may have been a bull-leaper. Beyond the putative leash, however, there is nothing preserved in the Pharmakovsky fragment that clearly points to this conclusion. Even with the curve in his torso (often seen in representations of athletes), the figure does not appear to us to be engaged in vigorous activity. Instead, he seems at relative ease, with his upper arm in a stable, nearly vertical position rather than being outstretched or angled sharply away from the body, as is characteristic of representations of Aegean taureadors, as well as warriors and hunters.[33]

While it is difficult to interpret the object the figure holds, other elements in Bobrov's watercolour are more clear. The bare skin of the male figure, for example, is painted a reddish-brown. His hair, we conjecture, was originally black, as was the norm for male figures in Aegean art. Typically added *a secco*, late in the painting process, black paint would have eroded far more easily than other colours in the composition.[34] The figure's necklace and armband, both of which appear solid and cylindrical in section, are depicted as brick red and blue-green respectively. The body, the necklace, the armband, the thin wristband and the object in the figure's right hand are shown outlined (or in the case of the wristband entirely rendered) in yellow paint. Bobrov's watercolour further suggests that the background of the fragment was painted a deep blue-grey, a colour frequently attested in the backgrounds of mainland paintings.[35] As explained above, whitish smudges both in the background area and on the body and arm of the figure likely belong to the new plaster layer identified by Pharmakovsky.

Also prominent in Bobrov's watercolour are two horizontal lines visible just below the tip of the figure's elbow and mid-way up his bicep. Describing these lines as having been incised "deep enough" prior to the application of paint, Pharmakovsky (1897b, 376-378) interpreted the marks – we believe correctly – as artists' guidelines. As discussed in recent studies (Shaw 2010; Egan 2015) incised (or impressed) lines assisted Aegean artists with the position and proportions of elements within a painted composition, and were considered by Pharmakovsky to be further indication of Egyptian influence in early Mycenaean art. While Pharmakovsky initially debated whether the incisions were originally vertical (thus requiring that the fragment be rotated ninety degrees), we agree with his ultimate conclusion that they were drawn on the horizontal, resulting in the orientation seen in Fig. 1.

Based on the presence of a held object, we reconstruct the Pharmakovsky figure not as an athlete but, as Evans (1928, 750) also inferred, as a figure of the "offertory class," with an estimated height of ca. 48 cm, roughly 1:3 or 1:4 life-size (Fig. 2).[36] At this height, he would have been roughly one-third the size of the Knossian Cup-bearer, and comparable in size to the figure represented by the "head and bust of a man" from the fresco dump recovered at the same site's southwest angle, dated by Cameron (1976a, vol. 3, 21, pl. 15E) to LM II-IIIA1. Also comparable in size are the ca. 50 cm tall male (and female) figures from the Great Procession Fresco at Ayia Triada's "villaggio"

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33 An example of the 'angled' arm can be seen in the so-called Bull Leaper from Pylos (Lang 1969, 77, pls. 24, 116, 124, C, no. 36 H 105), who is in the process of alighting after a jump. The same posture is exhibited by figures in the Knossos Taureador scenes (for a full treatment of bull leapers, see Younger 1995) and by bare-chested male figures identified as 'athletes' depicted in fragments from the Northern Wing of the palace at Orchomenos (Spyropoulos 2015, 367, fig. 24). None of these figures provides a close match for the Pharmakovsky figure. For a similar pose in 'epiphany' and 'presentation' scenes, see the Master Impression from Chania (CMS V Suppl. 1A, no. 142), or the seal (CMS V Suppl. 2, no. 106) from tomb 62 at Elateia Alonaki. A connection between the Mycenae fragment and bull sports (as well as warriors and hunters) has also been made by Peterson (1981, 89).

34 For another example, see the head of the Pylos White Goddess, whose long black hair is preserved only in scant traces along the right side of her neck (Lang 1969, 83-85, no. 49 H nws).

35 Pharmakovsky (1897b, 376) believed that blue was surely the most popular background colour in Mycenaean painting. Other colours known at the time included ochre, red/brown and their variations. At Pylos, while blue is used frequently as a background colour, it is typically lighter in hue than the deep blue-grey on the Mycenae fragment.

36 This measurement is based on Cameron's (1976b, 39, fig. 2) restoration of the Cup-bearer from Knossos, for which he reconstructed the distance from the top of the figure's shoulder to the tip of the elbow as 2:8 the total height of the body. Younger (1995, 534, no. 114) identified the Pharmakovsky figure as roughly 1:3 life-size. In three dimensions, the LM I Palaikastro kouros (ca. 50 cm tall) serves as a good comparison (Sackett 2006).

(north sector), dated by Privitera (2008; 2015) to LM IIIA2,[37] and the larger female figures from the Tiryns pomegranate-bearer scene who, in their full forms, are estimated to have stood 41-50 cm tall (Papadimitriou *et al.* 2015, 175, n. 7; the Tiryns scene was removed and dumped at the end of LH IIIB2).

If this interpretation of the Pharmakovsky figure as an offering bearer is accepted, the range of compositions in which he may have originally been placed becomes more restricted. Traditionally, male offertory figures in Aegean murals either stand alone (as the two Fisherboys painted on the walls of Room 5 in the West House at Akrotiri) or appear in parts of processions, depicted most vividly in the Knossian palace (*e.g.*, the Cup-bearer and other figures in the elaborate Procession Fresco). While both scenarios are plausible, we suggest that our fragment comes from a procession scene, based on the presence of such scenes in mainland Mycenaean painting (the same is not true for stand-alone offertory male figures, which are currently unknown on the mainland), the specific ornaments worn by the Pharmakovsky figure (which find close parallels in other processing figures), and the strong possibility that the composition to which this figure belonged was meant to imitate known compositions from Knossos.

PLACING THE MYCENAE FRAGMENT IN AN ARTISTIC TRADITION

While Pharmakovsky (1897b, 377) confidently assigned his fragment to an early phase of Mycenaean painting, a closer inspection of the find and consideration of the now-wider corpus of comparanda suggest several possibilities. In support of an early date are the clear similarities between this figure and large-scale men represented in the wall paintings from Knossos. In the early twentieth century, Gerhart Rodenwaldt (1911, 249, n. 1) was the first to observe this parallel in writing. This idea was reinforced further by Evans (1928, 750), who compared this piece with the Cup-bearer Fresco, which has been used as model for the first option in our reconstruction (Fig. 2a). As preserved, both figures have muscular arms, pointed elbows and sharply arched backs.[38] The upper incised guideline in the Pharmakovsky composition also crosses the figure's bicep at approximately the same place as the horizontal zone-changing line behind the Cup-bearer, perhaps lending credence to suggestions by Mabel Lang (1969, 21-24) and Sara Immerwahr (1990, 109) that such wavy lines once functioned as technical aids. The ornaments worn by the two men (and a third individual, a tiny scrap of whom is preserved at the left edge of the Cup-bearer composition) are also similar. Similar to the Pharmakovsky figure, the Cup-bearer wears two blue armbands, paired with a matching blue necklace. A red necklace presumably was worn by the third, poorly-preserved figure, who sports a red-orange armband with spiral decoration (Evans 1928, 704-708). Owing to the rarity of green pigments in Aegean murals (Brecoulaki 2014, 12-13; Vlachopoulos, Sotiropoulou 2013, 257-258), it is likely that the greenish colour of the armband worn by the Mycenae figure should be understood as blue paint, perhaps layered with yellow.

The Mycenae figure's U-shaped wristband also finds a parallel in the ornaments worn by the Cup-bearer. In the literature, this undulating band has been identified both as a bracelet, designed to follow the curve of the man's wrist bone (Evans 1928, 750), and also, as the articulation of the wrist bone itself, as Pharmakovsky pondered and Lang (1969, 57) proposed for Pylian examples. Lang in particular wondered whether the band might not be an artist's misunderstanding of similar lines articulating the anklebones on figures in the Knossos Procession Fresco. We suggest that in the case of the Pharmakovsky figure, the feature is a bracelet, similar to that worn by the Cup-bearer. Although Cameron (see Evely 1999, 193) and Younger (1992, 279) have reconstructed the latter figure's wristband as a cylindrical bracelet, the missing centre of the ornament could alternatively be restored as a gentle U, as

37 The scene is very similar to that shown on the Ayia Triada sarcophagus; found nearby, the two scenes are likely contemporary. From the same site, perhaps earlier and smaller in size, is the two-tiered Little Procession – four men and four women in each register – dated by Privitera (2015, 77-78) to LM II-IIIA1. Additional fragments illustrated by Militello (2006) may also belong to procession participants.

38 The posture of the figure, with the back arched, is shared by clay and metal Minoan-style figurines, where it is clearly established in the Neopalatial and continues to the Final palatial period. See *e.g.,* Verlinden 1984; Wingerath 1995; Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1995. The only clay 'figure' with an arched back is the Neopalatial relief inlay (HM 8557) from the House of the Sacrificed Oxen (Evans 1928, 753-754, fig. 487). In his French publication, Pharmakovsky (1897b) drew attention to the male lead figurine from the Kambos tholos tomb excavated by Tsountas (Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1995, 83-84, no. 133).

indicated by the slight downward turn of its preserved inner edges. In this case, the Pharmakovsky figure would be wearing jewellery that was nearly identical to that worn by the Cup-bearer, but made from a broader array of metals. If we follow Younger's (1992) proposition that particular colours can be tied to specific metals: red might represent copper or sylvanite, blue silver and yellow gold.

Yellow is also used for the heavy outline that surrounds the Pharmakovsky figure's armband and necklace, as well as his red-brown body and the rounded portion of the carried object. Indeed, this outline is one of the more unusual aspects of the entire Bobrov composition. As there are no other known Aegean paintings in which yellow is used as an outline colour, we suggest that what we are seeing here might be Bobrov's misinterpretation of traces of a preliminary sketch underlying an originally black outline, a misinterpretation of a white outline that had become discoloured by earth, or a combination of the two.

To examine the second (and simpler) interpretation first, it is possible that what appeared to Bobrov (and perhaps to Pharmakovsky) as yellow outlines were in fact outlines of calcium white. Such outlines, which are found regularly in small-scale mainland paintings including examples from Mycenae itself – where they trace the pendent rockwork in the LH IIIB Warrior, Grooms, and Horses Fresco (Immerwahr 1990, 192, My No. 10) –, are routinely applied *a secco* and often have the dimensionality of impasto. At Pylos, where the technique is also well documented, it appears on fragments of miniature scenes painted on red and blue backgrounds, many of which come from wall fill or dump deposits that predate the final destruction of the palace.[39]

Regarding the first interpretation, preliminary sketches (or 'cartoons') appear frequently in Aegean painting. In many compositions, red (or less often pink, orange, yellow, or black) paint was used to produce underdrawings for paintings on plaster.[40] These sketching lines were then either concealed by washes of colour, or traced over with black paint. What Bobrov may have seen, then, were parts of a yellow sketch line 'peeking out' in places where the final applications of colour (red-brown for skin and red or blue-green for the jewellery) had flaked away. He then restored these yellow traces as a continuous series of outlines in his painting.

If the flesh of the Pharmakovsky figure was originally outlined (in white, black or even yellow paint), this may also be indicative of the painting's date. At Pylos, Lang observed that the only composition in which contrast outlines were drawn around the bare skin of male figures is the Hunting Scene from Room 48. Because this painting was found inside the palace at the time of its destruction, Lang (1969, 17) reasoned that the outline technique, absent from fragments found in the surrounding dumps, may have been "somewhat late." This suggestion is corroborated by finds at Mycenae, where figure outlines are present, for example on the LH IIIB 'Mykenaia' but not on the Plakes House figures, possibly produced in LH IIIA2 (see further discussion below). Heavy black outlines also appear on the female and male figures from the Tiryns pomegranate-bearer group, as well as figures from other scenes dumped into the Western Staircase during renovations at the end of LH IIIB2 (Papadimitriou *et al.* 2015; Maran *et al.* 2015).

Similar chronological implications may derive from the Pharmakovsky figure's undulating wristband. Based on extant examples, the simple U-shaped design of this ornament appears to have originated in the Early Mycenaean period, most frequently appearing on three-dimensional objects found in LH II(B)-IIIA1 contexts.[41] In wall

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39 *E.g.*, catalogue nos. 8 N 32, Flowers and fish, and 14 N nw, Flowers on the vine (Lang 1969, 128-129, pls. 71, H and 130, pls. 73, H).

40 For the use of black, yellow and red sketching lines at Mycenae, see the bull-leaper fresco from the Ramp House deposit (Shaw 1996, 175). For the use of red/pink sketching lines at Pylos, see Lang 1969, 14, 15, 37, 53, 70, 75, 83, 142, 186, 188; for the use of orange lines, see Lang 1969, 191. Discussion of red, yellow, and black lines for the large-scale female figures from the Kadmeia at Thebes can be found in studies by Immerwahr (1990, 115) and Brysbaert (2008, 2766).

41 As a decorative motif, an inverted version of the U-shaped design appears in pairs as 'shoulder loops' on elaborate hilts of mainland cruciform swords (Di), *e.g.* NAM 3110 (Mycenae tomb 81), NAM 4908 (Mycenae tomb 102), NAM 7326 (Dendra tholos), the Chieftain's Grave from Zapher Papoura Tomb 36 (Evans 1906, 110), and the shaft grave (Tomb II) from the New Hospital site near Knossos (Hood, de Jong 1952, 265, 267, fig. 15a, pl. 50b, 53a, 54a). It is also present on a rock-crystal hilt found near the deposit of Sword Tablets at the Palace of Minos (Evans 1935, 854, fig. 847) and on a spearhead from a shaft grave at Ayios Ioannis [Hood, de Jong 1952, 256, no. A J (3)], also near Knossos. A similar-looking undulating band also appears on LH IIB-IIIA ivory mirror handles: *e.g.* from the tomb of Clytemnestra in the Argolid and Routsi Tholos 2 in Messenia (Poursat 1977, vol. 2, nos. 105-106, no. 331, pl. XXXV and 138-139, no. 411, pl. XLI). For a general discussion of the motif, see Younger 1992, 272.

paintings, however, the design appears primarily in LH IIIB, for example, on the wrists of figures in the well-known 'Mykenaia' fresco (Kritseli-Providi 1982, 37-40, no. B-1);[42] in the Tiryns procession (Papadimitriou *et al.* 2015, 180, fig. 3, fragment 3);[43] and on the wrist (rendered as a string of beads) of one of the two large-scale women from the Northwest Slope plaster dump at Pylos (Lang 1969, 86-89, pl. 37, no. 51i H nws). The most striking painted parallel for the bracelet worn by the Pharmakovsky figure, however, is the ornament on the wrist of the Woman with Lily found in Mycenae Area Γ, which closely approximates the thickness and yellow colour of the Pharmakovsky example (Kritseli-Providi 1982, 73-76, no. Γ-1). Recovered in a mixed LH IIIC context, the Mycenae composition bears a resemblance to the better-known Mykenaia, but has not been securely dated (Immerwahr 1990, 191, My No. 5).[44]

MEN, PROCESSIONS AND MURAL PAINTING ON THE GREEK MAINLAND

While the use of outlines and the presence of a U-shaped bracelet link the Pharmakovsky fragment with later (LH IIIB) mainland murals, the figure's colouring, posture, and adornments remain strongly reminiscent of the LM II/IIIA[45] Cup-bearer from Knossos, commonly identified as an offertory figure from a procession scene. Although such scenes are known on the Greek mainland, they are more often populated with *female* participants, starting as early as LH IIB-LH IIIA1.[46]

One of the most popular scenes in Aegean art, processions have been a regular topic of discussion. As noted frequently, the term itself can be problematic and should be used cautiously to describe rather than interpret a scene (Boulotis 1979; 1987; Peterson 1981; Blakolmer 2007; 2012; 2016). Moreover, considerable visual evidence is needed in order to establish: (1) whether a procession is indeed taking place, (2) the nature of the represented events and (3) where (*i.e.* in what context) the original act was performed and for what audience.

In her dissertation, Suzanne Peterson (1981, 165-167) identified two main types of processions. One is a large-scale affair featuring single files of barefooted women with open-front bodices, flounced multi-coloured skirts and variable levels of adornment. In such scenes, the women carry offerings such as stone vases,[47] pyxides, flowers,[48] figurines, textiles and jewellery. The second type of procession includes smaller-scale representations of women and also of men, wearing a variety of costumes and with some differentiation in the overall layout of the

42 Area B refers to the SW building (or buildings) where most of the fresco fragments were discovered at Mycenae. The destruction horizon for the structure(s) is placed at the end of LH IIIB. Kritseli-Providi thought that this figure represented a seated goddess. The recent study by Jones (2009) re-interprets it as a standing figure, perhaps part of a procession that moved towards another (seated?) female figure holding a figurine.

43 Rodenwaldt (1912, 87, fig. 37) also mentions a female hand with a solid undulating band and a string of beads around the wrist. A final example may appear on the wrist of a female figure from Ayia Triada (Militello 2006, 196, fig. 9a, no. U7).

44 As an ankle (as opposed to wrist) ornament, the U-shaped element appears in the Knossos Procession Fresco (Dimopoulou-Rethemiotaki 2005, 184). Also see the anklets worn by ladies in the frescoes from Xeste 3 at Akrotiri (Doumas 1992, 107, fig. 107). A similar element also appears on a fragment depicting the ankle of a female figure wearing a flounced skirt from Tell el-Dabʿa (Bietak, 2013, 196, fig. 11). As a necklace, the U-shaped ornament appears on the Ashmolean bull-leaper from Knossos (KFA, pl. A, fig. 2 and pl. X), and possibly on some of the Ayia Triada sarcophagus male figures. It is worth noting that although one can often recognise the jewellery worn by the figures in wall paintings among excavated finds (*e.g.* from Mycenae: GCB, tomb A, Mylonas 1973, 31, no. A-351; GCA, tomb IV, Karo 1930, pl. LXVII), the solid undulating wristband is as yet unknown archaeologically. The solid type of necklace is likewise unattested (Effinger 1996; Konstantinidi 2001).

45 LM II according to Boulotis (1987) and Hood (2005); LM II/IIIA according to Immerwahr (1990). A sealing from Mycenae (CMSI, no. 170) is the only other known representation of men at procession from this site.

46 *E.g.* Thebes (Reusch 1956; Peterson 1981, 46-58 and 180-190); Tiryns (Peterson 1981, 69-77, 206-218; Immerwahr 1990, 202); Mycenae (Cameron, Mayer 1995, 281-282; Jones 2009); Pylos (Lang 1969, 86-89, 51 H nws and Immerwahr 1990, 196-197, Py No. 6); and now also Eleusis (Cosmopoulos 2014, 92, fig. 90 and 442-443, megaron B), where only the eye, the eyebrow and part of the forehead of a life-size right-facing female figure is preserved, dated by Cosmopoulos to LH IIB-IIIA1.

47 *E.g.* at Mycenae (Reusch 1953), Tiryns (Rodenwaldt 1912, pl. X, no. 2) and Thebes (Immerwahr 1990, 116, fig. 32f).

48 On the association of flora and female figures in Late Bronze Age Aegean iconography see Mammel 2011 (http://classics.dartmouth.edu/sites/classics.dartmouth.edu/files/Kathryn%20Mammel%20Thesis%202011.pdf access date: 19 March 2017).

composition, which can occupy multiple registers. While the first type of procession is regimented, the second type is more flexible, allowing for variations in depictions between sites that perhaps point to different occasions and/or performances involving variable agents (both in terms of participants and objectives).

Fritz Blakolmer (2005) has further questioned the validity of the term and also pointed out that the differentiation of distinct mainland and Cretan traditions in processions should no longer be considered valid. He prefers an LM IA date for the advent of the *Prozessionsbildern* and suggests (for reasons that extend beyond this paper's scope) a possible Hittite model as opposed to the Egyptian prototypes more commonly sought by scholars from the time of Pharmakovsky to the present day.[49] Blakolmer does, however, agree with Peterson when it comes to her two procession classes: large-scale figures carrying precious and symbolic gifts (not dissimilar from the contemporary representations of 'people of Keftiu' which clearly had, within the Egyptian context, political connotations)[50] and small-scale representations, depicting religious ritual and frequently associated with feasting and sacrifice.[51]

On the Greek mainland, both kinds of procession are evident in the excavated mural corpus, and male figures are depicted at both a large and small scale. Large-scale men are represented only at Pylos, where fragments from the Northwest Slope plaster dump permit the restoration of seven male figures found together with pieces of large-scale women (Lang 1969, 85-95, nos. 50-60 H nws). One of the male figures, christened by Lang (1969, 95) the Pylos Cup-bearer, is represented only by part of a face in profile, while the other figures, all facing to the viewer's left, include parts of the heads and upper torsos of four individuals and one Composite Tailor's Dummy (all dressed in beast skins), and the mid-section and shoulder of one dark-skinned individual of possible African origin wearing a short Minoan-style kilt (Lang 1969, 94, no. 59 H nws). In the Outer Propylon (Room 1) of the palace, another fragment of a life-size male head was found, which Lang (1969, 81) speculated may have belonged to a figure in a tribute-bearing procession. In Corridor 13 of the Main Building, the still *in situ* red feet and lower skirt of a relatively late and somewhat crudely-drawn life-size male figure may have belonged to a similar scene (Lang 1969, 81-82, 197-198).

Small to medium-scale processions with male participants are depicted at Pylos as well as at Argos, Tiryns, and outside the palace at Mycenae.[52] At the latter site, a scene from Plakes House, a private dwelling north of the citadel, had – in Room 4 – a fresco that includes a line of at least eight men (ca. 16-17cm tall) moving to the viewer's left (Iakovidis 2013, 170-176, 236-237, pls. 64-65). The construction of the building dates to LH IIIA2-B1 and it was destroyed at the end of LH IIIB. The Plakes men lack the detail of the Pharmakovsky figure, not least because of their small size and fragmentary condition. Some men appear dressed while others have bare chests,[53] and all figures wear headdresses and hold unidentified objects in their outstretched arms.[54] At Argos, four joining

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49 Peterson (1981, 164) does acknowledge that, whatever the source, we are dealing with the "adaptation of a foreign composition to the pictorial tastes and practices of the Aegean."

50 Pharmakovsky (1896, 140-143 and 1897a, 289 and n. 1) agreed with Steindorff (1892, 16), Turayev (1893) and Müller (1893, 337-353) that the people of Keftiu were Mycenaeans, and not linked to Phoenicia. Müller, by contrast, by placing them in Cilicia, did not consider them to be genuine Mycenaeans. Pharmakovsky did not attempt a closer comparison between the Keftiu figures and the Mycenae fragment, which is surprising given that its provenance would have added further support to the Mycenaean origin of the Keftiu figures. Did he merely allude to the connection in order to avoid direct questions about the conditions of the fragment's discovery? Was his dating of the Mycenae fragment to the sixteenth century BC, an attempt to make it earlier than the Keftiu figures? For discussion of the connection of Keftiu with Crete, soon after Evans' excavations started at Knossos, see Hall 1901-02. More recently, see Panagiotopoulos 2001; 2006.

51 On processions and ritual feasting on the mainland, see also Wright 2004.

52 If not participating in an *agon* (as suggested by the excavators, Spyropoulos 2015, 366), the line of men depicted in the fragments from Orchomenos (discussed above) may also be part of a procession.

53 The combination of both partly-naked and fully-dressed figures appears often, *e.g.*, on the Ayia Triada sarcophagus recently re-dated by Privitera (2008) to LM IIIA2 advanced.

54 A sealing (CMS I, no. 170) and a signet ring (CMS I, no. 108) are the only other known representations of processing men from Mycenae. Both are dated, stylistically, to LH II-IIIA1, and the first impression is made by a metal ring. On the sealing, three male figures are preserved but only parts of the upper bodies of two individuals are legible. These two figures appear to extend their right arms outward rather than bend their elbows as in the Pharmakovsky fragment. To some extent, their posture is reminiscent of the steatite rhyton fragment with three men holding ladles (Kaiser 1976, pl. 6a; Logue 2004, 154, fig. 3). On the ring, a single male figure leads two women, and holds

fragments preserving parts of the lower bodies of three men (ca. 25 cm tall) moving to the left against an undulating blue and yellow background were found on the floor of a Mycenaean building destroyed in LH IIIA2 (Tournavitou, Brecoulaki 2015, 211-213, fig. 2a-b). At Tiryns, fragments from the Western Staircase found together with those of the pomegranate-bearer scene depict the legs and one hand of three or four medium-scale male figures painted in varying shades of reddish-brown with thick black outlines and interior details (Maran *et al.* 2015, 107-109). The overlapping legs suggest pairs of figures walking side by side, perhaps engaged in the transport of a palanquin, as indicated by the muscular thighs and single red-brown hand, which grasps a horizontal pole (Maran *et al.* 2015, 108-109). Lastly, at Pylos, at least three medium-scale processions of men are represented by isolated fragments found in the palace proper. Fragmentary scenes recovered from the Inner Propylon (Room 2) (Lang 1969, 77, pls. 25, 121, G, no. 35 H 2) and the megaron's Throne Room (Room 6) (Lang 1969, 81, pls. 29, A, no. 45 H 6) depict male figures proceeding to the viewer's right, while a more complete scene with men proceeding to the viewer's left was found in the megaron's Vestibule (Room 5) (Lang 1969, 64-68, nos. 5-15 H 5), and is discussed further below.

INSIGHT FROM THE PYLOS VESTIBULE PROCESSION?

As no exact parallels exist for the Pharmakovsky fragment on the Greek mainland, it is useful to consider more carefully the character of this male figure against those individuals in the Pylos Vestibule fresco, the only other wall painting found inside a mainland palace in which a processional scene with male object-carriers is certainly depicted.[55] This scene, termed the Vestibule Procession or the Procession of Kilted and Robed Males by Lang (1969, 13, 24, 26, 38-40, 64-68, 192-193), and reconstructed by Piet de Jong (Fig. 3), was assigned to the northern stretch of the Vestibule's northwest wall. The scene comprises at least 17 men and one woman (all of whom are fragmentary) measuring 30-40 cm in height. Among these individuals, some men carry objects, often indicated only by the figures' outstretched hands. Men clad in long robes bear long trays or baskets while one of the four kilted figures holds a table or frame and another carries an enigmatic "upright object with horns" (Lang 1969, 65).[56]

Lang (1969, 51) considered these figures, found together with fragments of a large bull (109, pls. 52, 135, no. 18 C 5), to be members of the same procession painted on the southeast wall of the adjacent Throne Room, represented by the single fragment (no. 45 H 6) mentioned above. Subsequently, Lucinda McCallum (1987, 124) modified this idea in her dissertation, and identified the Vestibule Procession as the prelude to a feasting scene painted on the Throne Room's northeast wall designed to memorialize a state-sponsored festival. The objects held by the participants in the Vestibule Procession, she proposed, may have been offered and/or used in the Throne Room during the live version of the painted event (McCallum 1987, 120-121).

In her important study of Aegean wall paintings, Immerwahr (1990, 118) observed a similarity between the men depicted on the wall of the Pylos Vestibule and Knossian processional figures, noting that "although badly burnt and uncertain in details of restoration, this [Pylos] procession seems a late reminiscence of the Knossian offering bearers."[57] We would add that parallels are also evident between the Pharmakovsky figure and the Pylian men, particularly the four kilted figures whose bodies provided the model for the second option in our reconstruction (Fig. 2b). Like the Mycenae figure, the Pylian kilted men are bare-chested, with their foregrounded arms clearly

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his foregrounded arm behind his body, bent upward at the elbow. Overall, the gesture is not too different from that of the Pharmakovsky figure, albeit with no accompanying held object.

55 Notably, the medium-scale male figures from Tiryns were also found in a palatial context. However, as it remains unclear what the men are doing – the excavators stress the tentative nature of their identification of the men as palanquin-bearers (Maran *et al.* 2015, 109) – they are not included here. Additionally, Lang's (1969, 61) suggestion that the animal-skin-clad figures in the large-scale procession from the Northwest Slope plaster dump were tribute bearers from untamed or far-off lands is intriguing but remains unproven.

56 The "horned object" identified by Lang is that carried by the third man from the left in Pylos fragment group no. 5 H 5 (see Fig. 3). The poor condition of this painting makes it difficult to further characterize or identify the object with any certainty.

57 A connection between the Pylos figures and those from the Knossian Procession Fresco is also noted by Peterson (1981, 86).

set behind their torsos and their upper arms (as indicated by the angle of their shoulders or elbows) in a roughly vertical position (Fig. 4).

While there are differences between the two representations (foremost in the held objects and resulting position of the figures' foregrounded forearms), it is tempting to see in these two murals a common purpose. In addition to its commemorative function, the Vestibule Procession at Pylos, McCallum (1987, 70-71, 119) has argued, served as a sign-post, a term used previously by Cameron (1970, 163-166) and Robin Hägg (1985) to designate a visual element designed to direct the flow of visitors through an architectural space. The same purpose was adduced for the processing men on the southeast wall of the Pylian Throne Room by Ulrich Thaler (2006, 94-96). If the Pharmakovsky fragment was originally placed on the walls of the Mycenae megaron (as suggested by its published find-spot) we might draw a similar conclusion about its function. This interpretation is also supported by the figure's affinity to the Knossian Cup-bearer, whom Cameron (1976a, vol. 3, 140, 163) identified as a prototypical example of this sort of didactic painting.

FRAGMENT(S) MATTER(S)

It is indeed dangerous to extrapolate too much from small fragments whose contents as well as contexts are problematic. From our analysis, however, it seems that the citadel at Mycenae may well have been another place where processions of men were once depicted. What is more, the inclusion of male participants reinforces the iconographic connection between this site and the palaces at Knossos and Pylos, at least in terms of broad themes and motifs, which – with increasing frequency across the centres of the southern Aegean – also include hunting, bull-leaping, flotillas, griffins and other beasts.[58]

With regard to the production date of this particular fragment, the collected evidence remains inconclusive. Stylistic features and jewellery suggest a date of LH IIIB, but an earlier date (though not quite as early as that as proposed by Pharmakovsky), would put this mural in the company of other Minoanising scenes from the citadel at Mycenae such as the Ramp House bull leaper, recently dated by Shaw (1996, 190) to LH II-LH IIIA. In terms of phasing, the latter date would correspond to what French and Shelton (2005, 177) have termed Mycenae Palace III, which was in use during the LH IIB-IIIA1/IIIA2 periods, and from which there is no surviving architecture.[59] Mycenae Palace IV, completed in LH IIIA2/B1, is also a possibility for the Pharmakovsky mural, as other unburnt fresco fragments (found by Tsountas and Wace) have been assigned to this phase, and the palace architecture is more likely to have included a megaron (French, Shelton 2005, 177).[60]

Its exact date aside, the painting's probable production in the later Mycenaean period is significant, as are the strong visual similarities between this figure and the Knossian Cup-bearer. As discussed above, processions of male offertory figures are relatively rare in the mainland mural repertoire. Where such scenes do exist, as at Pylos and Plakes House, the similarities with the Pharmakovsky fragment are somewhat superficial, and have more to do with general affinities (such as the figures' poses) rather than specific details or aspects of execution. Still the Pharmakovsky fragment finds its closest parallel in the Knossian mural.

In a recent study of mainland relief art, Blakolmer (2015, 99) concluded that between the Shaft Grave (MH III-LH IIA) and Late Mycenaean (LH IIIA2-IIIC) eras, mainland productions became increasingly "less inventive and [came] closer to the prototypes shaped by Neopalatial Crete." In other words, while artistic ingenuity was evident on the mainland during its earliest period of intensive contact with Crete, as time went on the mainlanders became more careful (rather than approximate) emulators of Minoan prototypes. While this argument does not

58 For a recent discussion on what constitutes a "palatial package" in elite material culture see Darcque, Rougemont 2015.

59 Notably, the earliest painted fragments from Mycenae are assigned by French and Shelton (2005, 176) to Palace II (destroyed in LH IIA) though again no physical evidence for the whereabouts of the palace "exist at this stage, only deposits."

60 We would like to thank Dr Lisa French for her valuable input in clarifying further issues relating to the palace's phases at Mycenae (pers. comm. 29 August 2016).

apply cleanly to our fragment given the differences in format (mural vs. relief) and chronology of the relevant examples (the Cup-bearer is likely a Final Palatial rather than Neopalatial product), it is still illuminating to consider the Pharmakovsky fragment as another example of a mainland borrowing of a recognizably Cretan palatial theme (in this case of LM II-IIIA1 date). In this scenario, painted processional figures acting as sign-posts might have been one of the most valuable tools in the arsenal of the *wanax*, both for legitimizing his rule, and for maintaining order by ensuring proper procedure within his palace.

Our story may sound like one of Agatha Christie's novels, where passion (for archaeology) leads to crime (an illicit excavation?) and a mystery for us to solve. But this is no work of fiction: the stakes are higher and the intellectual reward far greater. While the fragment presented here may be small, much forgotten and perhaps now lost, its merit as "part of larger, general issues of cultural history" – to quote the citation on Pharmakovsky at the opening of our paper – should not go unvalued. By adding up such *disiecta membra*, we continue to piece together the puzzle posed by mainland murals, giving all investigators a leg up on the next caper.

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Fig. 1. Watercolour by Victor Bobrov of the wall painting fragment reportedly discovered in 1893 on the floor of the megaron at Mycenae (after Pharmakovsky 1897a, pl. III).

Fig. 2a-b. Proposed reconstructions of the Mycenae fragment by Emily C. Egan.

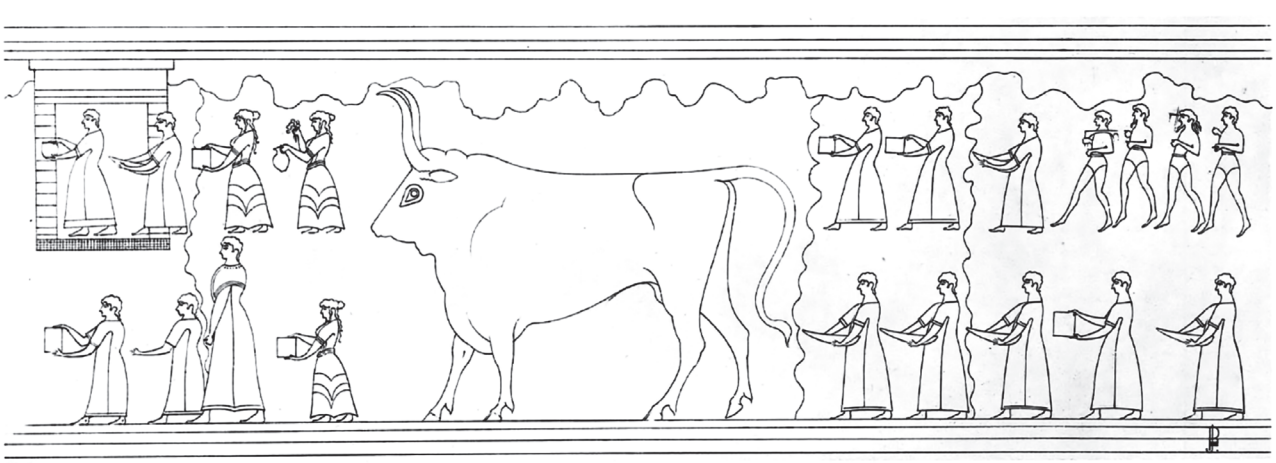

Fig. 3. Reconstruction of the "Procession of Kilted and Robed Males" from the Vestibule of the megaron at Pylos by Piet de Jong, after Lang 1969, pl. 119. Courtesy of the Trustees of the American School of Classical Studies, Athens, and the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati.

Fig. 4. Detail from the "Procession of Kilted and Robed Males" from the Vestibule of the megaron at Pylos by Piet de Jong, after Lang 1969, pl. N, 5H5. Courtesy of the Department of Classics, University of Cincinnati.