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STEP BY STEP: APPROACHING THE THRONE OF THE WANAX

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In a discussion of movement towards the megaron of Mycenaean palaces, computer-aided configurational analysis of the palace of Pylos indicates that one effect of architectural changes within the 13th century was to direct official visitors towards the court fronting the main building from where they had to follow the canonical route to reach the megaron. Wall-paintings such as the processional scene in the megaron’s vestibule would have assisted the orientation along this route and new evidence suggests a similar role for a life focus on the canonical route which may bear witness to a more advanced mid-13th century design. For Pylos, study of perceptual thresholds resulting from different forms of surface treatment and thus changing sensory stimuli not only underscores the channelling towards the distance between visitor and ruler, an effect to which further elements, such as the sentry stands, would have added. Similar effects are suggested by, e.g., carefully staged changes of direction in Tiryns, where furthermore the duplication of the propylon sequence results in an act lengthening of the canonical route. This linear sequence of courts can also be linked to differentiations in rights of access, which have received much attention in recent years, e.g. in Lisa Bedell’s study of the distribution of different qualities of drinking vessels used in Pylos during palatial feasts; the results of Bedell’s work are largely paralleled in configurational analysis, while inter-cultural comparisons with, e.g., the Hittites remind us that differential rights of access may have been in effect in everyday situations, too.

Among these characteristics of the approach to the megaron, the lengthening and indirectness of the route, as well as what Lucinda McCallan termed the use of wall-paintings as ‘sign-posts’, are also relevant to a discussion of movement within the megaron. This is clearly illustrated by wall-painting fragment 45 H 6 from the Pylian throne room, a depiction which suggests movement from the door to the left, i.e. away from the throne. This first indication of a clockwise circular sense of movement around the central hearth is not on its own conclusive, but is joined by others: from a position on the other side of the room, i.e. across the hearth from the throne, the ruler as well as the depiction of lion(s) focused on the throne in Pylos not only become fully visible, but are also effectively and most likely meaningfully framed by the columns and the hearth. John Bennet rightly suggested that those throne wall paintings were incomplete without the enthroned
LATE MYCENAEN THEBES: THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY AND OTHER ACTIVITIES IN THE KADMEIA AT THE END OF LHIII B

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The international project Mycenaean Textiles: Texts and Contexts: The Evidence from the Kadmeia of Thebes started in 2006 as a collaboration between the IX Ephorate for Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities (E. E. Epikariteia I.K.A.) of Thebes and the Center for Textile Research of Copenhagen, and supported by CNRS (Nanterre), the University of Udine, and the ICEVO-CNR, Rome. The overall aim was to sketch a general picture of the organization of textile production in Mycenaean Thebes (Kadmeia), combining both textual and archaeological evidence. The first results were published in the proceedings in the volume Tools, Textiles and Contexts (edited by E. Andersson and M.-L. Nosch). The work involved the study of textile tools and the re-examination of the general data from a series of building complexes excavated in the town of Thebes, and the LHIII B period (the plots called Sotiroiu Dougekou 1970-71, Loukou 1963 and Stamatis 1993-94, Pelopidou street 1993-95, Christodoulou 1983-84 and Kofini 2005). The material assemblies from these plots various kinds, including textile tools, and one or more bath tubs positioned on the floor, nodules, seals and seals) and also craft activity, especially ivory working, and possibly used as storage area for craft products (bronze, iron, pottery, raw material).

1 The bulk of the work was funded by: an INRAP Research Grant (2007-08), a Greek Government scholarship (2007-08), the Michael Vickers Memorial Award (2008), and a grant from the Mediterranean Archaeological Fund (2010).

Textile production and more broad economic activities in Thebes has been recently reviewed by M. Del Freo and F. Rougemont (see also the recent analysis by M.-L. Nosch).

Research on production and more broad economic activities in Thebes has been recently reviewed by M. Del Freo and F. Rougemont (see also the recent analysis by M.-L. Nosch).

1 Ed. note: this special meeting of the seminar preceded the presentation and launch of Cretan Offerings: Studies in Honour of Peter Warren. ISEA Studies 18 (ed. D. Kzydzinski).